

Mystery of Godliness: christ in You

by Stephen Kaung

The mystery of godliness is Christ in the Church, and it is a life that is characterized by a life that lives to please God.

Duration: 1:18:45

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 4:1

Topics: "Christ In You", "Corporate Body"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes that Jesus, during his time on earth, manifested God in every way. He embodied the love, righteousness, mercy, compassion, and even the anger of God. After his resurrection, Jesus took upon himself a corporate body, which is the Church. Just as he took on a physical body, he now manifests himself in the flesh through the Church. The preacher also highlights the impact of the gospel on the world, as the devotion and pouring out of oneself upon Christ is noticed by others and convinces them of the reality and power of the gospel. The sermon concludes by emphasizing that every knee will eventually bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord, whether willingly or unwillingly.

Transcript

This is Monday evening, May the 8th, in Richmond, Virginia. Minister given through Brother Stephen Kong. Amen.

May we look to the Lord in prayer. O Lord, how we praise and thank Thee, because Thou dost command to bless Thy people in Christ Jesus. And who can reverse it? We do praise and thank Thee because Thou art the God of all blessings.

Thou hast blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies, in Christ Jesus. And for this, we are grateful. We do come together to Thy presence this evening with hearts of gratitude.

We pray that as Thy word is given, that a spirit of wisdom and revelation may too be given. That we may, through Thy revelations, see Thy mystery, Thy secret. That our hearts may be lifted.

That we may, all the more, commit ourselves to Thee and to Thy purpose. How we praise and thank Thee, we cannot do anything. Thou dost do everything.

But Lord, give us a yielding heart. A heart that is open to Thee and submissive to Thee. That we may not in any way hinder Thy work, but Thou mayst be able to work in us and through us for the honor and the

glory of Thy own name.

We ask in the name of our Lord Jesus. I think we'll first read that verse that we have been reading during the past two sessions, because this is the theme in a sense that we are fellowshiping together. 1 Corinthians chapter 4. 1 Corinthians chapter 4 verse 1. Let a man so account of us as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

In a very broad sense, we are all servants of Christ. And therefore we are all stewards of the mysteries of God. As we mentioned in the very beginning, God has a mystery.

God has a secret. God has something that has been hidden in Him for ages and generations. And thank God, by the Holy Spirit, He has revealed that mystery or secret to His apostles and prophets.

And through the apostles and prophets, we now come into possession of God's secret. And because that mystery or that secret is so great, therefore, here you'll find in the pearl number, mysteries. Not that God has many secrets.

God has only one secret. But that secret has many facets, many aspects. Now these mysteries are given to us, entrusted to us, that we may be faithful stewards of them.

In other words, God's mysteries are not just given to us for our own pleasure and enjoyment. There is much enjoyment in it. And yet, the mystery of God is entrusted to us that we may manage it well.

We may be occupied with it. We may trade with it, as it were, until He comes. And then we shall receive our reward.

Now what is the mystery of God? We mentioned last night that the mystery of God is Christ. In other words, you can never know God unless you know Christ. And when you know Christ, you know all of God.

Because all the fullness of the Godhead dwells in Him and in Him bodily. And we are complete in Him. It is the mystery of God's will that He will head up all things in Christ.

Things in the heaven and things on earth. Everything will be united together in Christ. And when that happens, it is a new creation.

So brothers and sisters, we need to be occupied with Christ all the time. And to be occupied with Christ is to be occupied with God. To be filled with Christ is to be filled with the fullness of God.

And there is nothing higher than that. There is nothing that should occupy our whole thought and our whole life. Then this morning we mentioned the mystery of Christ.

The mystery of God is Christ. And the mystery of the Christ is the Church. In other words, you will never know Christ.

You will never come to the full meaning of Christ. You will never be able to experience Christ in all His fullness until you come to see the Church. You come to live in the Church.

And it is by the Church that Christ will be known. Not only to ourselves but to the whole world and even to the principalities and authorities. All the wisdom of God in mystery.

Now there is another facet which we were just mentioning without going into it because we do not have the time for it. And that is the mystery of Christ and the Church. In Ephesians chapter 5 you find the Apostle Paul is using the relationship of the husband and the wife to project the relationship between Christ and the Church.

And he said, great is this mystery. It is a mystery. The relationship of Christ and the Church is a great mystery.

