

Divine Life or Life in Christ

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Reading: John 7.

We may say that verse 38 is the outstanding verse, which contains the outstanding and all governing words in this chapter:

"If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, out of him shall flow rivers of living water. This spake he of the Spirit, which they that believed on Him were to receive" (v.38,39).

So far in this Gospel the matter of life in Christ Jesus by the Holy Spirit has had to do with the believer himself; that is, his own personal life. There is his birth in chapter 3 and there is the well within him in chapter 4 upon which he lives, the inner spring of his own life. It is all, up to this point, a matter of the believer's own living by the life of Christ.

Now, as we come to these words in chapter 7 we see that it is not only what is in the believer, not only what the believer himself is living upon, not only his own spiritual experience in every part of his being of the life of the Lord, but it is what is going out from him. That is the further step. It is what is going out to others. What is going to be the effect of this? How is the circle outside of himself going to be affected? So that here it is not a well of water in him, springing up unto life eternal; it is rivers of water flowing from him and, as we shall see, the setting of these words supports that view.

Having noticed the governing words, and the step forward in the revelation and experience, we must just glance over the chapter and look at its main features, so that we are able to come more fully into its message.

We note at the outset that the occasion of what the Lord says in this chapter was the feast of tabernacles: *"Now the feast of the Jews, the feast of tabernacles, was at hand"* (verse 2). We shall have to look at the Old Testament for a moment in two places in connection with the feast of tabernacles, so as to refresh our minds.

"Howbeit on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when ye have gathered in the fruits of the land, ye shall keep the feast of the Lord seven days: on the first day shall be a solemn rest, and on the eighth day shall be a solemn rest. And ye shall take you on the first day the fruit of goodly trees, branches of palm-trees, and boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook; and ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days. And ye shall keep it a feast unto the Lord seven days in the year: it is a statute for ever throughout your generations; ye shall keep it in the seventh month. Ye shall dwell in booths seven days; all that are home-born in Israel shall dwell in booths; that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt ..." (Lev. 23:39-43).

"And they found written in the law, how that the Lord had commanded by Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in booths in the feast of the seventh month; and that they should publish and proclaim in all their cities, and in Jerusalem, saying, Go forth unto the mount, and fetch olive branches, and branches of wild olive, and myrtle branches, and palm branches, and branches of thick trees, to make booths, as it is written. So the people went forth, and brought them, and made themselves booths, every one upon the roof of his house, and in their courts, and in the courts of the house of God, and in the broad place of the water gate, and in the broad place of the gate of Ephraim. And all the assembly of them that were come again out of the captivity made booths, and dwelt in the booths: for since the days of Joshua the son of Nun unto that

day had not the children of Israel done so. And there was very great gladness" (Neh. 8:14-17).

Now we are able to see the divine thought in the feast of tabernacles. It was intended to keep fresh the memory of the coming out of Egypt, a feast of remembrance of the outcoming.

Spiritually interpreted it is the coming out from the world unto God, and unto a condition which was marked by everything heavenly.

That last clause is of supreme importance. There was heavenly guidance and heavenly protection in the cloud, the pillar; heavenly food in the manna; heavenly water in the rock; heavenly priesthood in the blue upon the garments of the priests; a heavenly people in that all their garments were to bear a fringe of blue. The fact that they dwelt in tents, speaks of pilgrimage, no abiding city, a life not fastened to this earth and bound up with this world; and a great deal more. It all speaks of the heavenly life, the heavenly nature, the heavenly position of the Lord's people, to which they were brought when they were brought out of Egypt. Although there was no feast of tabernacles at the time of the exodus, later the feast of tabernacles was appointed by the Lord as a means of embodying that great truth that they were a heavenly people, and everything where they were concerned was heavenly. So right on through their generations God wished this feast to be preserved, and although there was this long lapse through the captivity, from the days of Joshua the son of Nun to the days of Nehemiah, yet it is restored when the Word of God has its place again among them as the governing factor. Although in the days of Nehemiah they are found dwelling in dwellings of stone, the feast of tabernacles requires that they forsake that which is too strongly a part of this earth, and once more for a whole week set forth in testimony the fact that they are not of this earth, they are a heavenly people. So they dwelt in booths, they forsook the solid structure of this world, and accepted that life of detachment and testified thus to the heavenly nature and heavenly calling of the Lord's people. Everything, then, is heavenly in the Lord's thought for them, and for us. The booths, the tents, the tabernacles, speak of pilgrimage, and our being strangers here.

