

THE SISTERS, THE BLESSING OF A LOCAL CHURCH LIFE

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MESSAGE TWO: THE DIVINE BLESSING THROUGH THE VIRTUOUS WOMAN WHO FOCUSES ON LIFE AND THE GROWTH IN LIFE

INTRODUCTION

Each of the next three messages will have two parts: experiences and applications. The experiences were already covered in the booklet *The Virtuous Woman*, and will be briefly reviewed. The main section of each message will be on the applications. How do we apply the experiences of the virtuous woman in our personal life and in our church life? We will find that many of the applications are not according to our concepts. For example, many things that bother us about the church life are actually normal. And many of the things that we desire to see happen are not normal. The things that we consider to be discouraging are often a blessing to us. When we read through this section of Proverbs we should have this realization. A virtuous woman goes through all sorts of experiences, and we in the church life also go through all sorts of experiences. But all of our experiences are eventually for our application. By applying the experiences of the virtuous woman we will become a blessing to the church life.

The title of this message is “The Divine Blessing Through the Virtuous Woman who Focuses on Life and the Growth in Life.” In order for the Lord to bless the church there must be a group of saints who focus on three things: life, truth, and operations. First, we need to focus on life and the growth in life. When we are short of life or of the growth in life, then the Lord will not be able to gain a testimony among us. In order for our church life to be blessed we must focus on life and the growth in life.

Everything outward can change. Church meetings and practices can change. The physical meeting place can change. But one element can never change, and that is the divine and eternal life. What relates us to God and to His testimony is a matter of life. The moment we were saved, we were saved into the divine life. The divine life came into us. Then after this our entire Christian life and church life are based on the divine life.

Perhaps you have been saved for many years. But no matter how old you are and how many years you have been saved, the divine and eternal life within you has not changed. It is always present, always growing, and always dynamically operating. The divine life within you is a treasure. You may have learned a lot in your experience, and you may have learned a lot of knowledge and truth. But if you take away the divine life, then everything becomes vain. What makes your existence as a Christian precious is the divine life. Then you need to enjoy the divine life, abide in the divine life, grow in the divine life, and even mature in the divine life. Are you always “in life,” enjoying and abiding in life? You might say, “The majority of time I am not in life.” But even when you are not abiding in life, you should focus on life. You might think that after receiving the divine life you should become angelic. When you were saved you may have said, “I will remain in this life all the time!” But eventually you learn that you can still fall. This is normal. When you fall, you should not lose your focus. You should just get up and say, “Praise the Lord for the divine life!” All of us have our weaknesses and are bound to fall sometimes. But we should still focus on life and the growth in life. Our living may be short, but we desire to be in life and to grow in life. The Bible’s description of the virtuous woman doesn’t speak of her being victorious. Instead it shows all the riches of the divine life that she has experienced in a marvelous way.

THE EXPERIENCES

*Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price
is far above rubies.
— Proverbs 31:10*

*She seeks wool and flax, and works diligently
with her hands.
— Proverbs 31:13*

*She makes herself coverings of tapestry; her
clothing is silk and purple.
— Proverbs 31:21-22*

*She makes fine linen, and sells it, and delivers
girdles unto the merchant.
— Proverbs 31:24*

The virtuous woman has many rich experiences of life. First, as a ruby, she treasures the work of the Spirit. Second, as a coral, she overcomes the death waters through her being firmly attached to Christ and the church, and through her proper growth in life. Third, she possesses wool and flax. This means that she lives out the proper human life through the divine life. Fourth, she clothes her household with scarlet and makes herself coverings of tapestry. Eventually she is clothed with silk and purple cloth. And fifth, she is able to make fine linen and sells it. This means that she has the ability to help others have the living of the highest humanity. The virtuous woman's growth in life begins with her as an individual. She is a ruby and a coral. Eventually she becomes a blessing to the church, because other saints are able to buy the fine linen from her.

THE APPLICATIONS

As a Ruby: Having the Ability to Understand the Work of the Spirit, and Being Able to Walk in the Work of the Spirit

How do we apply these experiences of the virtuous woman? The first experience she has is that, as a ruby, she treasures the work of the Spirit. What does this mean practically in our application? A virtuous woman has the ability to understand the work of the Spirit, and is able to walk in the work of the Spirit. If you are saved, you love the Lord, and you are consecrated, then you should focus on life and the growth in life. When you focus on life, the work of the Spirit automatically comes to you. The Lord begins to work on you to transform you. The most important principle of the Lord's transforming work is that it is always against your natural understanding.