It is in a very small way illustrated by the relationship of the husband and the wife. And yet it is far greater. And not only far greater but the relationship of the husband and wife actually is based upon the mystery of Christ and His Church.

Now we were just mentioning in passing. You will find the relationship of Christ and the Church is this. Christ is the head of the Church.

But how is He to be the head of the Church? He is first to be Savior of the body. In other words, you will find He first gave Himself to the Church. He first formed the body.

And after the body is born or the body is formed then you will find in Ephesians chapter 5 from verse 22 to verse 33 you will find how He cherishes and nourishes His body. How He takes care of this body. How He protects that body.

How He feeds that body. He makes provision for that body. But more than that, He also sanctifies that body.

He washes that body with the water by the Word. In other words, how His life continuously washes us, purifies us. By His Word that He may present the Church to Himself.

A glorious Church without spot or wrinkle. So this is the meaning of His being the Savior of the body. And because He is the Savior of the body therefore it leads up to His being the head of the Church.

You know, sometimes we think of the head in terms of... Well, of course, the head. When you think of the head, you think of authority. No doubt about it.

But sometimes our concept of authority is very different from God's concept. Our concept of authority is if we could only strive and struggle into our position then we will have authority over those below us. Then we will be able to lord over them, to direct their lives and to force them to comply to our thought and desire.

Now that is the human concept of authority. That is the human way of being the head. But here you'll find our Christ is the head of the Church.

Why? Because He has been the Savior of the body. It is His love for the body that puts Him in authority. So when His authority comes over the Church it is the authority of love.

And when the authority of love is manifested then you'll find the relationship of the Church to Christ is a matter of obedience. It seems as if from this passage in Ephesians 5 the Church does nothing. The Christ does everything.

You read that passage very carefully and you'll find it is as if the wife is doing nothing. The husband is doing everything. Christ is doing everything.

He loves the Church. He gave Himself for it. He sanctifies it.

He cherishes it. He nourishes it. He does everything for it.

And there is almost nothing mentioned about what the Church is doing. Nothing. Only one thing, to obey Him.

That's all. To obey Him. Brothers and sisters, is it not true? What can we do for Him? Nothing.

He does everything to us and for us. But because His love has constrained us that we may give Him our obedience willingly in all things. That is to say, we allow His authority to go through us without resistance, without obstacle.

That He may perfect His Church. That He may bring His Church to Himself in such a way that the Church is made suitable to be His bride. That's all.

So brothers and sisters, just in passing, there is much you can meditate upon and ask the Lord to open up to you this mystery. The mystery of Christ and His Church. And the emphasis there is relationship.

But tonight we would like just to read one verse. And that is found in 1 Timothy 3.16. You know, we are very familiar with John 3.16. But there is 1 Timothy 3.16, which is very, very precious. And confessedly, the mystery of piety.

Now, I like the other word better. Godliness. And confessedly, the mystery of godliness is great.

God has been manifested in flesh. Now, in the original, you do not have the word God there. In the original, it is only a pronoun.

Who? Confessedly, the mystery of godliness is great. Who has been manifested in flesh? Has been justified in the Spirit? Has appeared to angels? Has been preached among the nations? Has been believed on in the world? Has been received up in glory? It is the mystery of godliness. Now, what is godliness? Why is it a mystery? The word godliness in Greek is made up of two words.

Well, and to be devoted. To be devout. It means a life that is characterized by a life that lives to please God.

Or to put it more simply, godliness means god-likeness. To live a life like God. And to live a life like God is to please God.

That is really the simplest meaning of godliness. This is not the mystery of God, in the strictest sense. This is not the mystery of Christ, in the strictest sense.

It is the mystery of godliness. Of like God. If we want to know what that mystery is, you have to read the context.

In the preceding verse, what is Paul talking about? Paul is telling Timothy, saying that if I delay, in order that thou mayst know how one ought to conduct oneself in God's house. He was talking about the house of God. Which is the church of the living God.

The pillar and base of the truth. So in the preceding verse, you'll find Paul is talking about the church. He is talking about the house of God.

The house of God is the church of the living God. The house of God is the pillar and the base of the truth. It is the reservoir.

It is the testimony of the truth. So he has been talking about the church. And then immediately after that, he said, confessedly, the mystery of godliness is great.

