

# Sisters' Training Hamilton

Spring 2024

**THE OVERCOMING LIFE  
AS PORTRAYED IN  
SONG OF SONGS**

**Name:**

**Locality:**

## SISTERS' TRAINING SPRING 2024

	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	LORD'S DAY
7:00 a.m. – 7:30 a.m.		Rise, Dress, Morning Revival	
7:30 a.m. - 8:15 a.m.		Breakfast	
8:15 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.		Fellowship and Pursuit	
10:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.		Morning Tea	
10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.		Session 2	Session 5
12:30 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.		Lunch	
1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.		Rest and Fellowship	Clean Up / Depart
3:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.		Afternoon Tea	
3:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.		Session 3	
5:30p.m. – 6:00p.m.		Dinner (6:30p.m. – 7:00p.m.)	
7:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.	Session 1 (8 p.m. – 10 p.m.)	Session 4	
9:30 p.m.- 10:00p.m.	Supper (10:00p.m.- 10:30p.m.)	Supper	
10:00 p.m.- 10:15 p.m.	Room Prayer (10:30 p.m. – 10:45 p.m.)	Room Prayer	
10:15 p.m.	Lights out (10:45p.m. – 11:00 p.m.)	Lights out	

# GENERAL REMINDERS

## MEALS & DINING

### 1. **Breakfast**

All sisters will eat in the C-Block dining room.

### 2. **Lunch and Dinner**

We will use both the C-Block and T-Block dining rooms.

### 3. **After Meals**

Please clear your own dishes, cups and cutlery after your meal and dispose of any rubbish in the bins provided.

## SECURITY & ALARMS

### 1. **Building Alarms**

All the buildings are alarmed from 11 p.m. to 6 a.m. Please take care to remain inside the buildings within these times.

### 2. **Security**

All sisters should be out of C-Block by 10:30 p.m. so that the brothers can do their security checks.

### 3. **Fire Alarms**

Do not use any hair dryers in the accommodation and bathroom areas. In the past, the fire alarm was set off and the training centre was charged a call out cost of \$1000.

### 4. **Emergency Doors**

Do not use any emergency doors to enter or exit the building (e.g. A-Block basement doors, emergency doors in the C-Block meeting hall). Please use only the main entrances.

# SONG OF SONGS

1:1- 3:5

Subject:

The History of Love in an Excellent Marriage,  
Revealing the Progressive Experience  
of an Individual Believer's Loving Fellowship with Christ

## CHAPTER 1

**1** The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's.

- I. Drawn to pursue Christ for Satisfaction  
1:2-2:7
  - A. Attracted to Run after Christ  
1:2-4a

**2** Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth! / For your love is better than wine.

**3** Your anointing oils have a pleasant fragrance; / Your name is like ointment poured forth; /  
Therefore the virgins love you.

**4** Draw me; we will run after you —

- B. Fellowship with Christ Resulting in Entering into the Church Life  
1:4b-8

The king has brought me into his chambers — / We will be glad and rejoice in you; / We will  
extol your love more than wine. / Rightly do they love you.

**5** I am black but lovely, O daughters of Jerusalem, / Like the tents of Kedar, like the curtains  
of Solomon.

**6** Do not look at me, because I am black, / Because the sun has scorched me. / My mother's  
sons were angry with me; / They made me keeper of the vineyards, / But my own vineyard I  
have not kept

**7** Tell me, you whom my soul loves, Where do you pasture your flock? / Where do you make  
it lie down at noon? / For why should I be like one who is veiled / Beside the flocks of your  
companions?

**8** If you yourself do not know, / You fairest among women, / Go forth on the footsteps of the  
flock, / And pasture your young goats / By the shepherds' tents.

- C. Transformed by the Remaking of the Spirit  
1:9-16a; 2:1-3a

**9** I compare you, my love, / To a mare among Pharaoh's chariots.

**10** Your cheeks are lovely with plaits of ornaments, / Your neck with strings of jewels.

**11** We will make you plaits of gold / With studs of silver.

**12** While the king was at his table, / My spikenard gave forth its fragrance.

**13** My beloved is to me a bundle of myrrh / That lies at night between my breasts.

**14** My beloved is to me a cluster of henna flowers / In the vineyards of En-gedi.

**15** Oh, you are beautiful, my love! / Oh, you are beautiful! Your eyes are like doves.

**16** Oh, you are beautiful, my beloved; indeed, pleasant!

D. Satisfied with the Rest and Enjoyment in Christ  
1:16b-17; 2:3b-7

Indeed, our couch is green.

**17** The beams of our house are cedars; / Our rafters are cypresses.

## CHAPTER 2

C. Transformed by the Remaking of the Spirit (con't)  
2:1-3a

**1** I am a rose of Sharon, / A lily of the valleys.

**2** As a lily among thorns, / So is my love among the daughters.

**3** As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, / So is my beloved among the sons: In his shade I delighted and sat down, / And his fruit was sweet to my taste.

D. Satisfied with the Rest and Enjoyment in Christ  
2:3b-7

**4** He brought me into the banqueting house, / And his banner over me was love.

**5** Sustain me with raisin cakes, / Refresh me with apples, / For I am sick with love.

**6** His left hand is under my head, / And his right hand embraces me.

**7** I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, / By the gazelles or by the hinds of the fields, / Not to rouse up or awaken my love / Until she pleases.