Knowing that All Things Work Together for Good

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

— *Romans 8:28*

When you first love the Lord, it is easy to have the wrong concept. Your concept may even be close to that of an unbeliever. If you tell an unbelieving friend that you are a Christian, she might say, "Why don't you buy a lottery ticket? If the Lord is real, and you believe in Him, He will surely help you win the lottery!" This is the concept of an unsaved person who has no understanding of spiritual things. But we are often the same. We often think, "Now that I love the Lord and am in the church life, the Lord will be with me in whatever I do. If I need a job, the Lord will get me the best job, with the best salary. I will be able to make a lot of money. If I need a house, the Lord will open the way. He will get me the best house at the cheapest price. I need better health, so the Lord will take care of me and

make sure I don't get sick." Then in spiritual matters we think the same way. "Now I am saved. I want to preach the gospel, and wherever I go, people will get saved. I want to read the Bible, and whenever I do, the light will come in. I want to function in the meetings, so whenever I say a few words, everyone will say, 'Amen!'"

Yet you may have been surprised to find out something different. Now that you are saved, not one of these things has happened. You love the Lord, but you have trouble finding a job. Then when you do get a job, you aren't paid enough, and your boss is too hard on you. You love the Lord, but you bought the wrong house. Too many things need to be repaired. You love the Lord, but for some reason you still got sick. And this is true in spiritual matters. You love the Lord, but when you preach the gospel no one gets saved. You love the Lord, but when you open the Bible there is not much there. You love the Lord, but when you share in the meetings there is not much response. It seems that everything is a disappointment.

Perhaps you have even thought of leaving the church life. You used to think, "I am consecrated! I love the Lord! I am for Christ and the church!" Then one meeting you shared something, and the elders asked you to stop and sit down. After this you said to yourself, "That's it! This is the local church? There is no love here! I will leave! I will find somewhere else to meet!" Yet when you try to leave, you don't have any peace. This is not unusual. Most of us have made that decision before. At some point we have thought, "This is just too much. I can't handle it anymore. The elders are too much, the leading ones are too much, the saints are too much, even the sisters in my group meeting are too much. Everything is too much. But look at that denomination down the street. They seem so happy. They go to the church of their choice, they worship the Lord once a week, and their life is so simple." Sisters, if you have thought this way, there is nothing wrong with you. The Lord works in ways that are against your concepts, all for the sake of transforming you into a ruby. If you love the Lord, you may not get the best job. You may even get laid off. If you love the Lord and buy a house, you may find out

that the whole house needs to be renovated. If you love the Lord, all sorts of hardships and frustrations will come your way. Why? Because all of this is the work of the Spirit.

All of us are very natural in our reasonings. We have our plans, our ways, and our considerations. We want to live our lives according to what we decide. Actually, all of us want to tell the Lord, “Lord Jesus, what if I were to reverse things a little? I will call You, ‘Slave Jesus,’ and You can call me, ‘Lord.’ From now on You must meet my needs and answer all my prayers!” When we tell the Lord to answer our prayers, then who is really the Lord? Why does He have to answer our prayers? The Lord would say to us, “Because you pray in this way, I won’t answer your prayer. You have prayed for a snake, but I’ll give you a fish. You have prayed for a stone, but I will give you bread.” We are professional “snake seekers.” We pray all the time, “Lord, I want that snake. That snake is so beautiful. Lord, give me that snake.” But the Lord says to us, “No. I will not let you have your way. That snake is not good for you. But I want to work on you and make you a ruby.”

This is a lesson we all must learn. The ones who learn this principle are better able to grow in life. The work of the Spirit is against our natural concepts. The Lord works all things together for our good. He desires that we be transformed into rubies. The producing of rubies is not something simple. It is not a matter of making some meetings and fulfilling some obligations. A ruby only comes from the transforming work of the Spirit. We need to be transformed. The Lord wants us to become something precious. We need to exercise our person before the Lord. The more we know the Lord and love the Lord, the more we will appreciate the Lord’s work upon us. As believers, we are never “unlucky,” and our circumstances are never “unfortunate.” There is no such thing. We must have the ability to understand the work of the Spirit, and be able to walk in the work of the Spirit. We must know that all things work together for our good.