Who has been manifested in flesh? Do you see the point? We often interpret this verse in the person of Christ. And that is true. That is very true.

Because you'll find everything mentioned in that verse is applied to Christ. And yet, when you read the context, you'll find it is not just referred to Christ personally. It is referred to Christ in the church.

And that is godliness. Christ is God. But Christ's life in the church, that is to say, Christ lives in the church.

Or we live the life of Christ. That is godliness. That is godliness.

So you'll find the whole verse here. And some of the best commentators agree on this point. That this verse does not refer to Christ alone.

This verse refers also to the church. But not Christ alone. Nor the church alone.

As two separate things. But it is Christ in the church. It is Christ living his life through the church.

And that is godliness. And brothers and sisters, this is a great mystery. How can Christ live through man? Not one man.

But a company. How can he live his life through them? That's a mystery. But thank God, the mystery is out.

It is done. And it can be done. Now let us look very briefly on these six points.

And try to see how this is worked out. First of all, you'll find it is said, who has been manifested in flesh? The reason why in the original you do not have that definite noun. God there.

Instead, you have a pronoun. Who? Why? Because if you know the whole meaning of this verse, you can see that it is more than just God himself. But it is God in man.

That's the who. It is Christ in the church. Who has been manifested in flesh? This, of course, primarily refers to Christ.

The Word became flesh. And tabernacled among men. Full of grace and truth.

It is true that God had taken upon himself the form of a man. This verse, this first item, thus refers to the incarnation. How God became man.

How God came to be a man. How he took upon himself flesh and blood. You know, incarnation is a great mystery.

We cannot explain it. How is incarnation possible? Unless there is love that surpasses understanding is behind it. There can be no incarnation.

Why? Because for God to be incarnated, you find, first, it requires him to empty himself. Therefore, you find in Philippians, it is said, Christ, the eternal Son, who is equal with God. He emptied.

He took up the form of his life. He took upon himself the form of a man. Brothers and sisters, we cannot fathom the depths of incarnation.

You know, sometimes we just read the story of the birth of Christ. And we say, now God came to be a man as a little babe. But do you know what is involved? For God, the creator, to become a man, he had to empty himself first.

Because if he did not empty himself, he couldn't do that. Of course, that doesn't mean the eternal Son has ceased to be God. Not at all.

He cannot empty himself of his deity. That can never happen. Even when he was man, he was God.

No doubt about that. But he emptied himself of the glory, the honor, the power, the position that belonged to him. That he did empty.

So brothers and sisters, first of all, we need to see the secret of incarnation. Because of his great love towards us, he was willing to empty himself, not of his deity, but of the glory and honor and power and position that are connected with him as God. He came to take the form as one of us.

It takes revelation to see glory in him. Without revelation, you just see a man. But when the Father reveals him, you see glory there.

Why? Because he has emptied himself. Emptied himself. On the Mount of Transfiguration, we have a glimpse of his glory.

But that was, and not only that, after he emptied himself of all his glory, and honor, and position, and power, and he becomes a man. Think of that. God being imprisoned in the life of a man.

No wonder the Lord said, I am straightened. You squeeze God into the body of a man. And you know how straightened it must be inside him.

He feels so being bound up. When he was in Judea, he couldn't be in Samaria. When he was in Samaria, he couldn't be in Galilee.

You find that he was so tightened up. He was subject to all the limitations. And how he was obedient.

How he humbled. And he was obedient to the Father. Even unto death.

And that, the death. Now you find all this in the meaning of incarnation. Who has been manifested? On the one hand, you can see what love is involved there.

What emptying, what humbling is involved there. And yet on the other hand, you find God, who was the great unknown, has now been manifested in flesh. No one has ever seen the Father.

But he who has seen, the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, through the life of our Lord Jesus, truly God has been made. God has become not only visible, God has become reachable. He can be touched.

He can be handled. He has come to us. He has been manifested in flesh.

That is very true with Christ. It's a great mystery. But it's very true of Christ.

But dear brothers and sisters, you know, this mystery of godliness is, this is not only true to Christ, but because of Christ. Because of what he has accomplished. Now you will find, this has become true to the Church.

The Church is also that which has been manifested in flesh. Two thousand years ago, God has been manifested in flesh, in the person of Jesus. And this Jesus walked through the land of Judea, of Samaria and Galilee.

