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Visions and Revelations

Message 11: The Apostle Peter (2)

Note: This is a lightly edited transcript meant to aid saints in personal and small group fellowship and pursuing.

Dear brothers and sisters, I'm happy that we can come to message 11. In the beginning, we had thought this series would be short. We would have liked to get finished in about 16 or 17 messages, however, I realized our situation may not change. We may have to share all the way to the end of August. We hope in this way we could make each message richer. I'm not quite sure we can go slower, however we have a long message this morning. I like this topic, "Visions and Revelations." A Christian needs to have a vision and in every vision there should be revelations. Eventually, their whole life is under a kind of heavenly control. They don't live a life according to themselves; they live a life according to what they see, just like the apostle Peter. Peter saw a vision--a great vision. Now we come to Peter's vision.

You need to realize, all of a healthy Christian life is lived in the principle of vitality. Are you a healthy Christian? It is not how much you know. It is not how much you pursue or receive and understand. It's all about how vital you are. Whatever you heard, whatever you learned, whatever you pursued, whatever you gained, whatever you experienced, if it doesn't bear the sign of vitality, that means, you may be in religion. Vitality is crucial. So, how does vision operate? A vision comes, and in that vision, there are a lot of riches. These riches are no longer objective; they become very *subjective*. It's not something to talk about. It's something to enjoy. It's something to partake. To let that very thing which God has given to you to encourage you, vitalize you, and cause you to be a person who is being made alive.

You have to realize, the apostle Paul was very clear about this. So when he wrote Ephesians and Colossians--these two books in the Bible are the most high, spiritual books in terms of revelations--He stressed the fact of *being made alive*. Ephesians chapter two, verse 5 says, "When we were dead in our transgressions, he made us alive together with Christ." What does this mean, "dead in our transgressions?" It means, we have problems; we have limitations; we have shortages; we have many things that offend god, yet we have no feeling about it, because we're dead to it. We were dead in our transgressions, but the Lord has made us alive together with Christ. By being made alive, we understand what is transgression, we understand what is sin, we understand what is unhealthy, and we also understand how precious it is to be one with Christ. We were made alive with Christ--we are in the heavenlies. We have to be very thankful: the precious part with Christians is not how much they know, it's how much of what they know *vitalizes* them. I know a lot, but that's not good enough. What I know must become my vitality, become my strength, become my energy, become my elevation, become my source of pursuing, become something that causes me to be different, because I do have something that is heavenly. The heavenly things make me alive.

Do you know you have a vision? Let me ask you: Are you living, or are you dead? The truths which are with you, are they living or dead? The life which is in you, is that life living or dead (or, common)? How do you know you're a person with vision? You can say, "I can't say much, but I know that I'm alive." Just think about it: "I got my first vision. In that vision, I saw two things: I saw that Jesus is my Savior, and I also saw me--a sinner. A Savior and a sinner. The sinner needs a Savior! That's why I prayed, 'Lord

Jesus, save me. Save me.” At the time, you have no idea what the blood means, you have no idea what the cross means, you even have no idea how rich this salvation is, but for some reason, the day you say, “Jesus, I’m a sinner. Forgive me of my sins and save me,” you are very joyful. You are very vital. You begin to sing hymns. You begin to talk with the Lord a lot. Do you know why? Because at that moment, in a very limited scope, you saw a vision: Jesus is my Savior. I’m a sinner. I don’t have to go to hell--the Lord saved me.

Paul also stressed “being made alive” in Colossians chapter two when he said, “And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh” (Col. 2:13a). In other words, not only do you have weaknesses, but you don’t even know how much the religious power controls you. You think, “I’m doing fine, because according to religion I’m doing fine. I make Sunday meetings, I listen to Titus’ videos, I’m doing fine!” No, no, no--I don’t say they’re not fine, but they’re not adequate. So, here, Paul says, “when you were in trespasses,” that’s one aspect, and the other aspect is “the uncircumcision of your flesh.” In other words, your flesh is very alive. Not “spirit alive” alive, nor Christ alive, but your flesh is very alive. So you think, “Look, I go to meetings. Look, I listen to messages. Look, I have fellowship with brothers.” I don’t think they’re wrong. They could be something vital from the Lord. But, if you’re not careful, this can be the “uncircumcision of the flesh.” I do it by my flesh. Everybody seeks after his existence. In turn, everybody seeks after a social life. Be careful. If you’re not careful, your existence can focus on being in the church: your social life is with the brothers, you don’t have drinking friends, you don’t have gambling friends, but you do have some sweet brothers and sisters with you. Are you vital? Are you with Christ? Is this according to Christ? That’s hard to say. Actually, if you’re not careful, that can be our flesh because it is still, “I’m the center.”