II. Called to be Delivered from the Self through the Oneness with the Cross  
2:8-3:5

A. By Christ's Resurrection Power through His Fellowship  
2:8-9

**8** The voice of my beloved! Now he comes, / Leaping upon the mountains, / Skipping upon the hills.

**9** My beloved is like a gazelle or a young hart. / Now he stands behind our wall; / He is looking through the windows, / He is glancing through the lattice.

B. Entreated and Encouraged  
2:10-13

**10** My beloved responds and says to me, / Rise up, my love, / My beauty, and come away;

**11** For now the winter is past; / The rain is over and gone.

**12** Flowers appear on the earth; / The time of singing has come, / And the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land.

**13** The fig tree has ripened its figs, / And the vines are in blossom — they give forth their fragrance. / Rise up, my love, / My beauty, and come away.

C. Called to Be in Oneness with the Cross  
2:14-15

**14** My dove, in the clefts of the rock, / In the covert of the precipice, / Let me see your countenance, / Let me hear your voice; / For your voice is sweet, / And your countenance is lovely.

**15** Catch the foxes for us, / The little foxes, / That ruin the vineyards / While our vineyards are in blossom.

D. The Lover's Rejection and Failure  
2:16-3:1

**16** My beloved is mine, and I am his; / He pastures his flock among the lilies.

**17** Until the day dawns and the shadows flee away, / Turn, my beloved, and be like a gazelle or a young hart / On the mountains of Bether.

### CHAPTER 3

**1** On my bed night after night / I sought him whom my soul loves; / I sought him, but found him not.

E. The Lover's Waking Up and Recovery  
3:2-4

**2** I will rise now and go about in the city; / In the streets and in the squares / I will seek him whom my soul loves. / I sought him, but found him not.

**3** The watchmen who go about in the city found me — / Have you seen him whom my soul loves?

**4** Scarcely had I passed them / When I found him whom my soul loves; / I held him and would not let go / Until I had brought him into my mother's house / And into the chamber of her who conceived me.

F. Christ's Charge to the Meddling Believers  
3:5

**5** I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, / By the gazelles or by the hinds of the fields, / Not to rouse up or awaken my love / Until she pleases.



**GENERAL SUBJECT:  
THE OVERCOMING LIFE AS PORTRAYED IN SONG OF SONGS**

Message One

**Overcoming in the First Stage**

(1)

**Overcoming by Loving the Lord to Fulfill His Purpose**

Scripture Reading: S. S. 1:1-4; John 14:21, 23; 21:15-19

- I. All of the spiritual principles are contained in the first stage of the seeker's overcoming life in Song of Songs; the lessons that follow are not new; rather, they are old lessons repeated in a deeper way—1:1; Col. 2:6:**
  - A. Regeneration brings the gene of God into us; all the experiences of our whole Christian life are in this gene—1 John 3:9; Mark 4:26.
  - B. In principle, all the spiritual high points in Song of Songs are ours already because they are in the gene of God, the life of God, which has been dispensed into us and will grow in us—Rom. 8:10; Col. 2:19.
- II. Life is a person, Christ Himself, and there is no other way to enjoy this person but by loving Him—Mark 12:30:**
  - A. If we love the Lord to the uttermost, enjoying Him as the tree of life through the day, right away the church, regardless of its condition, becomes paradise to us—Rev. 2:4, 7.
  - B. Since the Lord as our life is a person, we must contact Him; we need the present presence, the present person, of Christ all the time, no matter how much we have experienced Him and enjoyed Him in the past—John 8:12; Phil. 3:13-14.
  - C. John 14:21 and 23 show the Son manifesting Himself to His lover and the Father coming with Him to make an abode with the Son's lover:
    1. We need to love the Lord Jesus and say, "Lord Jesus, I love You"; as we love Him, He will manifest Himself to us, which means that we have the presence of the One whom we love in our fellowship with Him.
    2. If we love Jesus, Jesus loves us and the Father loves us also; when the Son manifests Himself to us, the Father comes with Him to make an abode with us for our enjoyment—cf. 1 Cor. 2:9-12.
  - D. The beginning of our love toward the Lord is a vision of His person; we cannot go on without new knowledge of the Lord and a new vision of Him—Acts 26:14-19; 2 Cor. 4:6-7; Phil. 3:8-10a, 13; cf. Deut. 4:25.
- III. Our relationship with the Lord must be personal—S. S. 1:4a:**
  - A. We need to follow the pattern of Abraham, who was the friend of God for the desire of God—2 Chron. 20:7; Isa. 41:8; James 2:23; Gen. 18:1-33.

- B. We need to follow the pattern of Moses, who was a companion of God for the interests of God—Exo. 33:11.
- C. We need to follow the pattern of David and Asaph, who sought the shining face of God in and for the house of God—Psa. 27:4, 8; 80:3, 7, 14-19.
- D. We need to follow the pattern of the Lord Jesus, who lived in the presence of God without ceasing; every moment He saw His Father's face—Acts 10:38c; John 8:29; 16:32.
- E. We need to follow the pattern of Peter, whose love for the Lord was restored for him to shepherd the Lord's sheep and follow the Lord unto martyrdom without any confidence in his natural strength—21:15-19; Mark 16:7.
- F. We need to follow the pattern of Paul, who was constrained by the love of Christ to live in the person of Christ as an ambassador of Christ to be well pleasing to Christ—2 Cor. 2:10; 5:9, 14, 20.