Now that is the occasion of this chapter in the Gospel by John, and of what Christ says in it, and it is the explanation of His mysterious behaviour, for, until you get the explanation, His behaviour is very mysterious here. It was the feast of tabernacles:

"His brethren therefore said unto Him, Depart hence, and go into Judea, that thy disciples also may behold thy works which thou doest. For no man doeth anything in secret, and himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou doest these things, manifest thyself to the world. For even His brethren did not believe on Him. Jesus therefore saith unto them, My time is not yet come; but your time is always ready. The world cannot hate you; but Me it hateth, because I testify of it, that its works are evil. Go ye up unto the feast: I go not up unto this feast; because My time is not yet fulfilled. And having said these things unto them, He abode still in Galilee. But when His brethren were gone up unto the feast, then went He also up, not publicly, but as it were in secret" (Verses 3-10.)

That is strange and mysterious behaviour. Why did not Christ go up publicly to that feast? For this reason, as the whole chapter, and, indeed, the whole Gospel, reveals that He was repudiating the earthly and that which was of this world, even though it might be a religious system. He was repudiating it, and standing Himself in that which was heavenly: "*... the world cannot hate you; but Me it hateth ... I testify of it, that its works are evil*".

The Lord Jesus was, in every respect, heavenly, and He was the embodiment of all the thoughts of God for God's people, and those thoughts were not earthly thoughts, not the

thoughts of this world, they were heavenly thoughts. He in Whom the thoughts of God are expressed is a Heavenly Being, in all His life, in all His activities, in all His relationships, in everything. He said, These are my brethren, my father, my mother, that do the will of My Father which is in heaven. Everything for Him is looked at in the light of what is heavenly, all relationships, and everything else.

The feast of tabernacles being the background, speaks of the utter heavenliness of the people of God according to God's mind, but here was that which claimed to be the people of God which had become wholly earthly and of this world, and He was repudiating that, and not going up as a part of it. To go up publicly to that Feast would have said that He recognised it, He acknowledged it, He was in it, He was of it. He keeps outside of it in spirit and in action, and even when He goes up it is in the most detached way.

So the feast of tabernacles, when understood from the divine standpoint, gives us the clue and the explanation of this strange and mysterious behaviour, and brings us into the realm of living reality. That is the background, and we shall come back to that again presently.

The next thing which stands out in this whole chapter is the mystery of Christ. Heavenliness is always a mystery to this world. To the carnal mind, to the natural mind, what is heavenly is always a mystery, and running right through this chapter you have the mystery of Christ. Look at words like these:

Verse 5: *"For even his brethren did not believe on Him."*

That was simply because they did not know Him, even His brethren.

Verse 12: *"And there was much murmuring among the multitudes concerning Him: some said: He is a good man; others said, Not so, but he leads the multitudes astray."*

Verse 15: *"The Jews therefore marvelled, saying, How knows this man letters, having never learned?"*

Verse 16: *"Jesus therefore answered them, My teaching is not Mine, but His that sent Me."*

To them that last clause must have been very mysterious.

Verse 25: *"Some therefore of them of Jerusalem said, Is not this he whom they seek to kill?"*

Of course, you have got to link that with the words in the previous chapter, verse 42:

"And they said, Is not this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How doth he now say, I am come down out of heaven?"

Verse 27: *"Howbeit we know this man whence he is: but when the Christ cometh, no one knows whence He is."*

They spoke more truly than they knew.

All those words and a good many more, in verses 29 and 34 and so on, speak of the mystery of Christ. There is something beyond man's power to grasp, to apprehend, to understand. He is beyond these Jews altogether. That is because He is the Heavenly Man, and all that is heavenly is beyond the natural man, it is a mystery. It is not until the natural man has become possessed of a heavenly life that He knows Christ, he understands Christ, he is introduced into the mystery of Christ. When you come to

recognize that Christ is the Life and the Light — as we are going to see — then He is only that in a living, experimental way to those who have received the heavenly life which is in Him, and which is possessed by possessing Him.