Eventually, Paul says, “He made you alive together with Christ” (Col 2:13b). He wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us (Col 2:14). All these things--handwritings, the law, the commandments--he wiped them all out. These things are contrary to us (Col 2:14). Now, he has taken it out of the way and nailed all this stuff on the cross because you were made alive (Col 2:14). Brothers, *made alive* is a crucial thing. Think about this: I had loved the Lord close to seventy years now. In these years, what makes my going on valuable? You may say, “Well because you love the Lord, you’re a full-timer.” Brother, don’t say this. A full-timer can be just as dead as any other brother. An elder could be just as common as any other brother. Brothers, I would say, by the Lord’s mercy, in a period of time, the Lord gave me a vision. Eventually it became dim, and the Lord came in and gave me another vision and made it alive. So, redemption to me is alive. Salvation, stage by stage, to me, is alive. *Made alive* becomes the most crucial thing.

Now let’s come to the message. Point one: All the visions and revelations which Peter received were in the principle of being *made alive*. I see a vision, I see a revelation, which actually means, I am being *made alive*. All were eventually made alive in the vision and revelation given by the Father. The Father is willing to give you a vision. Remember, the Lord Jesus told Peter, “This is not from flesh and blood. Our Father in the heavens has given you this vision and revelation.” When he gave you this vision and revelation, you were made alive. Your question is, “Made alive in what? Is it a good feeling? I can sing a good song, I can say ‘hallelujah,’ I get excited?” This is okay, but remember that, this *made alive* is with key things.

First, in your existence, you were made alive firstly to Christ--the knowledge of Christ is made alive. I'm saved, so *made alive* means I enjoy the sweetness and the trustworthiness of my salvation. I'm saved and Christ is such a marvelous Savior, so you can say, Christ was made alive, so He's my lover, He's my life, He's my supply, He's my strength, He's my energy, He's my leader, He's my direction, He's the reason of my existence and I live only for Christ. Christ becomes different. I don't just tell people, "I'm a believer in Jesus, I'm going to go to the heavens." To believe in Jesus is a precious thing, but do you enjoy it? If you enjoy it, it becomes so valuable: Christ was made alive.

Second, the way you understand your "self" was made alive. Do you know our problem? Easily we think we are marvelous, or we think we are nothing. Easily we think, oh Lord Jesus aren't you so happy I love you? Or we think Lord Jesus how can I love you? When you were really made alive, both positive and negative became very clear to you. Who am I? I'm a sinner. I'm not a simple sinner--I'm a chief sinner. I'm a person against Christ. My being is a rebellious being. But, Lord, thank you. What a salvation! What a redemption! You redeemed me from the condemnation of the law, even from your own righteous judgment. You brought me to salvation and gave me eternal life. I'm a person with Christ. No, more than that, I was *made alive*. I see my value. I'm so valuable, You know brother? I was made alive. Don't just say, "I studied the Bible, how about you?" Don't just say, "I love Jesus with the brothers. It's good! How about you?" You have firstly been made alive unto Christ, then you're even made alive unto yourself. When you are made alive unto yourself you feel, "I am so terrible." What happens then? "Lord, thank you. You are a Savior. I am so shameful in talking about myself. Lord, thank you. Your blood cleanses me from all my sins. I'm made alive. And more than that, I'm a child of God. I am one of the children of God. And, more than that, I have Christ in me as life. I begin to realize, I have value." Brother, you should be made alive to yourself. Negatively, you say "Oh I am so terrible," but positively you say, "I am so valuable." All the negative things, the Lord cleansed them, washed them, and took them away. All the positive things, the Lord wants them to develop, to juvenate and to rejuvenate, to grow and eventually be to the satisfaction of the Lord.

