

SINGING THE WORD TO BE SATURATED WITH CHRIST AND TO LIVE CHRIST

- Singing the word is an especially good way for us to let the word of Christ dwell in us richly in all wisdom, because it helps us to exercise our spirit and our whole being to be filled with the Lord, and not merely our mind
- Singing opens our inner being to the Lord so He can fill us and inoculate us
- Our daily living needs to be filled with singing so that we may live Christ in our daily life and overcome formality in the meetings

The Best Way to Be Saturated with the Word Being by Singing

We must see that there is no better way to receive the Word into our being than by singing the word. The more we sing and psalm the Word of God, the more it will sink into the depths of our being and saturate us. If we take even a little time to sing the Word, we shall sense that we are inwardly filled and saturated with it. Then spontaneously we shall live Christ. When the element of Christ has been infused into us by our singing and psalming the Word, we live Christ spontaneously and automatically. Sometimes we may read the Word without having any element of Christ infused into our being. But when we sing and psalm the Word, we are saturated with the divine element contained in the Word and conveyed to us through the Word.

In Colossians 3:16 Paul tells us to let the word of Christ dwell in us richly "in all wisdom." Have you ever considered what it means for the word of Christ to dwell in you in all wisdom? If we would understand the meaning of this expression, we must differentiate between wisdom and knowledge. Knowledge is related primarily to the function of the mind, whereas wisdom is related to the function of our spirit. This means that if the word of Christ is to dwell in us in all wisdom, we need to exercise our spirit. If we use our mind to memorize the Word, the Word will then dwell in us in knowledge. Memorizing Bible verses is a function of the mind related to knowledge, not a function of the spirit related to wisdom. For the Word to dwell in us in all wisdom refers to its indwelling every way possible through the exercise of the spirit. Wisdom is deeper, finer, and more profound than knowledge. It comes from the exercise of the spirit. When Paul speaks in Colossians 3:16 of letting the word of Christ dwell in us richly, he does not mention reading, which is an exercise of the mind. Rather, he mentions wisdom, which implies the exercise of the spirit. What issues from the exercise of the spirit is wisdom, but what comes through the exercise of the mind is knowledge.

We should sing the Word not only in the meetings, but especially in our daily life. In particular, we should sing the Word at home. When you are alone in your room or with others at the dining table, sing the Word of God. Singing the Word is an excellent way to exercise the spirit. To pray is to exercise the

spirit, but to sing is an especially good way to exercise the spirit...If we sincerely desire to be saturated with the living Word so that we may live Christ, we need to follow the practice advocated by Paul in Colossians 3:16. This means that we must let the word of Christ inhabit us in a rich way, not by mere knowledge from the mind, but by every kind of wisdom from our spirit, including singing and psalming. Oh, we need to sing and psalm the Word of God! To sing the Word is better than reading it, and to psalm the Word is even better than singing it. Psalming the Word includes musing upon it and enjoying it. As we psalm the Word, we dwell upon it, muse on it, and enjoy it, thereby giving more opportunity for the Word to saturate us...Let us sing and psalm the Word of God not only in the meetings. Let us come to the Word daily to sing and psalm it with our whole being. In singing and psalming the Word of God, let us exercise our voice, our mind, our heart, and our spirit...The best way to receive the word of life and to be saturated with the element of Christ is to sing the Word. (*Life-study of Philippians*, Message 40)

Singing Opening our Being so that the Word of Christ Can Fill Us

There are prophecies, histories, doctrines, teachings, and commandments in the Bible. There are also songs in the Bible. Songs are the expression of man's finest feelings. The sentiments of man's prayer before God cannot match the sentiments of his songs before God. God wants us to have fine and tender feelings. This is why He gives us many kinds of songs in the Bible. In addition to the Psalms, the Song of Songs, and Lamentations, there are also songs in the history and the commandments (Exo. 15:1-18; Deut. 32:1-43). Even in Paul's Epistles, we find hymns interspersed in his teachings (Rom. 11:33-36; 1 Tim. 3:16; etc.). [This] shows us that God wants His people to have fine and tender feelings.

