

**Words of Fellowship to
the Working Saints in Northern California**

September 24, 2017

**Taking the Active-Passive Way
to Enjoy the Lord in His Salvation**

Scripture Reading: Acts 2:40; Eph. 5:18; 2 Tim. 2:1; Heb. 2:11; Eph. 6:10; 2 Cor. 13:11; Gal. 2:20

I. “Be saved from this crooked generation”—Acts 2:40b:

- A. *Be* is active, and *saved* is passive; hence, *be saved* is in the active-passive voice.
- B. Salvation is to be carried out by God, but man needs to be active to receive what God intends to do.
- C. At the time of Pentecost, everything concerning God’s full salvation had been prepared, and the Holy Spirit was poured out as the application and full blessing of God’s salvation, ready for man to receive; in this matter God is waiting for man, and man needs to take the initiative.
- D. Although we cannot save ourselves, we must be willing to be saved by God; God is willing and prepared to save us; nevertheless, we need to be saved; that is, we need to take the initiative to receive God’s salvation.

II. “Be filled in spirit”—Eph. 5:18b:

- A. We may say that the imperative *be filled* is actually in the active-passive voice; *be* is active, and *filled* is passive; hence, *be filled* is active-passive.
- B. Just as God has done everything necessary for us to be saved (Acts 2:40), He has done everything necessary for us to be filled in our regenerated spirit.
- C. Nevertheless, just as we need to take some action to be saved, we need to take some action to be filled in spirit with the Holy Spirit who has been given to us and who now dwells in our spirit.
- D. If we would be filled in our spirit with the Spirit, we need to clear away all preoccupations from our spirit and allow the indwelling Spirit as the consummation of the Triune God to occupy us in full.
- E. If we are filled in our spirit with the Spirit, the issue will be a proper Christian life, church life, individual life, and family life.

III. “Be empowered in the grace which is in Christ Jesus”—2 Tim. 2:1:

- A. The King James Version renders this verse in a very self-endeavoring, active way: “Be strong”; *be strong* is very active, but Paul says, “Be empowered”; you do not need to be strong.
- B. Even if you are strong, it means nothing; John 15:5 says that apart from Him we can do nothing; we still can do a lot of things, but whatever we do does not count, so it means nothing; apart from Him we can do nothing.
- C. But we need to be empowered; in order to be empowered we have to be calmed down, and He has to replace us; once we are calmed down and He comes in to replace us, we are empowered.

IV. “He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of One”—Heb. 2:11b:

- A. According to the New Testament sense, it is not a matter of being holy but of being sanctified.
- B. In principle, to be holy is just like to be strong, and to be sanctified is just like to be empowered; we cannot be holy, but we need to be sanctified—*Hymns*, #841.
- C. Someone is within us sanctifying all the time; we cannot be holy, but He can sanctify us.

- D. In the New Testament we are told not to be something or to do something but to be saved (Acts 2:40), to be empowered (2 Tim. 2:1), that we may be sanctified:
 - 1. This means that on our side we are reduced, and we are calm.
 - 2. Then on the Lord's side, He is active, He is living within us, He is living for us, and He is living with us; this is what He wants, and this is what will work.

V. “Be empowered in the Lord and in the might of His strength”—Eph. 6:10:

- A. The charge to be empowered implies the need to exercise our will; if we would be empowered for spiritual warfare, our will must be strong and exercised.
- B. We should not be like jellyfish, those who are weak-willed and vacillating.
- C. Actually, it is those with a strong will who are most able to repent; consider Saul of Tarsus as an example; because Saul had such a strong will, he could have a strong repentance.
- D. In addition to preserving our conscience, God has sovereignly preserved our will; if He had not done so, the preaching of the gospel could have no effect on people.
- E. Such a will is able to function positively in repentance; repentance requires the exercise of the will; in like manner, to be empowered also involves our will.
- F. An active element—be—is combined with a passive element—empowered; we need to exercise our will to be empowered in the Lord.