The knowledge of the Lord was made alive, so you understand Christ differently now. More than that, the declaration of the Lord is made alive. I heard the Lord declare a lot, but what he really said is made alive. Finally, all of the things the Lord has done in His wisdom and power were made alive. Formerly, He healed the blind, but now the fact He healed the blind is *made alive* to me. I feel different. Then, *to make alive* is a manifestation of having visions and revelations. How do you know you have a vision? Let me ask you a question: Are you alive? If you are a Christian alive before the Lord, then you are a man in visions and revelations.

Now, we come to the point: The knowledge of Christ was made alive. It's interesting right? Peter should have heard the story. When Jesus was baptized he was right over there, either in the crowd or nearby. When Jesus came up from the water, the heaven opened and God spoke "This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased." What a declaration from heaven. What a voice. Then, his brother Andrew came to him and told him, "I met the Messiah." Then Peter saw Jesus and Jesus changed his name. Something with the Lord must have been extremely attractive in the beginning. If his brother came and told him: "I met a man. Do you know who this man is? He was baptized and when he came out the water, the heavens opened and there was a voice that came out. 'This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.' Shouldn't this be the Messiah?" Marvelous. I think Peter was made alive at that very moment. Praise the

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Lord. Gradually for some reason, he realized, “yeah God did say this, yes this is true.” But there was no impact. No impact means the vision was not operating properly in him. He had limitations.

Next point: The understanding of “self” was made alive. The Lord told him, his name was pretty good. When he went to see the Lord with Andrew, the Lord told him, you are son of John (Jona [from Barjona] should be John), you are Simon son of John. You know that’s the best name you can have. Son is related to life, John means giving grace. You are a son of grace. More than that, your name is Simon. Simon means I hear, not only do I hear, but it leads to be obeying. Let me ask you. Can you find a better Christian than this? What a Christian is this. He’s the son of grace and he listened to all of God’s speaking to him. The Lord told him, oh you are Simon the son of John. Then the Lord suddenly changed, and using another language (Aramaic) told him your name shall be called Cephas. Cephas means a precious valuable piece of stone.

I think in the beginning he had three frustrations. Number one: I am so good, I am listening to the word of grace. I love God. Number two: the Lord changed my name to a piece of precious stone. Number three: the Lord even used a word in Aramaic. In the U.S, most of us just speak English. In other countries people are bilingual. Most countries are bilingual now. So Chinese will say, let me tell you, zhe shi (Chinese words) very important (English words). Zhe shi (in Chinese means “this is”) very important. When another language is mixed in it tells the listener, this is very important. He doesn’t say “Zhe shi hen zhong yao” which in Chinese means “this is very important.” The Lord used the word in Aramaic to remind Peter, “What I say is very crucial.” So, Peter should be very impressed with this right? Think about it, what is this? My name will be called, Cephas! I will be a precious piece of stone. When the Lord speaks about this he speaks in English, in Chinese, in all kinds of languages, just to stress to you: You got to hear, and listen, this is what I am speaking to you! But for some reason, he was bored and common. Now, Peter says, when I see the vision, my understanding to myself was made alive. I’m so valuable. Even though I am so disgraceful, I’m such a sinner, and yet I am so blessed. I can be a piece of stone, a precious stone, used by the Lord.

More than that, even the teachings of the Lord were made alive. If you consider the Lord’s teachings, there were mainly four things: teachings related to God, teachings related to your godly living, teachings related to your living out of Christ (your healthy daily walk), and finally, teachings related to Satan.