**IV. Our relationship with the Lord must be affectionate—S. S. 1:2:**

- A. The Lord who indwells us is our Father, and grace is our mother—Rom. 8:15-16; Gal. 4:24-26; Isa. 66:12-13.
- B. The Lord who indwells us is our Husband—Matt. 9:15; 2 Cor. 11:2.
- C. The Lord who indwells us is our Brother—John 20:17; Rom. 8:29.
- D. The Lord who indwells us is our Friend—Matt. 11:19; John 15:12-17.
- E. The Lord who indwells us is our Counselor—Isa. 9:6.
- F. The Lord who indwells us is our Advocate—1 John 2:1.
- G. The Lord who indwells us is our Comforter—John 14:16; 16:13.
- H. The Lord who indwells us is our Shepherd—Psa. 23:1; 1 Pet. 2:25.

**V. Our relationship with the Lord must be private—S. S. 1:4b:**

- A. We need to contact the Lord privately in a secret, definite, and prevailing way, opening our entire being to Him for His enlightening and infusing—Matt. 6:6.
- B. The highest profession on earth is to spend time being infused with God so that you can glow with God and shine forth God—Exo. 33:11; 2 Cor. 3:16, 18; 4:1; cf. Matt. 14:23; Mark 1:35; Luke 5:16; 6:12; 9:28.
- C. We need to experience and enjoy Christ as our hiding place, our dwelling place, and our secret of sufficiency—Psa. 31:20; 90:1; 91:1; Phil. 4:13.

**VI. Our relationship with the Lord must be spiritual—S. S. 1:4b:**

- A. Christ visits us spiritually because He is the life-giving Spirit in our spirit; our spirit is the Holy of Holies, the chambers of the pneumatic Christ as the Lord of lords and the King of kings—1 Cor. 15:45b; Rom. 8:16; 2 Tim. 4:22.
- B. In order to contact Christ and enjoy Christ for the Body of Christ, we must exercise our mingled spirit—Eph. 1:17; 2:22; 3:5, 16; 4:23; 5:18; 6:18.

**VII. Our personal, affectionate, private, and spiritual relationship with the Lord causes us to love Him for His purpose, leading us into the church life where we can be transformed and perfected by being constituted with the Triune God for the building up of the Body of Christ to consummate the New Jerusalem—S. S. 1:7-11; Eph. 4:11-12; 1 Cor. 3:12a.**

**GENERAL SUBJECT:  
THE OVERCOMING LIFE AS PORTRAYED IN SONG OF SONGS**

Message Two

**Overcoming in the First Stage**

(2)

**Beautified through Transformation in the Church Life**

Scripture Reading: S. S. 1:9-16a; 2:1-4

- I. In the first stage of overcoming (S. S. 1:2—2:7), the seeker of Christ overcomes the attraction of the world by being attracted and captivated by Christ—1:2-4; Matt. 4:16-20; Luke 9:23-24; Heb. 12:2; 13:13; *Hymns*, #437.**
- II. Our love for the Lord does not depend upon our ability to love Him—it depends upon His loveliness—S. S. 5:10-16:**
  - A. Loving the Lord Jesus is not a matter of our being able to love Him but of His being altogether lovely—*Hymns*, #169, 171, 172.
  - B. We cannot love the Lord without seeing His beauty; once we see His beauty, we cannot help loving Him—S. S. 1:2-4; Mark 12:30; 1 Cor. 2:9.
  - C. The Lord Jesus is lovable, and He makes all His lovers lovable also—S. S. 4:10.
- III. After we have been attracted by the Lord's beauty to love Him, we must learn one unique lesson—to be subdued—1:9-11:**
  - A. Song of Songs speaks not only of love but also of the subduing of the will—v. 10; 4:1, 4.
  - B. The more our will is subdued, the more we will be transformed:
    1. In 1:10 the Beloved appreciates the seeker's loveliness in her submission to Him (cheeks lovely with plaits of ornaments) and her beauty in her obedience to the transforming Spirit (neck with strings of jewels).
    2. In 4:1 we see the beauty of Christ's lover in her submission and obedience through God's feeding (hair like a flock of goats).
    3. In 4:4 the lover of Christ is beautiful in her having a will that is submissive to Him (neck like the tower of David).
- IV. The lover of Christ is beautified through the process of transformation in the church life—1:7—2:4:**
  - A. Whether we are overcomers or defeated ones depends on the transformation of our soul and on our attitude toward God's transforming work—Rom. 12:2:
    1. God's transforming work is actually His exercising of His kingdom.
    2. Transformation is a heavenly, spiritual, divine metabolic change in our being—S. S. 1:9-11, 15; 2:1-2.