And there you will find his life of thirty-three, a little over thirty-three years, manifested God in every way. By seeing him, we see God. We see the love of God.

We see the righteousness of God, the mercy of God, the compassion of God, and even the anger of God. Everything, you'll find, of God is being manifested in flesh. But brothers and sisters, is it not also true that after he is raised from the dead, he has taken upon himself a corporate body, which is as was he took upon himself a physical body Today, he has taken upon himself a mystic body.

Because we don't have good expression to express it. We can only say he takes upon himself a mystic body. A corporate body.

A body of believers. And he has taken us up as his body. And he is manifesting himself in the flesh.

Brothers and sisters, this is godliness. As he once manifested himself in flesh, in the person of Jesus, that body, now he has been manifested in flesh in the church. His corporate body.

But brothers and sisters, how much we have limited him. As he has felt strengthened in that physical body, how much more today he must have felt strengthened in us. Think of that.

He is willing to commit himself. The risen lord, the lord of glory, is willing to as it were, commit himself to us to share his destiny. We can bring reproach to him.

Or we can glorify him. We carry him. He is in us.

He has completely committed himself to the church. And if the church fails him, he is disgraced. Oh brothers and sisters, if you only can see this, you know what privilege on the one hand, and what responsibility we have.

How we need to deliver our flesh to the cross. That Christ may be glorified in the church. That we may not in any way hide him, veil him, or even bring him into disgrace.

But he may live his life freely through us. He may manifest himself to us without being restricted, limited in any sense. Brothers and sisters, this is the mystery of godliness.

What is the church? The church is where Christ manifests himself in flesh. The world does not see Christ today. But Christ is living today on earth.

He is living his life in the church. And because of that, if we allow Christ to live through us, what a glory it will bring. This is the mystery of godliness.

Then secondly, you'll find it is said, has been justified in the spirit. Now historically, this may refer to the time when Christ came to be baptized. You know when he was 30 years old? He came to River Jordan.

And there asked to be baptized by John. And John said, now how can I do this to you? The Lord said, we have to fulfill all righteousness. So you'll find Christ was baptized in the River Jordan.

And as he was baptized and when he came out of the water, the Bible says the heavens opened and the spirit of God descended like a dove upon him. And take up his abode in him. And there is a voice from heaven, this is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased.

We may say historically, Christ has been justified in spirit at that time. In other words, God puts his approval upon Christ by filling him with the spirit. And he was led by the spirit to the wilderness to take up the challenge of the devil.

And after he had defeated the devil, then the Bible said he came back full of the power of the spirit. And throughout his life you'll find when he stood up to speak, he was anointed by God of the spirit. Again and again, three times in the Bible, the heavens spoke saying this is my beloved son, hear him.

His life was justified in the spirit. He was under the constant approval of the Father. He did not live a life to please man.

If anyone tries to please all man, that's impossible. Christ did not come to please man. His one purpose is to please.

And he was justified. And finally you'll find in Romans chapter 1, he was raised from the dead by the spirit of holiness. Now whether you explain that spirit of holiness as his spiritual nature or as the spirit of God, it is the same.

With him it is the same. But anyway you'll find his whole life on earth, from the day that he appeared before the world to the day that he was raised from the dead in resurrection, he has been justified in the spirit approved of God. Now this is very true but do you know what is true of Christ? Is true of the church? What is the church? How should the church live before the world? The church lives before the world through the spirit.

On the day of Pentecost you remember how the spirit of God came and they were all baptized into one body. And they were all made to drink of one spirit. The Holy Spirit today in the church justifies all the action of the church.

How do we know we are approved of God? The Holy Spirit within us will either justifies us or condemns us. This is not only true individually but this is also true corporately. Now individually if we do something that will be displeasing to God, now how do we know God is displeased with us? The Holy Spirit within us will convict us.

When the Holy Spirit is grieved, you know God disapproves. You are not justified. Now even if all the other people say you are alright, everybody say you are alright, but you know you are not right.

Why? Because the Holy Spirit within you is grieved. He doesn't approve. Brothers and sisters, when we walk after the Spirit, there is life.

We are justified in the Spirit. And this means we are approved of God. Why? Because the Holy Spirit is a pledge.

He is the pledge of the inheritance that one day we shall inherit. But often you find we refer this to individuals. But you know it is more than individuals because the church lives under the authority of the Holy Spirit.