VI. “Finally brothers, rejoice, be perfected...”—2 Cor. 13:11a:

- A. To be perfected is to be restored, mended, repaired, and adjusted; it is to be brought back to the right position and restored to the right track so that we may be built up together with others in the Body.
- B. We may regard the exhortation “be perfected” as active-passive in voice; strictly speaking, this is passive; nevertheless, it also contains an active element.
- C. God is waiting to perfect us; however, we must take the initiative to be perfected.
- D. We may liken Paul to a physician and say that he was ready to dispense medicine into the believers, but it was still necessary for them to take the initiative to receive the medicine.

VII. We must be an active-passive person:

- A. The scriptural way is neither active nor passive; it is active-passive.
- B. In human culture there is not such a thing as active-passive, but in God's economy active-passive is too great a matter:
 - 1. Even in human culture, some things are really active-passive; suppose you are floating on the ocean and a boat comes by; you cannot save yourself, but the boat comes to save you; but you have to want to be saved; you have to cooperate.
 - 2. This is the active-passive voice, and it has to be applied to our spiritual life.
- C. Actually, what the Lord wants is that we return, we repent, and then let Him do everything.
- D. We had better tell the Lord that we love Him, we love His Word, but that we cannot do it and that we have no intention to do it, that we will let Him do it.
- E. This is to be active-passive; it means, “I am here, Lord, to let You do it”; *let* shows the active, but *You do it* shows the passive.
- F. This is the basic principle of God's economy—this is the active-passive voice; yet very few Christians really know the active-passive way for us to enjoy the Lord in His salvation.
- G. This word is not discouraging; it is just to give us a timely help to bring us into the spiritual natural way; this does not mean that we should not pray and read the Word; rather, we should pray a lot, and we should read the Word a lot, but we should let the Lord be the boss.
- H. If you are really reaching this point, from deep within you will realize that the Lord is living in you:
 - 1. It is not a matter of whether you lose your temper or do not lose your temper.
 - 2. It is a matter of the Lord living in you; then you could understand that it is no more I but Christ who lives in me—Gal. 2:20.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

Being Saved from This Crooked Generation

Acts 2:40 says, “And with many other words he solemnly testified and entreated them, saying, Be saved from this crooked generation!” Here we are told that Peter testified and entreated. To testify needs experiences of seeing, participation, and enjoyment. It is different from mere teaching.

Peter entreated the people saying, “Be saved from this crooked generation!” Here “be” is active, and “saved” is passive; hence, we may say “be saved” is in the “active-passive” voice. It is to be done by God, but man needs to be active to receive what God intends to do. At the time of Pentecost, everything concerning God’s full salvation was prepared, and the Holy Spirit was poured out as the application and full blessing of God’s salvation ready for man to receive. In this matter God is waiting for man, and man needs to take the initiative. Although we cannot save ourselves, we must be willing to be saved by God. God is willing and prepared to save us; nevertheless, we need to be saved; that is, we need to take the initiative to receive God’s salvation. (*Life-study of Acts*, msg. 11, p. 89)

Be is active, and *saved* is passive; hence, *be saved* is in the active-passive voice. Salvation is to be carried out by God, but man needs to be active to receive what God intends to do. At the time of Pentecost, everything concerning God’s full salvation had been prepared, and the Holy Spirit was poured out as the application and full blessing of God’s salvation, ready for man to receive. In this matter God is waiting for man, and man needs to take the initiative. Man, be saved! (Acts 2:40, note 2)

BEING ACTIVE-PASSIVE TO LIVE CHRIST

The King James Version translates Acts 2:40 as “With many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation?” Do you believe that this word, Save yourselves, is okay? Could you save yourself? Could anyone of you, including Peter, save himself? But according to the Bible, Peter charged the people to save themselves from this crooked and perverted generation. According to the King James Version, the theologians would surely have a problem. To save yourself means that you save yourself. If you save yourself, this must be a kind of saving by your work. And to be saved by any kind of work is heretical. Salvation is not by works; salvation is by faith through grace (Eph. 2:8). This is the basic principle. Why then does Peter say, “Save yourselves”?