Now we come to this pre-eminent element in this chapter, in verses 37-39:

"Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, from within him shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believed on him were to receive ..."

It is well-known that in the temple in the feast of tabernacles two ceremonies were performed; one, a great candelabra was lighted, so that the whole temple became ablaze with light; the other, great volumes of water taken from the Pool of Bethesda were poured out in the temple, so that the waters rushed out down the steps into the court, rivers of water. The Lord Jesus was evidently referring to this.

You notice that at this point in the Gospel of John a new aspect of things is introduced. So far the main emphasis has been upon life; now with life an emphasis is placed upon light, and the two things proceed together from this point onward. The Lord took hold of the setting of the feast of tabernacles at that time; the light represented by the candelabra, the life represented by the rivers of water; and He, the Heavenly Man, transferred all that to Himself. *"If any man thirst, let him come unto Me ..."*. He is drawing away from the temple to Himself. He is supplanting the temple Himself; *"... he that believeth on Me ..."*. He is making Himself the Object of faith, no longer the old Jewish system. And He is saying, Union with Me through faith will make that symbolism a living experience, fulness of life and fulness of light going out from the believer.

Life and light! What is that? It is living knowledge. The light is *"the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ"* (2 Cor.14:6). That light had not dawned upon these Jews, for they were in darkness, blinded. But there was light in Him, and it was living light, light that is linked with life, effulgence of light and abundance of water, or life by the Spirit.

What does this mean? It means that that which flows out of the true child of God in union with Christ is the Spirit of life and light; an outflowing in abundance, in fulness, in rivers unto the world of the Spirit of life and light. *"This spake He of the Spirit, which they that believed on Him were to receive ..."*; *"the Spirit was not yet given; because Jesus was not yet glorified"*. It is the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ shining in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, as Paul clearly states in 2 Corinthians 4.

Now Paul says, *"We have this ministry"* (2 Cor. 4:1). The ministry which is here in view is not the believer's personal life, but the believer's ministry which is the outflowing from the inner life of the Spirit of life and light, the Spirit of a living knowledge of the Lord. That experience is the Lord's thought for His own who live by Him as their life.

This is one further meaning of divine life, living on divine life in Christ, Christ being our life. What is ministry? Ministry is not proclaiming certain facts of truth about Jesus Christ, about God. Ministry is not the setting forth of doctrine in a systematized form. Ministry is the outflowing of Christ as life and light. Ministry must be life and light to others. The Lord's thought is that that shall be in great fulness, in rivers. It springs from Himself, and therefore there is no limit. The only thing which can limit it in its expression is that the believer should be out of accord with Christ, out of harmony, that there should be something hindering. The believer should know that of which we have spoken, true union with Christ in death, burial, and resurrection, where the natural life has been set aside altogether, and Christ has become alone the life of such. When that is true then there is fulness. When we have gone through something of the meaning of that, the death with Christ to ourselves, to our natural life, in every way and of every kind; when we have

come into risen union with Christ, and He is our life, and our only life, then there is a way for the rivers. They will go forth, and there will be a testimony in an ever-growing circle unto the ends of the earth, even through an individual believer, to the living reality of Christ in life and light. That is ministry.

Now this experience of John 7:38 is the result of certain things. Firstly, it is the result of our standing completely clear of all that is meant by prejudice; that is, in a pure spirit, a humble spirit, a receptive spirit, an open spirit, an earnest and willing spirit; with a single eye to God's glory alone, ready to learn: "*Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly of heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.*"

You remember what we read about the feast of tabernacles. The first day it should be a day of rest, and the last day should be a day of rest. So then, when we come into the pure meaning of the knowledge of our heavenly Lord we should come into rest. But we can never come there until we are free from all grounds of prejudice, or, to put it the other way, until we are in the realm where we are open to the Lord.