Then you find the presence of God in the church. And this is our justification. There is no justification for us as a church to exist if we do not have the presence of God.

But how do you have the presence of God? The presence of God is the sign of His approval. But how do you have the presence of God? We must all be under the authority of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is in the church representing the head.

And only when we are obeying the Holy Spirit, we are all under the authority of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit is able to carry out God's will through us. Then we are blessed with the presence of His approval. What does it matter if the world does not approve of us? It will matter if the world approves of us.

Because it shows something is very, very wrong. But it does matter a great deal, brothers and sisters, if we do not have the presence of God. The Bible says, where two of you are gathered together unto my name, there am I in the midst of doubt.

What do you mean gathered together unto my name? It is not just a legal, official thing. Unto my name it means that we refuse our own name. We put ourselves under His name.

In other words, under the authority of His name. Under the authority of the Holy Spirit. Then you will find we are justified in the Spirit.

We have the presence of God. Then thirdly, you will find has appeared to angels. In some version, you may find was seen of the angels.

But more literally, the saints should be appeared to angels. Because the word here is not just a is not just in the sense of being seen. The word here has the sense of appear himself to be seen.

In other words, it is a self-exhibition. He purposely appears that he may be seen. Not just that he is by chance being seen.

So here the more exact sense will be has appeared to angels. Now of course, when you refer this to Christ, what does it mean that Christ has appeared to angels? Oh, it must be a great joy to the angels when Christ appears himself to them. No wonder when Christ was born, the angels sing praises unto God.

How happy they are! They have been anxiously waiting for the day when Christ shall appear on earth. And now Christ has appeared. And throughout the life of Christ, you find these angels how they minister unto him.

With gladness, after 40 days of being tempted in the wilderness. The devil was defeated and left him temporary. Then the angels came to minister unto him.

Now I don't know y'all in what way they might bring food to Christ because he has been fasting for 40 days and 40 nights. He must be very hungry. Or they might minister to him even more than we understand.

But here you find these angels. They came to minister unto Christ. And in the garden of Gethsemane you find Christ was praying in the garden.

Not my will, but thy will be done. And the conflict was so great that his perspiration came down as drops of blood. He would expire in the garden if the angel did not appear to succor him.

To strengthen his physical body. Brothers and sisters, he appeared himself. He showed himself to the angels.

To show them that the purpose of God is now being fulfilled. No wonder when he was raised from the dead the woman came to the tomb, to the empty tomb, and they find the angel sitting there telling them the one that you are seeking he is not among the dead. He is alive.

He is risen from the dead. So brothers and sisters, when you think of the angels in the sense of the good angels, as we will say, Christ appeared to them. But if you take these angels to mean bad angels, then you remember what he said in Colossians.

He spelled principalities and authorities. He made a public show of them. He defeated all the evil angelic hosts on the cross.

And make a show of them in triumph. Brothers and sisters, in doing that you will find God's purpose is fulfilled. So what Christ has done is more than something that affects this world.

It affects the spiritual world. Now how can you apply this to the church? Has appeared to angels. We mentioned a little bit already.

In 1 Peter it is said concerning the glad tidings, even the angels desire in the sense, when God takes up men who are made a little lower than angels. And throw them to bringing the kingdom of God. To defeat God's enemy.

This is something that angels are learning through the church. That's why in Ephesians chapter 3 said through the church the principalities and authorities are to learn to know the wisdom of God. So brothers and sisters, here you will find the church is not only a testimony on earth.

The church is also a testimony to the spiritual world. Do not think that nobody sees you. The spiritual world is watching.

Is watching. And if we are faithful to the Lord, how happy the angelic host will be. How they will sing praises unto God.

Just like the Lord said, if a soul shall be saved, there will be great rejoicing in the heavens. That includes the angels. How they are rejoicing with God for the salvation of a soul.

And when they see the church is obedient to God. Carrying out God's will and purpose. How these angels are glad.

Because they are ministering spirits to those who shall inherit God's inheritance. And then of course, in a very real sense, it is through the church that the enemy of God is finally brought into destruction. It is no glory to God to destroy the devil.

Because he is far greater. Incomparably greater. He is the creator.

The devil is only a created being. But he raises up a company of people who are lower than the angels in the order of creation. Inferior.

And yet through these inferior beings he defeats the superior devil. That's glory. That's glory.