ACTIVE-PASSIVE

Suppose a message was given in a meeting exhorting people to save themselves from today’s dark age. Could you take it? Surely I would not take it. Salvation is by grace; I cannot save myself. In Peter’s time people were in a crooked, perverted generation. How could one fallen to the depth of a crooked generation save himself out of it? If you were drowning in the ocean, could you save yourself? No one could do it. Darby’s New Translation of the Bible and the Recovery Version say, “Be saved.” According to English grammar, you have the active voice and the passive voice. Save yourself is active voice; be saved is passive. Both are imperative. One is imperative active, and the other is imperative passive. Actually, it is not only active or only passive. It includes both sides. It is an active-passive voice. The grammar in English is not adequate; you need an active-passive voice. Be is active, but saved is passive. It does not mean that you save yourself but that you are to be saved by something or someone. So it is passive.

Some might say that active-passive is not good language, but I would say that the language should be improved. Language is a kind of culture, and culture depends upon invention and improvement. Today we have a lot of new words that we did not have two hundred years ago. This is why the King James Version of the Bible is out of date. You need a new translation. Both the

English language and the Chinese language have active and passive voice, but neither has an active-passive voice. Language is always according to human culture. If you do not have a culture, you will not have a language. In human culture there is not such a thing as active-passive, but in God's economy active-passive is too great a matter. Even in human culture, some things are really active-passive. Suppose you are floating on the ocean and a boat comes by. You cannot save yourself, but the boat comes to save you. But you have to want to be saved. You have to cooperate. If you do not want to be saved, people cannot save you regardless of what they do. Or if you do too much to help yourself, you cannot be saved. If you are drowning and someone comes to save you, you had better not do anything. Just let him save you. Otherwise, you may drown the both of you. This is to "be saved." This is the active-passive voice, and it has to be applied to our spiritual life.

In the last meeting I told you not to go backward, not to go forward, and yet not to stay here. Then you wondered: What shall we do? Do not do anything. Be saved! The problem is this: as fallen human beings, either we would not care for our salvation, or we would do everything to save ourselves. The more we do to save ourselves, the more we cannot be saved. The best way to be saved is to desire to be saved yet do not do anything to save yourself. This principle is hard for you and me to apply. Perhaps you were bothered by the two preceding messages. In the first one I told you that your prayer is a trap, your reading of the Bible is a trap, and whatever you do even spiritually is a trap. In the second one I told you not to go forward, not to go backward, and yet do not stay where you are.

Actually, what the Lord wants is that we return, we repent, and then let Him do everything. Not many believers would do this. Most would either forget about God, or they would turn to Him and do so many things. Some might testify that they got saved thoroughly because they cried for two nights and fasted for three meals. All of a sudden joy came to them. Yes, a kind of joy came to them, but it was a joy created by themselves because they had been crying for two nights and fasting for three meals. Surely they needed some happiness, and surely some joy would come to them. They got saved. Another may simply say, "O Lord, save me." Many dear ones got thoroughly saved by this kind of quiet salvation. Some of those who cried for two nights and were on fire for two months may have gone back to the beach.

A PICTURE IN LUKE 15

You must see the principle. We have been talking about living Christ. So you may consider that you like to live Christ, and because you cannot make it, you need to fast and you need to pray. You may want to do these things, but He does not. What is religion? Religion is that you and I would do something to please God. You and I would initiate something to please God. What is God's economy? God's economy is that He has prepared everything. The Father has prepared the best robe and is waiting for His son to come home. The Father has also prepared a fattened calf. According to Luke 15, everything was prepared for the prodigal son's return. When the son came home, the father had the best robe put upon him. This is to be saved. He comes back to be saved. He cannot save himself; only the father can save him. But he needs to come back to be saved. If the son never came back, how could the father save him? But if, after coming back, the son was too busy doing things, how could the robe be put upon him? The father stopped the son's talking and put the robe upon him. Then he said to kill the fattened calf and to be merry. This is to be saved. The picture in Luke 15 shows what it is to be saved.

ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST

The principle was the same on the day of Pentecost. While Peter was speaking there, the best robe was already prepared, and the fattened calf was already killed. Everything was there, and salvation was ready for the people to receive. So Peter said, "Be saved." To be saved simply means to turn to God and calm yourself down. Let the Lord do everything not only for you but upon you and in you. The more we do to get salvation, the more the Lord is frustrated. He cannot do

anything. This is a real picture of the situation with so many Christians. Many turn their back to the Lord. Others listen to the Lord and turn to the Lord. After turning to the Lord, they get involved in too much doing. Sometimes when the Lord would see that we are so active, He would just wait until we have done everything and have been thoroughly disappointed and have given up. When we are tired out, the Lord would say, ‘Very good! Now is the time for you to be saved. Let Me save you. Do not do anything. Do not pray; let Me save you. Do not read the Bible; let Me save you. Do not do your good work; let Me save you. Stop. Just turn to Me. Love Me, and tell Me that you want Me. You cannot do anything.’”

Do not come to the law saying that you will do it. You cannot do it. You had better tell the Lord that you love Him, you love His Word, but that you cannot do it. Tell Him that you have no intention to do it, that you will let Him do it. This is to be active-passive; it means, “I am here, Lord, to let You do it.” Let shows the active, but You do it shows the passive. To the Lord it is active, but to me it is passive. We must be an active-passive person. Peter had that kind of experience. So based upon his experience, he charged the people to be saved. This means that the Lord is here; salvation is ready; everything is prepared for you. The Lord is saving now. Are you willing to be saved? You must be willing. Be saved! On that day over three thousand responded in a willing way (Acts 2:41). This means that they regretted their past, they repented, and now they were willing to be saved. Then they were all baptized. Even they could not baptize themselves. They were baptized by someone else. This is the basic principle of God’s economy—this is the active-passive voice.

Very few Christians really know the active-passive way for us to enjoy the Lord in His salvation. Consider your own experience. For years you may have been a good Christian—seeking, doing, praying, studying the Bible. This means that you are doing, doing, doing. All your doings have been a kind of frustration to the Lord. Then you may consider not to do anything. This also is wrong. If you do nothing, you are absolutely passive.

TWO EXTREMES

Two extremes can be seen in Christianity. One school is the Pentecostals who are too active. They believe that their fasting and different kinds of maneuverings can accomplish everything. Although God may have no intention of healing someone, they think that if they fast and pray, eventually their fasting and prayer would heal this person. This is why they invented a lot of false healings.

After fasting for three days and praying for seven days, there must be some healing. So they just manufactured healing. I was there and I studied it thoroughly, and I can tell you that very few of the healings are genuine. It is the same with their tongue-speaking. Most of their tongue-speaking is also humanly manufactured. After fasting for tongues, they have to speak in tongues. When the tongues did not come, they told people to turn their jaw and to exercise their tongue; then a tongue came. What kind of tongue is this? This is humanly manufactured. I am not criticizing. I am strong in this matter because I was there. I studied it; I was in it; I practiced it; and I discovered all kinds of human manufacturing. The Pentecostal school may be considered at the “south pole?”

Another school may be considered at the “north pole?” They teach people not to do anything. They tell them that they do not need to do anything. This also is to the extreme. The scriptural way is neither at the south pole nor at the north pole. It is halfway. It is midway. It is neither active nor passive; it is active-passive. To say this is easy, and to demonstrate it also is easy. But to get into the practicality takes time. When you first begin to practice certain things, they may seem to be very strenuous. But when you get into the experience your practice becomes so natural. When you practice playing ball, your skill of playing ball becomes very natural. In principle, it is the same spiritually.