- B. Transformation in the church life is carried out by the transforming Spirit—2 Cor. 3:18:
1. After the lovers of Christ enter into the church life, they begin to be transformed by the remaking of the Spirit—S. S. 1:9-16a; 2:1-2.
  2. Transformation is the working of God’s attributes into the seeking believers to become their virtues—Rom. 12:2, 9-21.
- C. The lover of Christ is transformed from a strong natural person (mare) into a person who looks to the Lord with a single eye (eyes like doves—Matt. 3:16; 10:16) and into a person who lives a life of not relying on herself but trusting in Him (lily—6:28):
1. He appreciates her beauty in looking to Him with a single eye by the Spirit (eyes like doves)—S. S. 1:15:
    - a. A striking aspect of our beauty in the sight of the Lord Jesus is our single eye toward Him—Matt. 6:22.
    - b. The eyes like doves signify the spiritual insight that comes from gazing on the Lord—2 Cor. 3:18; Heb. 12:2.
  2. After having the eyes like doves, she becomes a lily, signifying that she is now living a life of trusting in God, not in her natural strength—S. S. 2:1-2.
- D. In this transforming work there is the need of the coordination of some “transformers”—the perfecting ones who help the seeker to know God in His nature and to experience Christ—1:11; Eph. 4:11-12:
1. They beautify the seeker in her submission to God through the transformation of the Spirit with the divine nature of God (plaits of gold) as ornaments in her expression (cheeks)—S. S. 1:10-11.
  2. The perfected ones coordinate with the Spirit to beautify the seeker through the dispensing of the transforming Spirit with the divine life expressed in strings of jewels—v. 10.
- E. Transformation is a feast; at this feast we, like Mephibosheth, who was crippled in his feet, enjoy the King’s riches at His table—v. 12; 2 Sam. 9:1-13:
1. David preserved Mephibosheth’s life, restored his inheritance, and invited him to feast with him at the same table—v. 7.
  2. After Mephibosheth received grace from David, he looked only at the riches on David’s table, not at his crippled feet underneath the table—4:4; 9:13.
  3. As we are sitting at the table of our King, Jesus Christ, we should forget our “crippled feet” and enjoy Christ with His unsearchable riches for our transformation—S. S. 1:12; 2:4; Heb. 12:2; Eph. 3:8; *Hymns*, #542.
- F. The love of Christ’s lover toward Him as spikenard spreads forth its fragrance—S. S. 1:12; Mark 14:3; John 12:3:
1. Christ’s fragrance is expressed by the lover in her spikenard—S. S. 1:12.
  2. Our experience of Christ should be constituted into spikenard so that we have something to contain the fragrance of Christ.
  3. First, Christ satisfies us so that we gain the spikenard; then we satisfy Christ by His fragrance in our spikenard.
- G. The lover and the Beloved both have beauty, and they appreciate the beauty in each other; this shows that transformation produces a mutual appreciation between Christ and His lover—vv. 15-16a; Isa. 33:17a; Psa. 45:11a.

**GENERAL SUBJECT:  
THE OVERCOMING LIFE AS PORTRAYED IN SONG OF SONGS**

Message Three

**Overcoming in the Second Stage**

(1)

**Living the Life of the Cross by the Power and Riches of  
Resurrection to Overcome the Self and Build Up the Body for the  
Glory of God**

Scripture Reading: S. S. 2:8-14; Matt. 3:13-17; 21:32; 16:24

- I. After the Lord's seeker has some success in pursuing Christ for her satisfaction, she falls into introspection, which becomes a seclusion as a wall that keeps her away from the presence of Christ—S. S. 2:9:**
- A. Introspection is to examine the self by looking into and analyzing the self; the self is constituted with introspection—cf. 1 Cor. 4:3-4.
  - B. We must look away unto Jesus; our self is not worthy to look at—Heb. 12:1-2a; John 3:14-15; 12:31-32; Num. 21:4-9:
    - 1. The Lord's seeker is disappointed by her introspection, but the Lord is calling her into the springtime—S. S. 2:10; cf. Heb. 3:7-8; John 8:58.
    - 2. When she looks into herself, it is the winter of dormancy; when she looks away to the resurrected Christ, she enters into the stage of spring, the stage of resurrection—S. S. 2:10-13.
- II. We are delivered from the self through the oneness with the cross by Christ's resurrection power through His fellowship—v. 14:**
- A. Christ wants His seeker, His dove, to remain in a crucified condition continually, that is, to remain in Him as "the clefts of the rock, in the covert of the precipice," the secret of the steep places—v. 14; Gal. 2:20.
  - B. Our being crucified is not by our natural life or strength but by the power of resurrection, by the presence of the mountain-leaping and hill-skipping Christ, "the hind of the dawn"—Psa. 22 title; Prov. 4:18.
- III. We must die daily, take up our cross daily, being conformed to Christ's death by the Spirit as the power and riches of His resurrection for the sake of His Body—1 Cor. 15:31, 36; Luke 9:23; Phil. 3:10; cf. Hosea 6:1-3:**
- A. We must take the way of righteousness by entering into the vision and ministry of the age, recognizing that we are good for nothing but death and burial so that we may enjoy the open heavens, the descending Spirit of God, and the speaking of the Father—Matt. 3:13-17; 21:32; cf. Ezek. 3:1-3.
  - B. We must enjoy the precious death of Christ with its sweet effectiveness and the precious resurrection of Christ with its repelling power in Christ as the compound Spirit for the church life—Exo. 30:23-25; Rom. 14:17-18; cf. Phil. 1:19-21; 2:13; 3:10; 4:11-13.