Our Lord's feelings are fine and tender. We have fine feelings as well as harsh feelings. Wrath and anger are clearly harsh feelings. Some people are not full of wrath, but their feelings are not fine either. God wants us to be patient, compassionate, merciful, and sympathetic because all these are fine feelings. God wants us to sing in the midst of our trials and to praise and bless His name in the midst of our pain because all these are expressions of fine feelings...We must realize that from the day we were saved, God has been training us to have fine and tender feelings day by day...The deepest feelings that flow from a man's heart are the feelings expressed in songs. (*Messages for Building Up New Believers, Vol 1.*, Chapter 15)

Colossians 3:16 says, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to God." Here Paul does not speak of reading, analyzing, or meditating on the Word. Instead, he encourages us to

sing the Word. We should receive the word of Christ not only by reading, but also by singing, psalming, and praising. Whether or not we sing well, the Lord is pleased to hear us singing the word. He is happy when we sing from our spirit and from our heart. If we do not know a melody to use in singing a particular verse, we may make up one of our own. The important thing is that we learn to sing the Word of God...We have pointed out that the Lord Jesus said that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. The Word, however, is not only food to us and our life supply; it is also a spiritual antibiotic. We should not only be fed by the Word, but should also be inoculated with it against many different kinds of troubles, problems, weaknesses, and "diseases." Murmurings and reasonings are spiritual diseases against which we need to be inoculated by the Word. Day by day we need to pray-read the Word and sing the Word in order to receive further inoculations. If we pray-read 2:14, we shall be inoculated against murmurings and reasonings...It is crucial that we eat the Word by pray-reading it and by singing it. (*Life-study of Philippians*, Message 46)

A Daily Living of Singing and Praising to Fill our Meetings with Christ

We must admit that, at least to some extent, we are still under the influence of the religion, especially in the way we gather together for the meetings. Nowhere in the New Testament are Christians told that we should gather together and sit quietly, waiting for someone to start the meeting. According to the book of Psalms, when the children of Israel came together for the feasts three times a year, they began their meetings not in the temple, but at the foot of Mount Zion. As they ascended the mountain, they psalmed the songs of ascent (Psalms 120 through 134). Likewise, the church meetings should begin not in the meeting hall, but either in our homes or on our way to the meeting. The meeting should be an exhibition of our daily life, of the way we live at home, at school, or at work. The meeting should be full of singing and praising because we sing and praise the Lord day by day. I appreciate the chorus of the hymn, "This is my story, this is my song, praising my Savior all the day long" ...Our daily life should be filled with singing to the Lord.

Let us build up the habit of singing the word day by day. Then our meetings will not be formal. Instead of any kind of performance, the meetings will be filled with an exhibition of our daily life. What we exhibit in the church meetings will be the way we live day by day. In particular, we shall sing in the meetings because we sing the Word daily. Concerning the singing of the Word of God, my main burden is not that the meetings will be enriched; it is that we shall be saturated with the living Word. We shall participate in the bountiful supply of the Spirit and enjoy the riches of Christ by receiving the Word of God. In the past I lost many opportunities to be saturated with the Word

because I did not know to sing the Word. I spent a great deal of time reading and studying the Bible, filling several Bibles with notes, but I did not realize I could sing or psalm the Word. I wish to emphasize that singing the word is even better than pray-reading...I am confident that the more we sing and psalm the Word, the more we shall be washed by and saturated with the element of Christ.

Living Christ by being saturated with the Word is very different from making up our minds to live Christ and then asking the Lord to help us in this matter. I know from experience that this kind of determining does not work. In the past I often said, "Lord, I ask You to help me to live You from now on." I would be successful for a short period of time, only to fail the Lord again later in the day. Then I would confess my failure and ask the Lord to have mercy on me and help me to live Him. Eventually, I learned that the way to live Christ is not to ask Him for help; it is to be daily nourished with the living Word. For example, instead of praying to be healthy physically, we should learn to eat nourishing meals day by day. Likewise, if we want to be spiritually healthy and live Christ, we need to take the Word of God into us again and again. Simply praying for the Lord's help does not work. But what does work is coming to the living Word of God every day and being infused with the riches of Christ. We all need to open from the depths of our being and exercise our spirit to receive the Word of God into us not merely by reading, but also by praying, singing, psalming, thanking, and calling on the Lord. Then the riches of the Word will saturate our being. The more we sing and psalm the Word, the more we give opportunity to the Word to dwell in us, sink into us, and permeate us with the divine element. Then we shall be constituted of the element of Christ. Automatically we shall become what we eat and live out what we have absorbed. This is the way to live Christ. (*Life-study of Philippians*, Messages 40-41)

Fellowship Questions:

1. What additional benefits does singing the word bring over reading the word and even pray-reading the word? How does singing let the word dwell in us *in all wisdom*? What experiences do we have of this?
2. How does the Lord use songs to work Himself into our being? What examples of this are there in the Bible?
3. What is a key insight for how we can live Christ in our daily life? How can our meetings be saved from formality?