NOT COMMANDING THE LORD

Four or five years ago I would not have given you such a message. I learned these things over thirty years ago, but I would not release a message like this until I saw the right situation. Now I feel that the time is right, and many of you need this message. If you consider that my word is quite discouraging, it means that you are not qualified to hear it. This word is not discouraging. This word is just to give you a timely help to bring you into the spiritual natural way. I do not mean that you should not pray, and I do not mean that you should not read the Word; Rather, you should pray a lot, and you should read the Word a lot, but do not be the boss. Let the Lord be the boss. You do not realize that in your spiritual seeking you give the Lord a lot of commandments. Your prayer is a kind of commanding, and your study of the Word is a kind of commanding. You fast because you are commanding the Lord to do something. Even in your prayer. (*CWWL, 1980*, vol. 1, "Perfecting Training," ch. 20, pp. 217-221)

INACTIVE BUT NOT PASSIVE

By way of illustration, the Bible says that we need to love one another. You surely would like to love others, so you begin to love. You have to realize that it is you who love. Whether you can actually love or not makes no difference; it is you who are loving. Most of us have experienced the failures again and again. It will take you a long time to reach the point where you realize that you do not need to love, because the Lord lives in you. When you love by yourself, your loving frustrates His living in you. When your loving is stopped, you have no doing. You are calm, silent, and inactive, but not passive. Inactive does not mean that you are passive. The worldly people surely could not understand this. How could someone be inactive and yet not passive? To the worldly people, to be inactive is to be passive. But in our experience, inactive is altogether not passive. We are in a kind of inactive condition—very calm, very silent—yet we are very positive. Yet, we are not positive in ourselves or by ourselves. We are silent, we are calm, but He gets every inch of our inner room. He has every opportunity, every chance, to do everything. He lives. When we are calmed down, He has the opportunity to live.

This does not mean to be calmed down by way of an accident. Sometimes a very active person receives some chastisement from the Lord, and he becomes very calm. That kind of calm does not mean too much. You do not need to have some big blow from the Lord, like losing your job or losing your wife or having your house burn or having sickness, to calm you down. I have seen this a lot in the past, but I do not trust in this. I saw some persons stopped by the Lord in this way, but after a short time, that "horse" became even bigger. This kind of calm does not mean much. The kind of calm I mean is in the measure of your stature. In life you reach a stage where you become a calm person. You are not calm in the outward doings; in fact, you may be very active in outward doings. But your inward situation regarding your contact with the Lord is in a very calm situation. You do not try to love others; you do not even try to pray. You are very calm.

As a further illustration, I believe that when many brothers were married, they prayed that they would be a good husband, a nice man. They prayed that they would never have a long face toward their wives but that they would always be smiling and never lose their temper. I prayed this way. But eventually all the brothers have the experience to testify that on the whole earth there is not such a husband. Gradually, we struggled and prayed and fasted and read many books to find the way to be such a husband. Eventually, nothing worked. But while you are growing in the Lord, you will reach a point where you are calm. Do not be a bad husband or a good husband. Do not be anything. Do not be somebody, and even do not be nobody. Forget about the being or the not being. If you are really reaching this point, from deep within you will realize that the Lord is living in you. It is not a matter of whether you lose your temper or do not lose your temper. It is a matter of the Lord living in you. Then you could understand that it is no more I but Christ who

lives in me (Gal. 2:20). I do not believe that any Christian could experience Galatians 2:20 in full in his early Christian life.