- C. We must take up the cross, which means to take up the will of God; the cross is God's will, and God's will is our food—Matt. 26:39; Heb. 10:5-10; John 4:34:
1. The one church is God's will, and every brother and sister in the church is God's will; thus, to bear the cross is to bear the church and to bear all of the saints so that we would have the genuine oneness—Eph. 4:1-3; 1 Cor. 1:10; Phil. 2:2.
  2. The oneness in the divine glory is realized when the self is fully denied and we are Body-centered, not self-centered—John 17:21-23; 1 Cor. 12:24-25.
  3. The cross as the will of God in our outward environment and as the killing of Jesus in our inward being work together to kill our natural man and remodel us with the God of resurrection—2 Cor. 4:10-12; 12:7-10; 13:3-4.
  4. To take up the cross for the Body is to let the peace of Christ arbitrate in our hearts, take the forgiving Lord as our life, receive the Lord's believers, and turn away from those who cause divisions and spread death—Col. 3:12-15; Prov. 25:15, 20, 26; Rom. 15:7; 16:17; Num. 6:6-7; Lev. 5:2.
- D. We must enjoy the crucified and resurrected Christ as the life-giving Spirit to be the solution to all the problems in the church life—1 Cor. 1:9; 2:2; 15:45b, 58.
- E. We must eat the crucified and resurrected Christ as the tree of life, taking Him as our daily "antibiotic"—Rev. 2:7; 1 Pet. 2:24; 3:18; John 6:57.
- F. We must enjoy the crucified, limited Jesus as the land of wheat and the resurrected, unlimited Christ as the land of barley—Deut. 8:8; John 12:24; 6:9.
- G. We must enjoy the crucified Christ as our spiritual rock by drinking of Him and flowing Him out as the water of life in resurrection to save us from the iniquity of the sanctuary—1 Cor. 10:4; John 19:34; Exo. 17:6; Num. 20:8; 18:1; Jer. 2:13; John 7:37-39; Ezek. 47:1; Rev. 22:1.
- H. We must take the crucified and resurrected Christ as our dwelling place, our hiding place, the secret place of the Most High—S. S. 2:14; Psa. 90:1; 91:1; 31:20; 83:3; Isa. 32:2; Exo. 33:22; cf. Matt. 6:6; John 14:23.
- I. We need to live a pure and simple life of trusting in God in the midst of an intermixed and complicated situation—S. S. 2:2; 1 Kings 7:17-20; Matt. 6:28.
  - J. We must continually exercise our spirit to deny the self, which is both the embodiment of Satan and the soul declaring independence from God—Rom. 1:9; Matt. 16:22-24.
- K. We must follow the pattern of the Lord Jesus, who lived a crucified life to express the divine life, living out the divine attributes as His human virtues; to follow Him as our model intrinsically is to bear in our body the brands of Jesus by the grace of Christ—John 5:30; 1 Pet. 2:21; Gal. 6:17-18.
- L. We must serve by the Spirit of God for the glory of God and have no confidence in ourselves—Phil. 3:3; 1 Thes. 3:13; 2 Cor. 4:5; 1 Cor. 10:31; cf. Prov. 25:28; 28:25-26; 29:23.
- M. We must see a vision of the crucified Christ and apply the cross of Christ to our bitter situations and our bitter being to enjoy the resurrected Christ as our Healer and healing power—Exo. 15:22-27; 1 Pet. 2:24; Rev. 2:7; Matt. 9:12.
- N. We must "switch on" the law of the killing and resurrecting Spirit of life, keeping ourselves in constant contact and touch with the Lord, to remain in the divine dispensing for the divine economy—Rom. 8:2, 10, 6, 11, 13.

**GENERAL SUBJECT:  
THE OVERCOMING LIFE AS PORTRAYED IN SONG OF SONGS**

Message Four

**Overcoming in the Second Stage**

(2)

**Called, Empowered, and Encouraged by the Resurrected Christ  
to Be Delivered from the Self through the Oneness with the Cross**

Scripture Reading: S. S. 2:8—3:5; Matt. 16:24; Phil. 3:10

- I. We need to see a vision of Christ in His resurrection as depicted in Song of Songs—2:8-13:**
- A. The Lord is the Lord of resurrection, and in this section He manifests the vitality and power of His resurrection.
  - B. Christ empowers His lover by showing her the power of His resurrection by the gazelle's leaping upon the mountains and the young hart's skipping upon the hills—vv. 8-9:
    - 1. It is by the power of Christ's resurrection that we determine to take the cross by denying the self—Matt. 16:24.
    - 2. It is by the power of Christ's resurrection that we are enabled to be conformed to His death—Phil. 3:10; S. S. 2:14.
  - C. Christ encourages His lover by the flourishing riches of His resurrection—vv. 11-13.
  - D. The reality of resurrection is Christ as the life-giving Spirit indwelling and mingled with our regenerated spirit—1 Cor. 15:45b; 6:17.
  - E. In the mingled spirit we experience the resurrection of Christ, which enables us to be one with the cross to be delivered from the self.
- II. We need to see a vision of the cross—Gal. 6:14; 2:20; 3:1; 1 Cor. 2:2:**
- A. The cross is precious in the eyes of God because the cross terminated all the negative things and released the divine life—Rom. 6:6; Heb. 2:14; John 12:24.
  - B. In His economy God has given us one person—the all-inclusive Christ—and one way—the cross—1 Cor. 2:2; Phil. 2:5-11.
  - C. God governs everything by the cross and deals with everything by the cross—Col. 1:20; 2:14-15.
  - D. The way that God has ordained, uplifted, and honored is the cross of Christ—Gal. 6:14:
    - 1. The cross is the centrality and the universality of the way to accomplish God's economy—Col. 1:20; 2:14-15.