Now, we also have to be completely free from all that is merely dead tradition and earthly forms and systems. The Jews were bound by their tradition, and they were steeped in formalism. They were tied up with what had become merely an earthly system of representation of heavenly things, and not the heavenly things themselves. The Lord Jesus says, that, in spirit, is the world. What He says here is rather impressive, because He says it about the Jews. He says that "*the world cannot hate you; but Me it hateth, because I testify of it, that its works are evil*". He is not talking about the irreligious world. He is talking about the world of Judaism, and He is saying it has become a worldly thing in principle, in spirit, a thing of this world, and He testifies against it that its works are evil.

So you find a thing which was raised up of God, and which has the truths of God in it, becomes a worldly thing, a system, which is dead and simply bound up with this world. The Lord says, Now you have got to come out of all that, and stand in a heavenly place, a clear place, a place where everything is heavenly, where everything is living, transparent, pure, if you are going to know the meaning of this word, "*... out from his inner life shall flow rivers of living water*". It is, in a word, a spiritual and heavenly relationship with Christ Himself, not with that which is supposed to represent Christ; not with a system, but with Christ Himself; not with an historic Christ, a traditional Christ, not even a doctrinal Christ, but with Christ Himself, the Living Lord. You must be in union and fellowship with Him if the rivers of living water are to flow out.

He was the life and the light because in all things, in all respects, He was heavenly, and for the life and the light to flow out from us, from Him in us, we have to be heavenly, in heavenly union with Him, and all things have got to be heavenly.

It is so easy to use words, but it represents a position of utterness; on the one hand, utterness of being out with God (that is the feast of tabernacles), in a heavenly place, living a heavenly life upon heavenly resources. You have got to be right out, so much out as to be a true counterpart of what the Lord said through Moses to Pharaoh, that not one hoof shall remain in Egypt, not the hoof of one beast shall remain in Egypt. God says it must be out to the last hoof, an utterness of being with the Lord in a living relationship. Then, and only then, shall there be rivers of living water, life and light by the Holy Spirit going out to others.

We can easily understand why there is so little life and light going out into the world from the Lord's people. They are compromised, and limited by things of this world, and that may be even in a religious way.

May the Lord find us those who are right with Him to the last degree, and out from whom the rivers of living water are flowing.

Chapter 2

Reading: John 8; Deut. 16:9-11; Eph. 1:17-18.

In John 8 there is a section which is bracketed at the commencement. It is really verse 53 of chapter 7 which goes on to verse 11 of chapter 8. There is a question in the margin as to whether this section was in the original text, but we need not worry ourselves about that. For the moment we are not going to be occupied with that section. It certainly does seem that with verse 12 there is the proper sequence connected with verse 52 of the chapter before. However, for our present purpose from verse 12 of chapter 8 we shall have all that we want.

Now, I want to remind you of the ground upon which we find ourselves in chapter 7. We are led in our understanding of the things that the Lord is doing and saying by means of the feast of tabernacles, and we observe that the feast of tabernacles sets forth the true and the essentially heavenly nature and life of the Lord's people, inasmuch as for seven days they were commanded to leave their houses and dwell in booths. This became the feast of tabernacles, or of tents, and spoke of their being outside of this world, and everything that is established in relation to this world, in a free and heavenly place with the Lord. That fact has got to be regarded as established as we proceed with this Gospel, and we may say here and now, as we go forward, that we regard ourselves as occupying heavenly ground, and it is necessary to recognise that, in order to get the value from what the Lord will yet say in this chapter 8, and do in chapter 9.

Just by way of introducing the divine and spiritual sequence, let us see that the feast of tabernacles was the issue of the feast of weeks, or the feast of Pentecost, as it is otherwise called. The feast of tabernacles, as we have said, sets forth or represents a heavenly people living in the life of the Spirit. It was the feast of tabernacles in John 7 which led the Lord Jesus in transferring everything to Himself to conclude the whole thing on the last great day of the feast with those words regarding the Holy Spirit: "*He that believeth on Me, as the scripture saith, out of his inner man shall flow rivers of living water; this spake he of the Spirit ...*". So the feast of tabernacles is the issue of the Feast of Pentecost, which means spiritually that because of Pentecost, or the advent of the Holy Spirit, the Lord's people are regarded as being a heavenly people. That is, Pentecost, or the feast of weeks, means from the Lord's standpoint that His people are a heavenly people. The Holy Spirit came to make the church a heavenly people. He is called "*the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven*"; but in exactly the same way as the Lord Jesus came from heaven. He remained heavenly and made everything which came into relationship with Him also heavenly. So, then, that is the meaning of the feast of tabernacles.