For over fifty years I have given messages on Galatians 2:20, but up to now I still feel I do not have that much thorough experience of no longer I but Christ living in me. How much Christ lives in us all depends upon how much our being is calmed down. It has to be calmed down not only in loving the world but even calmed down in prayer. Our being has to be calmed down from loving others. If you keep on this track, some day you will reach a point by the Lord's growing within you that your being, your person, will be calmed down. Then the Lord will live in you but not in your sense. He just will live in you. When you reach this point, you will even realize that you do not need to pray that much. You need more prayer, but you do not need to pray that much. Right now you have little prayer, but you pray too much. Prayer means just to contact the Lord and to keep yourself in a very close and intimate contact with Him. Could you spend twenty minutes with the Lord without praying anything? Could you spend that much time just saying, "Lord, I love You. Lord, I need You. Lord, I like to be here with You; I like to look at You. I like to remain here in precious, dear, and intimate contact with You"? Could you pray in this way? This is what I mean that you have a lot of prayer but you do not pray much. Many of you do not have this kind of prayer, yet you pray a lot. You spend a lot of time to pray concerning your need to be more spiritual, concerning your need to live Christ, concerning your need to practice the one spirit with the Lord, concerning your need for impact, concerning your need for the inner life. You pray for your wife, for your children, for so many things. This is what I mean that you have little prayer but you pray too much. You need to have a spacious prayer yet with nearly no praying. As you grow in life, you will reach a point that you may be in prayer for twenty minutes with the Lord but have nearly no prayer. Every experienced person would say the same thing. We are altogether too much in our doing. You pray very much, but that kind of praying is your doing.

We need to continue to speak in this way until we all are reduced. The Lord must reduce all your spiritual doings, your good doings, even your doings for the seeking after the Lord. The Lord will reduce all your doings to make you realize that He is living in you right now. You do not need to overcome sin or temper, and you do not need to strive to love others. You just need to say, "Lord, I am here. I love You. I would like to stay with You." Spontaneously, He will be your life in a very actual way. It is not that you take Him as your life but that He is your life. He is just your life. At that time you will realize that you are really one with Him, and He is really one with you. He lives in you. You do not need to live Him; He lives in you. When you reach that point, you will fully realize what I am telling you now. At that time some probably will not love the Lord so much as you do, yet they are very active and aggressive. You are inactive but not passive. Actually, you will love the Lord more than they. It may seem at the time that you are not on fire, but actually you do have a thorough mingling of the Lord with you. You would not just feel or sense but fully realize that the Lord really lives in you. It is altogether not your doing. You are so inactive; you are so calm. You are not cold, yet you are very calm. You do not hate, you do not love, even you do not pray, and neither do you not pray. You enter into a stage that the Lord lives in you.

THE GOAL OF THIS TRAINING

This stage is the goal of this training. Praise the Lord! Someday you will grow up. You cannot remain young. I do believe that at least the majority of us are seeking and are growing. We may be foolish, and we may waste a lot of time, but the Lord is not foolish, and He has never wasted our time. One day we will thank Him for His preservation and His recovery. The Lord's recovery is not just to recover the one church in one city. The Lord's recovery eventually is to recover Himself as our real experience. Then you may ask about our ups and downs. We have to leave these until later. For right now, we have to realize that, on the one hand, the Lord is growing within us, and on the other hand, He is reducing us. He is not killing us; He is reducing us. You must realize that

you do not need to pray that much, you do not need to love people that much, and you do not need to endeavor that much. The Lord is adding Himself into you, and He is also reducing you. You had better come to Him and stay with Him; this is what we call the proper prayer. You do not need to endeavor to pray that much. You need reducing. But you cannot reduce yourself. This needs time. What you need right now is simply to tell Him all the time, "Lord, I love You. I want You. I need You. I like You. I want to get with You." This is very active. Yet you do not do anything; this is passive. This is what I call active-passive. This is, "Be saved" (Acts 2:40).

BE EMPOWERED

In 2 Timothy 2:1 Paul says, "Be empowered." The King James Version renders this verse in a very self-endeavoring, active way: "Be strong." *Be strong* is very active, but Paul says, "Be empowered." You do not need to be strong, and you cannot be strong. Even if you are strong, it means nothing, because John 15:5 says that apart from Him we can do nothing. We still can do a lot of things, but whatever we do does not count, so it means nothing. Apart from Him we can do nothing. But we need to be empowered. How could we be empowered? We have to be calmed down, and He has to replace us. Once we are calmed down and He comes in to replace us, we are empowered.