2. In order to progress spiritually and to have the church life, we need to experience the cross—1 Cor. 1:2, 9, 18-23; 2:2; 3:6, 9; 12:27.

### **III. We need to see a vision of the self—Matt. 16:22-24; Luke 9:23-25:**

- A. The self is the embodiment of Satan—Matt. 16:23-24:
  1. The soul became the self when something of Satan was added to the soul.
  2. When the mind, the thought, of Satan was injected into the human soul, the soul was corrupted and became the self—Gen. 3:1-6; Matt. 16:22-25.
  3. The self is the soul plus the satanic mind, the mind of Satan—v. 23.
  4. To be in the self is to be incorporated with Satan—vv. 22-24.
- B. The self is the soul declaring its independence from God—Gen. 3:1-6:
  1. Whenever the soul is not dependent on God but is independent of Him, the soul immediately becomes the self—1 Cor. 2:14.
  2. The self is independent of God; it does not care for God's will or for God's interests—Matt. 16:22-23; cf. 6:9-10, 13b, 33.
- C. The self is the greatest problem to the building up of the Body—16:24; Eph. 4:16.

### **IV. In Song of Songs 2:8—3:5 the Lord calls His lover to be delivered from the self through the oneness with the cross:**

- A. The cross is signified by the clefts of the rock and the covert of the precipice—2:14a.
- B. Christ wants to see her countenance and to hear her voice in the cross as the clefts of the rock and the covert of the precipice—v. 14b.
- C. Philippians 3:10 matches Song of Songs 2:8-14; the cross that is described here is subjective and experiential:
  1. The objective cross must become our subjective experience—Gal. 2:20.
  2. "O, Cross of Christ, I take thee / Into this heart of mine, / That I to my own self may die / And rise to thy life Divine"—*Hymns*, #477, chorus.
- D. To be delivered from the self means to be saved from the self through becoming one with the cross of Christ—S. S. 2:8—3:5:
  1. We need to be delivered from the subjectivity of the self—from taking the self as the center and principle object—Luke 9:23.
  2. We need to be delivered from the peculiarity of the self—our biased and warped characteristics—cf. Rom. 8:29:
    - a. Our peculiarity frustrates us from the richer experiences of Christ, from living Christ, and from being built up as the Body of Christ—Eph. 3:8; 4:16; Phil. 1:20-21a.
    - b. Our peculiarity frustrates our experience of Christ's resurrection in the church life—cf. John 11:24-25.
  3. We need to be delivered from the love of the self—Luke 9:24; Rev. 12:11.

### **V. The issue of our being delivered from the self through our oneness with the cross is that we experience the flourishing of resurrection life, we experience and enjoy Christ, we grow in the divine life, we are beautified through transformation, and we become conscious of the Body of Christ and live in the Body, through the Body, and for the Body—Phil. 3:10; Col. 2:19; Rom. 12:4-5, 15; 1 Cor. 12:12-27.**

**GENERAL SUBJECT:  
THE OVERCOMING LIFE AS PORTRAYED IN SONG OF SONGS**

Message Five

**Overcoming in the Second Stage**

**(3)**

**Experiencing the Cross**

**to Be Delivered from the Self for the Body of Christ**

Scripture Reading: S. S. 2:14-15; Rom. 6:6; Matt. 16:24; Phil. 3:10; Eph. 2:16; Psa. 43:4a

**I. “My dove, in the clefts of the rock, / In the covert of the precipice, / Let me see your countenance, / Let me hear your voice; / For your voice is sweet, / And your countenance is lovely”—S. S. 2:14:**

- A. Christ wants His lover to remain in the cross, that is, to stay in “the clefts of the rock” and in “the covert of the precipice”—v. 14a:
  - 1. In the New Testament, the primary meaning of the cross is not to suffer but to be put to death—2 Cor. 4:10-12; *Hymns*, #622.
  - 2. Christ wants us to remain in a crucified condition all the time—Phil. 3:10.
- B. The work of the cross in dealing with the self has three aspects:
  - 1. We need to have the revelation that our old man was crucified with Christ—Rom. 6:6; 2 Cor. 5:14.
  - 2. We need to recognize, realize, and accept the accomplished fact that we have already been crucified—Rom. 6:11; Gal. 2:20.
  - 3. We need to apply to ourselves the death of Christ that He has accomplished and that we have recognized; this is the correct meaning of bearing the cross—Matt. 16:24; Gal. 5:24:
    - a. The application must be carried out in the Spirit and by the Spirit—Rom. 8:13.
    - b. When we are living and walking in the Spirit, the Spirit applies the death of Christ to us—Gal. 5:16, 25.
- C. To be conformed to Christ’s death is to take Christ’s death as the mold of our life—Phil. 3:10:
  - 1. God has put us into the mold of Christ’s death, and day by day God is molding us to be conformed to this death—Rom. 6:3-4.
  - 2. Our life should be conformed to such a mold—dying to our human life in order to live the divine life—Gal. 2:20; 2 Cor. 4:10-11.
  - 3. If we allow our circumstances to press us into this mold, our daily life will be molded into the form of Christ’s death—Rom. 8:28-29.