And this is the meaning of has appeared to angels. Brothers and sisters, our testimony not only affects the seeing, the world that can be seen. Our testimony affects the unseen world.

As you read the Bible, you'll find there are many things that are related to the invisible world. Not something seen, but something unseen. And yet, it's very real.

It's very real. Man, he said, has been preached among the nations. Now certainly.

At the day of Pentecost Christ has been preached among the nations. You see, these six items are in three pairs, actually. Who has been manifested in flesh? Then justified in spirit.

You know? Appear to angels and preach among the nations. So you'll find everything actually is in pairs. Believe all in the world and receive unto glory.

So actually these are three pairs. Now you'll find Christ has not only appeared to angels to show them how God's purpose has been achieved. Has been fulfilled.

Accomplished. Then he is preached to the nations. There is a difference.

To the angels he appears to show forth the purpose of God. But to the nations he is preached that we may believe and be saved. Now thank God for that.

Because he has taken not the angels but the seed of Abraham. So Christ has been preached among the nations. Now in what sense can you say the church has been preached among the nations? Certainly the church does not preach herself.

The church preaches Christ. In which you preach ourselves. That is another gospel.

Should not be allowed. The church does not speak of herself. The church speaks of Christ.

But as we preach Christ you know there is something that is being preached at the same time. You remember one day. Mary came.

And the Lord was at the table. He broke the alabaster. He pulled a pound of pure nard upon Christ.

And some of the disciples began to murmur in their heart. And Judas began to complain and said why such a waste? Why not fill this pound of nard for thirty pieces, three hundred denarius, and to give to the

poor? Why just waste it upon Christ? You know a denarius is a day's wage. Three hundred denarius is almost a year's wages.

And that's the wages of a man. Now in the old days the woman does not get as much. So Mary must have stored up, saved up that money for years.

To buy a pound of pure nard. I don't know why he did that. Probably she was preparing for a wedding.

To be used for a wedding maybe. But when she was touched by the love of God she had to give all that she had to the Lord. And that was all she had.

So she broke the alabaster vessel and pulled a pound of nard upon the Lord. And the disciples said what a waste. And the Lord said do not trouble her.

She has done a good thing. She is preparing for my burial. Wherever the gospel is preached what a woman has done will be mentioned as a memorial of it.

Brothers and sisters, is it not true? Wherever the gospel of Jesus Christ is preached there is a memorial of Mary in a sense in the sense of consecration of devotiveness. Wherever the gospel is preached there will be the pouring of the pure nard upon Christ. Wherever the love of Christ is preached, His love will constrain us to pour ourselves upon Christ as our devotion to Him.

And you know this has been mentioned together with the gospel. So it is in this sense that the church has been preached among the nations. The world sees how the church is devoted to Christ.

Pour forth everything upon Christ. The Christ who has so loved her and gave Himself for her. You see it is a reciprocal, mutual thing.

And this is what the world has noticed. The world has noticed this. The other devotedness and they were convicted and convinced of the reality of the power of the gospel.

Then it has been believed on in the world. That is Christ being received. Even though there were many who refused to believe in Christ.

There are many today and there will be many today who will not accept Christ and yet thank God. There will be people who will repent and believe in the Lord Jesus. Who will gladly acknowledge Him as their Savior and their Lord.

And brothers and sisters even if the world does not believe one day every knee shall bow. Whether willingly or unwillingly. And every tongue shall confess that Jesus is indeed brothers and sisters in what sense? That the church has been believed on in the world? It is only in the sense that when we love one another then the world will believe that God has really sent His Son.

And lastly has been received up in glory. Now so far as Christ is concerned we know that speaks of His ascension. He was received up to glory.

But when He was received up to glory we find He returned to the glory that He had with the Father even before the world was. But when He returned He received added glory. Not only as the glory of the Son of God but also the glory as the Son of Man.

There is a man in glory. And our brothers and sisters we all know this. In Hebrews chapter 2 He will lead many sons into glory.

What is it that God is doing today? He is maturing His people that He may bring many sons into glory. What is the world, the whole universe waiting for? In Romans 8 it is said the whole creation is now under bondage. The whole creation is moaning under yoke.

They are waiting for the day of their liberation. And when will the day come? When the sons of God shall be manifested. Then the whole universe will be liberated, will enter into liberty.