BE SANCTIFIED

Likewise, the Bible does not tell us that we can sanctify ourselves. In the Old Testament we are told to be holy (Lev. 19:2). But you have to realize that according to the New Testament sense, it is not a matter of being holy but of being sanctified (John 17:19; Heb. 2:11). In principle, to be holy is just like to be strong, and to be sanctified is just like to be empowered. We cannot be holy, but we need to be sanctified. Someone is within us sanctifying all the time. We cannot be holy, but He can sanctify us. In the New Testament many points like this have either been translated in the wrong way or understood in the wrong way. Actually, in the New Testament we are told not to be something or to do something but to be saved (Acts 2:40), to be empowered (2 Tim. 2:1), that we maybe sanctified. This means that on our side we are reduced, and we are calm. Then on the Lord's side, He is active, He is living within us, He is living for us, and He is living with us. This is what He wants, and this is what will work. (CWWL, 1980, vol. 1, "Perfecting Training," ch. 21, pp. 233-237)

ACTIVE-PASSIVE

The problem with most of us concerning the spiritual life is this: either we are at the north pole, or we are at the south pole. When we say that we trust in the Lord, we feel we do not need to do anything. In the past I told you that we have to cease from our effort. That is right, but there is also another side. Many times we have mentioned that in the entire universe, nothing can exist without two sides. Even a very thin piece of paper has two sides. But when we come to the spiritual life, it is easy for us to take just one side and forget about the other side.

Then you might consider that you need to exercise your self. But to exercise your self is one thing; to have your mind, will, and emotion exercised is another thing. To say that you need to exercise your self is active. But to say that you need to have your mind, will, and emotion exercised is equal to being saved and to being empowered. This is active-passive.

WILLING TO BE SAVED

The problem always lies here and even hides here. You have to realize that in God's salvation, He saves, but you need to be saved. He is willing to save, yet if you are not willing to be saved, you cannot receive the salvation. It is not that God is going to save a piece of driftwood. That would be altogether up to Him, because the driftwood does not have a will, a mind, or emotions. But you and I have a will, a mind, and emotions. God is willing to save, but we are not willing to be saved. We have no appetite and no desire to be saved.

Good preaching is always to stir up the appetite to be saved. The good speaking many times is just to stir up your hunger, to stir up your thirst, to stir up your interest. Even among those in attendance at this Perfecting Training, the degree of the appetite differs. Some may have the highest appetite, and others may not have any appetite. If you have no appetite, this training cannot help you. Actually, it does not depend upon the training; it depends upon your appetite. If your appetite is higher, you will get more help. If you do not have any appetite, regardless of how many times you would attend the meetings, you will get little help. This is a matter having two sides: God is willing to save you. But are you willing to be saved? We must see these two sides. (*CWWL, 1980, vol. 1, "Perfecting Training," ch. 45, pp. 436-437*)

To be filled in spirit is to be filled in our regenerated spirit, the human spirit indwelt by the Spirit of God. However, some readers of Ephesians 5 may regard the spirit in verse 18 as the Holy Spirit. But according to the Greek text, Paul here is not saying that we should be filled with the Spirit; rather, he is saying that we should be filled in our spirit, that is, in our regenerated spirit. Our spirit should not be empty, but should be filled with the riches of Christ unto all the fullness of God (Eph. 3:19). If our spirit is filled with the riches of Christ, we shall have no problems in our Christian life.

All the items in Ephesians 5:18—6:9 are related to the one matter of being filled in spirit. We may read these verses and pay attention to such details as wives submitting to their own husbands or husbands loving their own wives, but fail to see the source of these virtues, that is, being filled in spirit with the processed Triune God. When we are filled in our spirit with the Spirit, then wives will be subject to their husbands, husbands will love their wives, parents will care for their children, slaves will obey their masters, and masters will treat their slaves in a proper way. All of these things are the issue of being filled in spirit.

We may say that the imperative "be filled" is actually in the "active-passive" voice. "Be" is active, and "filled" is passive. Hence, "be filled" is active-passive. In our language there may not be such a thing as active-passive, but in God's New Testament economy active-passive is a great matter.