**II. “Catch the foxes for us, / The little foxes, / That ruin the vineyards / While our vineyards are in blossom”—S. S. 2:15:**

- A. Christ calls His lover to be aware of her peculiarities, habit, and introspection (little foxes) which ruin the resurrection for His lover (our vineyards in blossom).
- B. Our natural man is biased and warped and is expressed mainly in our peculiarity—Acts 13:13; 3 John 9-10:
  - 1. Peculiarity is the ultimate expression of our natural being, the last and final expression of our natural life.
  - 2. Peculiarity is the strongest controller and director of our being—cf. Prov. 21:1.
  - 3. Our peculiarity is a hidden factor within us that frustrates us from experiencing Christ and living Christ—cf. Phil. 1:19-21a.
  - 4. The ground within us for Christ has been subtly and hiddenly usurped and possessed by our peculiarity; thus, peculiarity is a terrible antichrist in our being—cf. Eph. 3:16-17a.
  - 5. The divisive factor within us is our peculiarity; it is the root of all outward division—Acts 15:36-39.
- C. We are delivered from peculiarity by the cross; whenever we are willing to have our self with our peculiarity crucified, resurrection will follow—Matt. 16:24; S. S. 2:11-13.

### **III. We are “in one Body...through the cross”—Eph. 2:16:**

- A. The Body is versus the self; the enemy of the Body is the self—Col. 2:18-19, 23:
  - 1. The hindrance to seeing the vision of the Body and to practicing the Body is the self—vv. 18, 23.
  - 2. The greatest frustration to the building up of the Body is the self—Matt. 16:18, 24.
  - 3. If we would be built up in the Body, the self must be condemned, denied, rejected, and renounced—Luke 9:23-24.
- B. The work of the cross consummates with the Body and ushers us into the Body—Eph. 2:16; Rom. 6:6; 8:13; 12:4-5:
  - 1. The cross brings us into the Body, and it operates in the sphere of the Body; the Body becomes the realm in which the cross works—Eph. 2:16.
  - 2. The restriction of the Body will take away our freedom and drive us to the cross.
  - 3. Only when our self has been utterly dealt with by the cross are we able to touch the reality of the life of the Body and come to know the Body—Matt. 16:24-25; Rom. 8:13; 12:4-5; 1 Cor. 1:18, 23; 2:2; 12:12, 27.

### **IV. “I will go to the altar of God, / To God my exceeding joy”—Psa. 43:4a:**

- A. The altar, the cross, is the center of the universe—Ezek. 43:13-27.
- B. Since the cross occupies a central place in our relationship with God, we cannot avoid it; we all need to come to the point where we know and accept the cross—Gal. 6:14; Matt. 16:24.
- C. Although we meet the cross everywhere in our Christian life, we experience the cross in a particular way when we come to the altar at the center of God’s building—Eph. 2:15, 21-22.
- D. Through the experience of the cross, we are brought into the reality of the church life—Matt. 16:18, 24.

## THE CROSS—THE CENTER OF THE UNIVERSE

No matter which gate we take to enter the compound, eventually we will come to the altar. There is no exception; the altar is unavoidable. We have all come in through the wonderful God-man, who was crucified and who is now in resurrection. If we want to meet God, we must come to the altar.

The altar is at the center of the compound. The altar is the center not only of the inner court but also of the whole premises of the temple.

This altar, which signifies the cross, is actually the center of the universe. As far as the relationship between man and God is concerned, the earth is the center. The center of the inhabited earth is the good land of Canaan, Palestine, for it is the connecting center that connects the continents of Europe, Asia, and Africa. The city of Jerusalem is the center of the good land; the temple compound is the center of Jerusalem; and the altar is the center of the temple compound. Thus, ultimately the altar is the center of the universe. Since the altar signifies the cross, this means that the cross is the center of the universe.

It is crucial for us to know the full significance of the cross. According to superficial Christian teachings, the cross is the place where the Lord Jesus died for us. This is surely true, but the cross means much more than this. As the center of the universe, the cross signifies the all-inclusive death of God, of man, and of all the creatures. The death of the Lord Jesus on the cross was not the death merely of one single person; it was an all-inclusive death involving God, man, and all the creatures.

When God comes from the temple to meet man, He likewise arrives at the altar. Therefore, the altar is not only the center of the universe but also the meeting place of God with man and of man with God. If one person comes in through the north gate and another enters through the south gate, both will eventually meet God and each other at the altar.

God came out of His dwelling place and went to the cross and died there. First, He left His dwelling place and was born in Bethlehem. After living on earth for thirty-three and a half years, He went to the altar, to the cross. As He was dying there, He was not alone. Through His incarnation He had put man upon Himself. Hence, as He was dying on the cross, man was also dying there. This indicates that God and man met together on the cross in the way of death.

God, however, cannot be affected by death. No matter how much death He passes through, He remains the same. Death actually helps Him to be released. God came out of His dwelling place and went to the cross and died there in order to release what was in Him. We may use a grain of wheat as an illustration. When a grain of wheat is sown into the earth, it dies. Is this death terrible or is it wonderful? We should say that the death of a grain of wheat is wonderful, because without this death all the riches and beautiful things in the grain cannot be released. For this reason, the death of a grain of wheat is not terrible but wonderful. In the same principle, death is wonderful to God. The Lord Jesus said, "Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit" (John 12:24). He was speaking of Himself as the one grain who would fall into the ground and die in order to be multiplied into many grains. By His death the riches of the divine life within Him were released. Because God is life, even resurrection, He cannot be terminated by death. Whatever is of man can be terminated, but whatever is of God is released through death. Now we can see that when God went to the altar, the cross, and died there, His life was released.