Now you notice the order of things. The first is the Passover, and the Passover speaks of the death of Christ in relation to the old creation, the putting aside of that old creation in its entirety. Then, following the Passover, is the feast of weeks (or Pentecost). Then, following Pentecost, is the feast of tabernacles. The Passover is death, the feast of weeks is resurrection, the feast of tabernacles is heavenliness of life on the ground of death and resurrection, coming out therefrom.

The Passover, we are told in Deuteronomy 16, was to be observed at the going down of the sun. That means the end of a day. One day is closed in the death of the Lord Jesus. The feast of weeks, being resurrection, because at the beginning of the feast of weeks

the wave sheaf was presented to the Lord, the first fruits of the harvest (Christ the Firstfruits in type), means a new day. A new day has been brought in in resurrection.

That is the key to chapter 8 and chapter 9 of the Gospel by John. We have come through the feast of tabernacles onto the ground of a heavenly life, and what that means, carrying over all the values of the feast of weeks in the Holy Spirit for all the future life of the Lord's people. That is resurrection.

This means that everything is now transferred to the Kingdom of the Spirit. That is the meaning of resurrection and heavenly life. It is what we may call the altogether utterness of everything. I take it that that was what the Lord Jesus was seeking to establish in the consciousness and recognition of His disciples, the fact that things are now altogether other than they were. There is that about them which is the same; that is, He is the same, and yet there is an utterness about Him and about everything that makes for the difference of two worlds. One day had closed in His death. The Passover had seen one day closed, and that was the day of all that was merely of this earth, even in relation to Himself. They wanted to cling to Him, they wanted to go on on the old ground, but He was altogether putting them off and saying, No, it is different now; the same, yet tremendously different. Everything now is of a heavenly and a spiritual order, not an earthly and temporal order. It is not now the old flesh and blood association. Now it is association in spirit. It is not now the old earthly association, it is now a heavenly relationship. There is a big difference made by the death and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and in the coming of the Holy Spirit everything is carried over to or transferred to the Kingdom of the Spirit, and Christ is now to be known, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, and everything to do with Him has to be of a spiritual and heavenly nature.

I take that to be the meaning of the counting of seven weeks. It is a strange form of words into which the commandment is given. "*Thou shalt count unto thee seven weeks, from the putting in of the sickle*". It is as though the Lord was saying, You shall mark seven weeks, you shall take definite account of a period. It shall come under your very clear and specified observation. It is not casual, that there shall seven weeks elapse, but you shall count unto you seven weeks. It is something about which you have got to be exercised, and concerned. It is not that I appoint seven weeks, but you must count seven weeks. Seven, as we know, is the number of spiritual perfection, and when it comes in relation to a period of time it means a dispensation, a period which is of a spiritual character, and that means that it is a period marked by that which is wholly spiritual. Now you have got to mark a time which the Lord has introduced, which is characterised by what is spiritual, and wholly spiritual. That is the feast of weeks, and if this is, as we have said, the feast of resurrection, or represents resurrection, the beginning of which is Christ, the wave sheaf, the firstfruits, then we understand that God has called us to take account of the fact that now history begins with resurrection, and everything has to be governed by resurrection for the future. Resurrection becomes the governing reality in the life of God's people, and it lays down this law, that the Lord's people have got to date everything from resurrection. Christendom, of course, has dated from the birth of Christ, but the church dates follow the resurrection of Christ. The sabbath is to be put aside for the first day of the week, which is resurrection. In the Acts of the apostles we read that they gathered together on the first day of the week. So that the church's history in the New Testament begins with the resurrection, and the Lord's people have to count everything from resurrection, and resurrection has got to govern their life and history in every respect.