Peter's word in Acts 2:40 helps us to understand how "be filled" in Ephesians 5:18 is a matter of active-passive. Peter entreated the people saying, "Be saved from this crooked generation!" Here "be" is active, and "saved" is passive. Hence, we may say that "be saved" is in the active-passive voice. It is to be done by God, but man needs to be active to receive what God intends to do. At the time of Pentecost, everything concerning God's full salvation was prepared, and the Holy Spirit was poured out as the application and full blessing of God's salvation ready for man to receive. In this matter God is waiting for man, and man needs to take the initiative. Although we cannot save ourselves, we must be willing to be saved by God. God is willing and prepared to save us. Nevertheless, we need to be saved; that is, we need to take the initiative to receive God's salvation.

The principle is the same with Paul's charge, "Be filled in spirit." Just as God has done everything necessary for us to be saved, He has done everything necessary for us to be filled in our regenerated spirit. Nevertheless, just as we need to take some action to be saved, we need to take some action to be filled in spirit with the Holy Spirit who has been given to us and who now dwells in our spirit.

We should not limit the Spirit or restrict Him. The Holy Spirit with all of Christ's riches as the fullness of God is ready to fill us in our spirit. Now we need to coordinate with Him, taking some action, to be filled.

Many of us are filled with the Spirit not thoroughly but only partly. The reason for this may be that we do not give the Holy Spirit enough room within us. Instead, we still have a great deal of reserve and do not allow the Spirit to have every part of our being. As a result, we are filled with things other than the Spirit.

It is very difficult for the believers to be completely emptied in order to give the indwelling Spirit all the room in our spirit and in our mind, emotion, and will. The Spirit as the consummation of the processed Triune God indwells us and desires to fill us. However, we give Him too much restriction and limitation. He does not have the freedom to occupy every part of our inner being. Therefore, if we would be filled in our spirit with the Spirit, we need to clear away all preoccupations from our spirit and allow the indwelling Spirit as the consummation of the Triune God to occupy us in full. If we are filled in our spirit with the Spirit, the issue will be a proper Christian life, church life, individual life, and family life.

As believers, we should not only be filled in our spirit with the processed Triune God but should also let the word of Christ dwell in us richly. In Colossians 3:16a Paul says, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly." The word of Christ is the word spoken by Christ. In His New Testament economy, God speaks in the Son, and the Son speaks not only directly.... (*Conclusion of the New Testament*, msg. 154, pp. 1672-1673)

BEING PERFECTED

In verse 11 Paul also appeals to the Corinthians to be perfected. Literally the Greek word rendered "perfected" means completed thoroughly, that is, repaired or adjusted, put in order again, mended, perfectly joined together, thus restored. In Greek it is the root of the word for perfecting in verse 9 and also the root for perfecting in Ephesians 4:12.

To be perfected is to be restored, mended, repaired, and adjusted. It is to be brought back to the right position and restored to the right track so that we may be built up together with others in the Body. The books of 1 and 2 Corinthians are books of perfecting. The unique goal of these two Epistles is to perfect the damaged, distracted, and divided saints at Corinth. The believers there had been damaged, and the situation among them was unhealthy. Therefore, these two books were written to perform the necessary task of perfecting the believers, of bringing them back to a healthy condition full of life, of edifying them, and of equipping them for the building up of the Body. All this is included in Paul's charge, "Be perfected."

We may regard the exhortation "be perfected" as active-passive in voice. Strictly speaking, this is passive. Nevertheless, it also contains an active element. This is the reason we speak of it as being active-passive. God is waiting to perfect us; however, we must take the initiative to be perfected. Moreover, the apostle was used to perfect the Corinthians. This means that a perfecting work was being done. But the Corinthians still had to be perfected. We may liken Paul to a physician and say that he was ready to dispense medicine into the believers, but it was still necessary for them to take the initiative to receive the medicine. The doctor was at hand and the medicine was ready, but the crucial question was this: Were the Corinthians willing to take the medicine and be healed? This was the reason Paul urged them to be perfected. (*Life-study of 2 Corinthians*, msg. 58, p. 516)