When the Lord Jesus died, man also died, and this death meant the termination of man. All the negative things related to man were terminated on the cross. Praise the Lord that we all were terminated on the cross! By the all-inclusive death of the Lord Jesus on the cross, all the riches of God were released. The death of Christ on the cross was a wonderful release to God and a wonderful termination to us. We all need this vision of the altar. We need to see that, no matter what our age may be, we all were terminated on the cross at the same time. The riches of God were released there, and all the negative things were terminated there. Therefore, the all-inclusive death of Christ on the cross was our termination and God's release.

Although we meet the cross everywhere in our Christian life, we experience the cross in a particular way when we come to the altar at the center of God's building. To come to the altar at the center is to realize that all that we are and all that we have were terminated at the cross. Here we have a definite experience of the cross and not merely a superficial knowledge about the cross. In our fellowship with the

Lord, we are brought to the point where we touch the cross in a definite way and sense that God will no longer allow us to live in our natural man. This causes us to have a major breakthrough and an absolute submission to the cross. As a result, we will know what the natural life is and what it means for the old creation to be stripped away. This is the experience of the cross as the center.

I am grieved that although many of us have heard messages about the cross, only a few among us truly live a crucified life. For example, we may not live a crucified life in our married life. If a married brother and his wife argue with each other, this indicates that they are not living a crucified life. If they were living a crucified life, they would not accuse each other and vindicate themselves. Those who live a crucified life do not vindicate themselves when they are attacked or criticized. They experience the termination of their Adamic life and of the old creation through the death of the cross and enjoy God's riches and His divine element, which were released through the cross.

When some, especially young people, hear this word about the altar, they may be frightened and think that it is better not to love the Lord and seek Him...They may fear that it would be dangerous to reach the altar and become a burnt offering.

We need to realize, however, that since the Lord has had mercy on us, we cannot escape Him. We were not saved of our own will. On the contrary, while we were wandering in the world, having no intention of entering in through the gate, the Lord brought us through the gate. Apart from our own choice, we believed into Christ. This is altogether a matter of God's selection, of His mercy, and of His reaching us with His care. The principle is the same in our loving the Lord and pursuing Him. If we did not believe in the Lord, love Him, and pursue Him, we would feel uncomfortable and dissatisfied. But the more we love the Lord and pursue Him, the more we are satisfied. This also is a matter of the Lord's mercy. Because of His mercy to us and His operation within us, we have no choice except to go forward; we cannot turn back. If we do not advance toward the altar but instead try to go back to the outer court, we will feel uncomfortable. Therefore, we need to go on and on until we reach the altar.

Eventually, all those who are spiritual and who pursue the Lord end up on the altar where they are terminated, even destroyed, by the Lord. Seemingly without reason, the Lord tears them down and strips them of everything. God puts to death all that we are and all that we have. Madame Guyon experienced this and could say that God gave her the cross. Because we love the Lord and pursue Him, sooner or later we will meet the cross, which will tear us down and bring everything into death. We will be forced to pass into death, even if we are not willing to do so.

We do not experience the cross once for all—we experience the cross again and again. Those who pursue the Lord will meet the cross at every turn. At one time they will meet the cross through their children. At another time they will meet the cross through their spouse or through illness. At other times, they may experience the cross through the church or through the co-workers. The reason that the cross is everywhere is that we must go through the cross in order to contact God. Thank the Lord that God gives us the cross and that the cross gives us God. The ones who love God the most and experience Him the most are the ones who have gone through the cross.

We need to be impressed with the fact that only by passing through the altar can we come to the temple. Whereas the altar signifies the cross, the temple signifies both Christ and the church, the Body of Christ. The cross, Christ, and the church are the central subject not only of the New Testament but also of the whole Bible. First we come to the altar, the cross, and then we come to the temple. This indicates that we cannot have the church apart from the cross. Through the experience of the cross, we are brought into the reality of the church. Only as we pass through the cross do we have the real church life. On the one hand, as saved ones we come together to practice the church life; on the other hand, we can have the reality of the church only after we have passed through the cross.

We all need to be brought to the point where we know and accept the cross. Then as we pass through the cross, our flesh, our old creation, our self, and our natural man with the natural life will all be dealt with. Everything that has its source in our humanity will be terminated at the cross. Then we will have the reality of the church. Then we will be one in the Lord, we will have genuine coordination, and we will have harmony, rest, and the presence of Christ. This is the temple, the place where God dwells. This is the expression of Christ, the reality of the church. (*Life-study of Ezekiel*, pp. 236-241, 246-247)







## Upcoming Events

National Highschoolers' Camp <i>Queenstown</i>	28 September – 1 October 2024
National Intermediates' Camp <i>Lake Taupo</i>	18 – 20 October 2024
Jubilee Week <i>Hamilton</i>	17 – 23 November 2024
Summer School of Truth <i>Ngaruawahia</i>	27 December 2024 – 3 January 2025

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