So brothers and sisters you find it is a tremendous, tremendous thing. And this is the mystery of Godliness. It is Christ in the church.

It is Christ living through the church. Then finally how does this Godliness work? You remember in 2 Peter chapter 1 it is said God has given us all things that relate to life and Godliness. God has already given us all things that concern life and Godliness.

In other words God has already given us Christ. And having Christ in us, the hope of glory, having Christ in us, Godliness is there. It is possible.

Now who can be like God? You cannot be like God if you do not have God's life. If you have God's life in you, then to be like God is natural. Not to be like God is unnatural.

So here you will find Godliness is made possible. When God gave His Son to us we have the godly life in us already. The life of God in us already.

But how can this life of God be translated into a godly life? A life that lives like God? In other words, how can that life be released into practical expressions in the church? Here you will find something is necessary. God has put that life in us. But on our part, we must exercise ourselves unto godliness.

That's 1 Timothy. In 1 Timothy you find Paul is exhorting Timothy saying that exercise thyself unto godliness. To exercise your physical body is profitable but little.

But to exercise unto godliness is profitable not only for this age but also for the age to come. Now what do you mean by exercise unto godliness? You know the word in Greek is where our English word gymnasium comes from. Gymnastic.

You are doing gymnastics. Among the Greeks they worship the body, you know. The Greeks worship the body.

So they send their boys to gymnasiums to be instructed by physical instructors to develop their bodies so that their whole body will be so coordinated and they find beauty in coordination. That's a great accomplishment among the Greeks. So Paul is using that as a background.

He says it's good. It's good to exercise physically. It is good.

Do not neglect your body. You should take care and exercise it. But this is only for this age.

There is good but little in comparison with exercise yourself unto godliness. We have the life of Christ in us but how can this life of Christ be developed? Be expressed? We too need to be put under instructor. Not

physical instructor but spiritual instructor.

And our instructor is the Holy Spirit. The world is our gymnasium. In the gymnasium you'll find all kinds of exercises.

Some will develop your arm muscle. Other will develop your back muscle. All so on and so forth.

The Holy Spirit will so order our environment in this world. And these serve as instruments for exercising ourselves unto God. All the things that happen to us.

All the people that are around us. Everything in our life. Our instructor, the Holy Spirit, has carefully arranged everything.

Why? He knows where our weakness is. Where does we need exercise? Spiritual exercise. But of course, first of all you have to be committed.

When a boy is committed to a gymnasium then the instructor is able to help him to exercise. So we must be committed to the Lord. Then the Holy Spirit is able to work in us during exercise.

It is painful. It seems as if you have to stretch yourself to your limit and sometimes beyond your measure. But that's the way to develop your muscle.

If you always stop before the pain comes, or you will just go that far and not, as it were, overstretch yourself, you will never become an athlete. Brothers and sisters, how we need to commit ourselves to the Lord? How we need to stretch ourselves even beyond measure. Yes, during the process of training there will be pain, no doubt.

But out of it you'll find Christ is being incorporated into our very being. We are made partakers of His divine nature. And brothers and sisters, this is not just for individuals.

This is for the whole Church. Not just individually! We learn this lesson. But together we learn this lesson.

We exercise ourselves unto Godliness. While in exercising, there is your will involved. In other words, you must put yourself in it.

Apply yourself to it. And if we apply ourselves to it and really come to the Lord and are willing to learn, then brothers and sisters, the mystery of Godliness will be manifested. And great is that mystery.

We are stewards of this mystery. God is to be seen in man. Christ is to be manifested in His Church.

Shall we pray? Our Heavenly Father, how we do worship Thee that Thou hast this mystery in view. Thou hast put Thy life in us, that this life may be developed, may be lived, that God may be seen, may be glorified. Oh, our Heavenly Father, do help us to see what potentiality there is and make us willing to commit ourselves to Thee.

To be led by Thy Holy Spirit, willing to be stretched beyond measure that Christ may be so incorporated into our life together, that God may be seen through us as a company of people, Thy people. Oh, Lord, we do pray that through this Thou mayst gain the praise for Thy great name. We commit ourselves one to another into Thy hands.

Lord, Thou dost know we can do nothing, but help us to be obedient to Thee. And we pray that Thou will work out Thy will in spite of us. In the name of our Lord Jesus.

Out, out. Amen.

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