For teachings related to God, he said: “Blessed are the pure, for they shall see God.” That should be the most important one right? But that’s not how he started. He started with “blessed are the poor in spirit.” You’re poor in spirit which leads you to mourn. “I’m poor in spirit, so Lord have mercy, oh I’m poor in spirit.” Because you’re poor in spirit, you call to the Lord, “Lord I cannot boast, I need your mercy.” This mourning causes you to be very meek. You’re not bossy anymore, and you drop all your self-confidence. More than that, meekness leads you to hunger and thirst for righteousness. Tell the Lord, “I want to be healthy. I want to be proper.” Eventually that leads you to have compassion and mercy towards others. Finally you’re pure to God. Do you want to be pure to God? When I was young this verse was one of the verses I loved the most: “Blessed are the pure, for they shall see God.” So my prayer was “Lord have mercy so that I’m so pure unto you, and I see you.” The Lord says, “Wait a minute. I want you to be clear, unless you are poor in spirit and poor in your heart, nothing is going to happen.” You begin with, “Lord

have mercy, have mercy, I'm poor." Then you develop all the virtues, and they lead you to say, "I want to be pure. I just want to be pure to love you alone."

More than that, it also comes to a holy life next. You know this verse is not hard to understand. The Lord told the disciples and those who were with him, if you look at a woman and have evil thoughts, you have already committed adultery in your heart. It's not "I see something beautiful" it's look at ("staring at a woman" in Chinese), and then an evil thought goes through you – this is committing fornication. What does this mean? Godly. Godly. Only look at Christ alone. There is a lot of beauty: a marvelous building, a marvelous creation, marvelous flowers, marvelous animals of all kinds and so forth. You can even see a handsome man, a beautiful woman. One day in the airport, I saw a pilot, about 50 years old who was really handsome, with a pilot's outfit. I went to him and said, "Sir, you look so grand." Is there anything evil? No nothing evil, it's just something for you to appreciate – the way he dresses, the way he walks. But don't look at something improperly and have thoughts take over you. You've got to be godly, and more than that your living has to be so holy. I live Christ. I live Christ.

Finally, you have nothing to do with the world, because Lord says, "Only lay up for yourself treasure in heavens." You know your pursuing, your gaining, you have to ask, "Do they match the heavens? I have a car today, does it match the heavens?" If it doesn't what does that mean? I focus on the car, I only want to gain the car, I pay a price for the car, I work overtime for the car, I even ignore my family to gain this car. This doesn't match heavenly things. So eventually I seek after treasure in heavens.

More than that, even he was clear the declarations of the Lord were made alive. If you ask me how many declarations the Lord had, I would say so many. But a few things were very crucial. Number one, the Lord says, "He who is born of the Spirit is spirit." What a declaration! Dear brother, you, dear sister, you, you should be born of the Spirit. If you're born of the Spirit, you know what makes you unique and valuable? He who is born of the Spirit is spirit. What a declaration. Your whole being: the kernel, the most crucial element, the most crucial substance, the most crucial thing that lives in you is the Spirit! I have a revelation, I have a vision, I see the Spirit! I realize without the Spirit nothing works! He who is born of the Spirit is spirit. Now in the vision I realize I must pay attention to my spirit. I have a spirit, I treasure it. I have a spirit, I nourish it. I have a spirit, I strengthen it. I have a spirit, I exercise it. I have a spirit, I feed my spirit so my spirit can be the real substance of my being. What kind of person are you? Spirit! I'm a spiritual man. I'm a man of spirit. And more than that, he also said if you want to worship God, worship Him in spirit, and in reality.

More than that, he also declared, "Who am I? I'm the bread of life for you to be satisfied. I'm the water of life so you will not be thirsty. Then, I'm a light of life so you know your life's way." Let me ask you, on this earth what are the three most crucial things? You can say air is most crucial, but nobody is ever short of air, except with something drastic. In principle, air is always there. Now he said you need three things. You need light so you know the direction. You need bread so you have strength. You need water so you are satisfied. So Lord says, "Who am I? First, let me declare who you are to you. You are born of the Spirit. Worship me in spirit and in reality." Then he said, "Come to me. Who am I? I am the bread of life. I am the water of life. I'm the light of life." Okay, he didn't say "water of life" so don't go and ask, "Titus where did Jesus say water of life?" He said he who believes in me, as the scriptures have said, out of his innermost being will flow rivers of living water." Isn't living waters a water of life? Such a marvelous

fact. So look at his declaration. All of a sudden Peter was clear. Oh, marvelous. And more than that he said, "I am the light of the world. You follow me and you will not walk in darkness. You will have the light of life." Brothers, I tell you I'm so happy I have a spirit. I love the Lord in my spirit with reality. I enjoy the bread of life. I enjoy the flowing of living water. I enjoy the light of life that leads me, directs me, and causes my whole life to be very meaningful. I'm not short of anything. What a declaration the Lord has made.