Let us remember that; all things to be reckoned from and governed by resurrection. We put it in the general form, the embracing form. It is the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, but it is resurrection as a great spiritual reality. The resurrection of the Lord Jesus may be regarded, after all, as but a historic thing, but here the Lord is laying down this rule, that it is a spiritual period. It is not just a historic fact in the creed, that He rose from the

dead, but a spiritual state of resurrection into which the Lord's people have to come, and that has to be the governing thing of their entire life.

Seeing that as the foundation we are able to enter into these two chapters of John's Gospel, chapters 8 and 9 and see what the particular value of resurrection is that is presented here, and as far as I can see in the teaching of the New Testament this is the first value of resurrection, or of resurrection life in Christ. If you like to put it another way, and say the first value of the Holy Spirit's advent and regime, it is the same thing in other language. Resurrection, resurrection life, the government of the Holy Spirit; they are the same thing, and you can use which language you like. We are seeking to get at the spiritual reality.

If you look, then, at chapter 8, beginning from verse 12, you notice that you do not travel far before you come on these words: "*I am the light of the world: he that follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life*". Then from that point onwards you get this terrible night of darkness into which the Jews, and especially their rulers and leaders, and representatives (the Pharisees) have come, and you find them simply gripped and mastered by that darkness and blindness, unable to see anything, unable to grasp anything, and the Lord Jesus seeking to bring it home to them all the time, and their utter inability to grasp the true nature of His person. "*I am from above*", He says, and then they say, "*Who art thou?*", "*Even that which I have also spoken unto you from the beginning*". Then you get such words as these, which are all so significant: "*When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know ...*", indicating how dense and blind they were at that time that they did not know Who He was, they could not see. In verse 31 the Lord says to those Jews which had believed Him: "*If ye continue in My word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free*". Then verse 43: "*Why do ye not understand My speech? Even because ye cannot hear My word.*" You can go right through chapter 8, and find that on every side it was a matter of darkness and blindness. There was on His side the declaration that He was the light, and then: "*He that follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.*" That is the word that is the key to everything, the light of life.

The first fruit in the believer of the resurrection life of the Lord Jesus indwelling by the Holy Spirit is revelation. The blindness is past, the darkness is gone, the eyes are opened, and in the first place He is seen, and then He goes on to be ever increasingly revealed as we walk in the light. It sounds a simple thing, but it is not quite so simple as that.

What we mean is that so many of the Lord's people have not recognised all that this means, the great, the wonderful fact that in union with Christ in His risen life the believer has now eyes to see for himself or herself. In an altogether new way, a new world is represented by Christ, and in an ever-growing way those eyes may feast upon Him. It is that resurrection knowledge of Christ which is basic to all spiritual growth, and all spiritual usefulness and ministry. Our perfecting is a perfecting in the knowledge of God; all our development, right to the very consummation of the divine purpose in us, is along the line of knowledge. It is from the beginning life eternal to know the only true God and Jesus Christ, and Paul will tell us that the very goal and prize is reached by way of that knowledge being made perfect. "*I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord ...*"; "*That I may know Him, and the power of his resurrection?*" That is the cry, the prayer of Paul the aged at the end of his long life, recognising that His perfecting — because he also says, "*Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended*" — is a matter of a knowledge of the Lord Jesus, which even at that date he did not possess.

This knowledge is resurrection knowledge, or, in the words of this chapter, it is the light of life. It is not mental knowledge, intellectual knowledge, academic knowledge. It is the light of life. It is living knowledge, coming from a living union with a living Lord, and that

is ever-growing, constituting the believer a spiritual, intelligent one in an ever-growing way. Oh, that the Lord's people were more alive to this great reality, that it is given to them to have the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of wisdom and revelation dwelling within them, to teach them all things. The measure of the knowledge of so many is that which they have received second-hand, that which has come to them from other directions than directly from the Lord Himself and their walk with Him.

You see how the spiritual sequence is marked in these chapters. The blindness, the inability of the Jews to see and know and understand the Lord was due to prejudice. Now the Lord says, in effect, that is a bit of the old creation, and it belongs to the day that is closed with the evening of the Passover. Death to all that sort of thing must take place, and there must be resurrection to a new realm of the Spirit; not to the flesh any longer but to the Spirit, and in this new resurrection realm of the Spirit the eyes which were closed by prejudice are now opened and full of light.