More than that, all the things the Lord has done in his wisdom and power were made alive. You know brothers, outwardly you can say all these are miracles. No, they are very real. Number one, he said the Lord healed the leper. You know Peter looked at the leper and the Lord healed him. Praise the Lord for that, right? Peter was, "Wow, what a miracle! Hallelujah! My boss, my Lord is great!" Then he began to realize, "Wait a minute, when I see the vision I begin to see, 'No that leper isn't someone else, it's me. I am fallen on the inside. My sickness doesn't even manifest outside. People see me with a suit, nicely dressed. But very few people see me and realize what an evil man I am. Only I know I'm a leper. And the Lord healed me."

More than that there was also a paralyzed man. One man was a leper, another man was paralyzed. What does it mean to be paralyzed? It means not having the strength to walk. Don't you have that experience? I want to love the Lord, how? I want to follow the Lord, how? I want to do something pleasing to God, how? I want to be one with the Lord, how? But when you have a vision of this Christ, who is he? He heals the paralyzed. He says, "Rise up. Pick up your mat and walk." Brothers, inside we're terrible. Outside we're terrible too.

But more than just being paralyzed, we can have a high fever. I see many Christians who are high fever Christians. We're zealous, we want to do this, or want to do that. But I tell you, brother, I say in a very nice way, especially when the things you do go with you. You like these things. I know a sister, every time a love feast comes, she is resurrected. She comes in, coordinates the whole thing, but after the love feast is over she disappears. What is that? A fever. No Christ, but activities for Christ. No Christ, but doing things for Christ. Lord says, "I will take care of the fever, so you can serve the Lord properly." More than that, the Lord says, "I don't want your enthusiasm in religion. I want you to be healthy."

More than that, there's a woman with a flow of blood. The Lord healed the woman with the flow of blood. It is kind of embarrassing for a woman to let people know she has a flow of blood. It is kind of embarrassing. Which means what? Which means blood, a sign of life, can keep on coming to you, but for some reason, it flows away. Hey brothers, sisters, please don't be offended. Your love to your family, which is proper, your love to your career, your love to your development, your love to a new car, your love to success, your love to be known, your love to be appreciated, your love to be above somebody else, your love to be the CEO or whatever, your love to success, or self-importance, for some reason, all these push away the life you receive. You're in a very good meeting. Praise the Lord for that. You receive life, praise the Lord for that. Until Monday morning comes and you go to the office. Quickly, a lot of things come in, push away every life element that you have. The life you received flowed away. So here he said, what did the Lord do? He deals with the leper. He deals with the paralyzed, he did something with someone with high fever, who is overly zealous, and he did something to balance the flow of blood. Now,

the life you have, you must keep. The truth you have must be vital. The spiritual things you received must be alive. So the blood doesn't flow away.

More than that, the Lord takes care of the blind, those with no goal. What should I do? I don't know. But the Lord comes. Now, I healed the blind. I know the way.

Eventually, he take care of the dumb. Who are you? Hey, if I say, don't be offended, you are, sorry, you are number one a leper, you are number two paralyzed, number three have a high fever, number four with a flow of blood, number five, you're blind. You know why so many people go to San Francisco? Blind. You say the Lord led me to go to San Francisco. No problem. To go to San Francisco is not sin. To follow the flow is something wrong. Blind. You say, "Everybody goes to San Francisco to get a job." Brother, don't you have a job in Cleveland? Don't you have a job in Pittsburgh? Don't you have good jobs in Columbus? But you don't even fight for it! You fight for "Oh, where everybody is going, we go!" Brother, what does that mean? Blind. We can easily be blind, and out of this, we become dumb. We cannot testify. We cannot declare, we cannot tell others "I have a risen Savior!" We cannot testify, "My Jesus so sweet, so loving to me!" I can't. Why? Because I'm dumb.

Hey, do you appreciate all of this? All of a sudden, Peter realized, "I'm not just a simple Peter. Who am I? You know who I am? I'm a leper. I'm, secondly a paralyzed. Third, fever. Fourth one, I have a flow of blood. Fifthly, I'm blind. Six, I'm what, dumb! That's why my whole Christian life is terrible!" But you see a vision. "Oh you take care of all this, hallelujah, you do take care of this!" So eventually, he said praise the Lord. Such a poor man to be called as an apostle. To labor with God. To fight for his interest.

Now we come to the last point. "Peter was able to rise up and declare buoyantly," means what, he saw the vision, right? When Jesus asked who do people think I am? Oh you're Isaiah, you're Elijah. You're... what. Then he said, "what about you?! What do you say about me?!" Then all of a sudden, this is a puzzling thing, because everybody should be clear, right? They should say, and they may not use the word Christ, but at least they can say you're the son of God. We heard it! John can answer, I say in a good way, it's not so good, John should be able to answer this. And Nathaniel, the second one, Nathaniel should be able to answer. They two were there, clearly heard the declaration in the heavenlies, but then for some reason, they can't answer. You know why? The vision's dim. They are the apostles, they are with Christ all the time. But it has become common. Just like with preaching brothers, preaching becomes common. Just like an elder takes care of the church, it becomes common. Just like a faithful serving one serving in practical matters, it becomes common. Brother no. You cannot be common.

Peter stood up, he saw a vision. You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. You see three elements in this statement. You are the Christ, the Son, the living God, all unique. There's only one living God, the one living God only has one son, and this only one Son is the Christ, the anointed one, to carry out God's economy. When Peter received this revelation, in the very moment, all that he saw, all that he heard, all that he experienced, became not merely teaching, after teaching, story after story, but a complete revelation as a picture made alive to him. You know what, Lord Jesus says whom you say I am? He stood up, just dah dah dah dah dah all things come together. You say wow! I see who's Christ, I see who am I, I see how he teaches, I see how he handles things, I see how he asks us to live a certain life. I see his commitment to us. All of a sudden, WOW! It becomes a clear picture!

Just like what? Just like when a young brother sees a young sister. This young brother and young sister grew up together, and knew each other for years, especially in the church life, but one day that sister or that brother becomes a vision. WHOOO! And with that vision, a lot of revelation comes. Oh, she's so beautiful. Oh she's so virtuous, oh she's so capable. Oh she's so sober, oh she's such a nice Godly woman, a lady, all revelations come in with this vision. It's a picture. Nobody can say, maybe there's exceptions, but in principle, it's hard for people to say, "know why you married that girl? Because her eyebrows are so beautiful." There got to be something as a vision, inclusive. Everything with her became real attractive. I didn't say it, Watchman Nee said it. He portrayed love in this way. Everything with the other person becomes so attractive to the one who experiences this.

You know brother, a picture comes. When the picture comes, everything seems to be very clear, so at that moment, what he saw, what he experienced, what he heard, all of a sudden, became a picture with a complete revelation made alive to him. Oh, now it's clear. I see Christ. What a savior. I see Christ, what a poor man I am. Yet what a commitment I'm given. I see Christ, you understand? What kind of life I can live out. I see Christ, how can I walk with him. I see Christ, how he exposes me in so many angles, yet in every part, he's my healer. I say Lord, I am so happy, I have a vision. That's why Peter here boldly declared that "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." This complete revelation then caused the Lord to rise and testify. After he shared that, the Lord was excited, "Hey Simon! Barjonah! Let me tell you! This is not from flesh and blood, this is from God the Father!" What does this mean? God the Father is willing, waiting to give you a vision, to give you visions, to give you revelations, so you can become followers of Jesus with commitment. May the Lord have mercy. This is a long message, but may the Lord have mercy to us. Tell the Lord, Lord I want to be Peter, I want to have that picture. I want to have that vitality, I don't want just to have doctrines and truths, things I learned, all the things I know, I want them to be as spirit, energizing in me. Make that life to me. I can declare, I'm following the resurrected Christ! He carries God's economy. May the Lord have mercy, I stop here.