So then the point for emphasis and underlining is this, that there is a resurrection eye, a resurrection seeing faculty. It does not belong to the old creation, it belongs to the new. It is the eye of the Spirit. It is that to which Paul refers in Ephesians 1.17,18: "*That He would grant unto you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him; the eyes of your heart being enlightened, that ye may know ...*". What we want to recognise in that particular connection is this, that that is not the eye-opening of new birth. In his letter to the Ephesians he is a long way past new birth. He is moving on into the highest and fullest things of the life of the church, the Body of Christ. He is now up in the heavenlies, and viewing all ages, eternity past and future, and the counsels of God, and he uses a word here which is indicative of what he means: "*That He would grant unto you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of Him ...*". That is the word he uses. It is not the initial knowledge, not the knowledge of a newborn child, but the full knowledge of Him, and the resurrection eye is needed, for that the resurrection faculty, for that the eyes of the heart need to be not only opened but enlightened to the full purposes of God. That is the way of growth, of increase, the full knowledge of Him. What he means, in a word, is this, that the faculty which is given to us by the Holy Spirit in resurrection union with the Lord Jesus may be in full function. You see the things which he would have them know; what is the hope of His calling, what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, what the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe. These are not elementary things, but they are all reached by the same way, the resurrection eye.

Now you notice that the truth is laid down in word in chapter 8 of John's Gospel, and then it is exemplified in action in chapter 9. It is no mere hap, no mere coincidence, no mere chance, but all under the divine sovereignty, everything falls into line with the purpose and the truth. The Lord Jesus should have been struggling, so to speak with this blindness and this darkness; you can almost hear Him groan at times in chapter 8. "Why do ye not understand My speech?" He is a Man grappling with an impossible situation. After all, what is the use of trying to show things to a blind man? That is what it seems to be like in chapter 8 trying to describe to a blind man things of which he has no notion whatever, and things for which he has no faculty of apprehension. Then in chapter 9 as He goes forth He meets a man blind from his birth, and this man becomes the symbol of those Jews to whom the Lord had been speaking; blind, with no faculty of spiritual sight. But the Lord heals the blind man, gives him sight, and thereby says to all around, What you need is Myself, My touch, a living touch with Me, a living union with Me. "*I am the light ... he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life*".

All that is quite well known to us, but there is a special emphasis which the Lord would make, and that is upon the great need, and the blessed possibility for the Lord's people to have this that the apostle prays for "*... a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of Him ...*". That is a resurrection enlightenment by the Holy Spirit. Their knowledge of the Lord shall be firsthand knowledge, and ever-growing knowledge by

revelation of the Holy Spirit, and it shall be living knowledge. Only so will they be able to go through triumphantly.

It is essential, in order that we shall go through to the end, that our knowledge of the Lord is a living, spiritual knowledge. It is essential, if we are to be of the greatest help to others, that we have that kind of knowledge of the Lord. That is, in other words, the measure of our own personal testimony in its effectiveness, and the measure in which others come into the fulness of Christ is the measure of our own living, resurrection knowledge of the Lord.

We shall be limited in ourselves, and we shall be limited in our value to others if our knowledge of the Lord after this living kind is limited. Growth in ourselves, and growth in our value to others, the increase of the Lord in others, depends entirely upon our growth in spiritual knowledge of the Lord. We are not working by a standardized truth or doctrine. Ours is not just a completeness of doctrine, crystallized and in the form of a workers' manual, to be produced second-hand as from a book. Ours is to be in every fragment of it living, and living more and more with the increase of Christ; to that, coming to the Lord's Word the thousandth time of reading any given part, means new life, and new light to us. The Word of God has not become a book that we know. I am sorry for the person who has got to the place where they think they know the Bible. I am perfectly certain that one mark of a true spiritual life will ever be, however much you know you are conscious that you know nothing in comparison with what you recognise there is to be known, that you are still only on the fringe of things, and there lies to your consciousness — not to your apprehension yet — a whole universe in relation to the Lord Jesus, and that universe is open to you, yet for you to explore, and as you go on your only feeling is that you are sorry, from this standpoint, that you are getting old, that there will not be time enough here on earth to explore that world which has come to your consciousness.

That is how it should be, and that is how it is with those who know resurrection illumination. There is a world there that we must long to get into, we are conscious of it, we are as it were on Pisgah's height, viewing it, and longing to get into it. Blessed be God, we may yet be led into more.

A life like this is for the believer now. Get inside of that phrase, "light and life"; the light which comes out of life, the light which is produced by life, which is living light. That is for us. How foolish we were years ago when we thought that we knew the Bible. We had studied it, and analysed all the books, and put them all out into diagrams, and thought we knew all that the Bible contained; and we have lived to discover that we knew nothing about it at all. It all lies there before us, but we have got the key, we have got the secret, and that is risen, living union with Christ, Who is the sum and substance of all the Word of God.

Now this poor man who was born blind eventually came to the place where the Lord Jesus said to him: "*Dost thou believe on the Son of God?*" "*Who is he, Lord*", said the man, "*that I may believe ...*" "*I that speak unto thee am he*". That is where the Jews were, all in the dark as to the Son of God. The Lord Jesus, by His act, His miracle, in the case of this man born blind, said so clearly, so eloquently, so forcefully, 'You will never know the Son of God until the Son of God has opened your eyes, and that as the result of your faith.'

We have laid the finger of emphasis upon a truth, not expounding it but emphasising it, a great and glorious truth, that there is for us, for all the Lord's people, what we have called a resurrection faculty of sight, which means a capacity for a new universe. That universe is Christ, never exhausted in His fulness, and resurrection life is the key to that universe. He is the Risen Lord. To know Him we must have His risen life. He is that now, and all that has to do with Him spiritually, heavenly; we therefore must come in

resurrection into the realm where the Holy Spirit governs, interprets. We must be in the possession of the Holy Spirit to know Him, but, given that, oh, what a wonderful life ours may be of a growing discovery of the Lord Jesus.

Now then, "*Reckon unto you seven weeks ...*". Take account of it, mark it out, recognise God's meaning. The Lord Jesus in the forty days after His resurrection was appearing unto them. As He did, there was one thing happening with them all the time. It was the consciousness that they were seeing, and they were able to see what it was quite impossible for the ordinary man to see, that this was something that they were brought into that no one else knew anything about. It was their secret, it was a marvellous thing.

I wonder how we should feel. If we could just project our imagination enough we should understand what was happening with them. If He suddenly, in physical form, without the opening of any door, stood in the midst, we saw Him, we could feel Him, handle Him, and He was as tangible as we ourselves are; if we could hear His voice with our own ears, could handle Him with our own hands; and then, without any door opening, and any material exit being given Him, we should find Him gone; we should say, Surely we have got a new faculty of some kind, for seeing something that is not seen in the ordinary way. Yes, they were recognising that they were in a new world of faculties, abilities, and the thing which accompanied that, as you can see quite clearly from the record, was a growing wonder. "*Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord*" (John 20:20). They were glad, they wondered, they prayed, they worshipped. That is resurrection revelation.

It is a wonderful thing to have resurrection eyes. It is a thing of wonder, a thing of glory, and whatever may be the suffering, whatever may be the trial, whatever we may have to go through, that thing remains to us a prize with which we would not part for anything. If the two things were put in the balances for us, and we were allowed to choose, the yielding up of our resurrection eyes — that is, the revelation that the Lord gives — and in surrendering that being given an easier path, a less suffering way, some of us know quite well which we would choose. We would not choose to have those eyes closed again at any cost, for any prize; not to lose that blessed Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the growing knowledge of Him — not yet the full knowledge, but the growing knowledge. No, not for an easier path; not for anything! When it comes to the issue, the values of risen union with the Lord Jesus are greater than all other prizes. That is the wonder of it all.

May the Lord, by the simple re-emphasizing of the fact, not by its exposition but by the fact restated, draw our hearts out in the same prayer, "*that He will grant unto us (and He will if we believe) a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of Him, the eyes of our heart being enlightened that we may know ...*". All that there is to know is a wonderful world, but it is all Christ.