***Knowing How to
Take Every Opportunity to Gain Christ***

We need to be rubies. Unfortunately our logic is so strong. All of the time we think about “it should be this,” “it shouldn’t be that,” and “how come it’s not this way?” We get upset at the elders and leading ones, and we question their decisions. Meanwhile there are many things we go through in our human lives that we don’t understand. Then we ask the Lord, “Why, Lord? How come?” Perhaps you find out you have a medical problem that will be with you the rest of your life. How do you respond? If you understand the work of the Spirit, then you can pray an honest prayer to the Lord: “Lord, I don’t know if I should blame You or worship You. On one hand I know I can’t handle this. At the very least this is going to be troublesome for the rest of my life. Yet on the other hand, Lord, I trust in You. You are reminding me not to be proud. Lord, I am dependant on Your mercy. If You withhold Your mercy and Your protecting hand, then I have no hope. I need You, Lord.” Many things happen to us in our lives, and not one of them is by coincidence. A ruby comes into being by the work of the Spirit, in an environment which is fully according to God’s sovereignty. We must always have the attitude, “All things work together for good. What I am going through is actually the work of the Spirit. I will not let it be wasted. I am going to take this opportunity to gain Christ.” Whatever we go through, we should remind ourselves not to murmur, or reason, or complain. Don’t blame the elders, and don’t get frustrated with the other sisters. Instead, take every opportunity to gain Christ.

***Knowing How to Take the
Divine Arrangement as the Best***

We also need to take the divine arrangement in our lives as the best for us. Everything in our lives is under God’s governmental arrangement. That means everything is the best for us to be transformed into rubies. If we feel that we are blessed, we should take our environment as from the Lord. If we feel that we are

unblessed, we still take our environment as from the Lord. Our desire is to gain Christ and to allow the Spirit to work on us. When everything is smooth, learn to say, “Thank You, Lord.” And when everything is difficult, still learn to say, “Thank You, Lord.” As we focus on life, we learn that God’s divine arrangement is truly the best.

***Appreciating the Church Life We Are in as
the Best Ground for Transformation***

Whatever local church you are in is the best ground for transformation. Your locality is the best ground for you to gain Christ and be transformed by the Spirit’s work. Sometimes you might have a little complaint to the Lord, “Lord Jesus, how come You put me in such a lousy city? How come I am in such a frustrating local church?” The Lord would answer, “Why? Because it’s the best place for you to gain Me.” It is the work of the Spirit that put you where you are. Learn to appreciate this. Learn to tell the Lord, “Lord, thank You for the church life here.” We should not live as common people, thinking that the grass is always greener on the other side. Although it can be a hard lesson, we must learn to treasure where the Lord has placed us. The church life we are in is the best. It is under His arrangement. Sisters, if you can realize this, then your value will be far above rubies. The Lord has placed you where you are because it is the best transformation ground.

**As a Coral: Having the Ability to Overcome
all the Negative Things, and Being Able to
Gain the Growth through all the Death Environments**

As we covered in the first message, the Hebrew word for “ruby” can also be translated coral. For a virtuous woman to be like coral means that she has the ability to overcome all the negative things, and is able to gain the growth through all the death environments. Coral is very interesting. It is almost like a stone, yet it is living. When you look at it, you think you are looking at

a piece of rock. Yet actually it is growing. It grows under the sea, but is attached to the ground beneath the sea. No matter how deep the sea is, as long as there is light the coral can grow.

When you first love the Lord, you are like a ruby. When you are truly consecrated to the Lord, you are like a coral. When you came into the church life, did you realize that you were coming into many experiences of death environments? If you had known this, you may have been scared. Of course, the church life is precious. But it also a death ground. It even seems that the church life is good for nothing except to put you to death. Every dear saint can sometimes become a death element to you. Then you might say, "If there are so many death elements, then I should get away from here." Yet if you try to avoid the church life, you get a real sense of death. This is surprising. When you are living in the church life, you wonder how come there are so many death elements surrounding you. You want to enjoy the church life, and you want to enjoy the Lord's blessing, yet instead all kinds of frustrations and defeats come your way. All sorts of things come to oppress you. Yet at the same time, there is light for you to grow. As long as you are attached to the ground, which is Christ and the church, you can grow. Then all of the irritating elements become like algae for you to eat. The frustrating experiences become food for you to grow in life.

If you are coral, then the death environments work to turn you to the Lord. The seemingly negative things become food for you to eat. When you are in such an environment, you find that the Lord's light is there. Praise the Lord for this. In the church life you are growing. There may be all sorts of frustrations and pressures and disappointments, but it is the best place for you to grow. The church life is like an "algae center," but all the irritating algae is for your nourishment. All of the death environments are food for you to grow in life. Although you are in the environment of death, surrounded by algae and death waters which threaten to overwhelm you, praise the Lord that you can be coral. Because you are in the church life, living in the Lord's light, all of these negative things become food for you to grow.

***Knowing that the Divine Union We
Have with the Lord is Inseparable***

***Knowing How to Appreciate the
Normalcy of the Surrounding Unhealthiness***

***Having the Ability to Draw the “Life-Juice” from
the Church Life Regardless of the Condition the Church***

***Never Departing from the Light,
the Living Presence of Christ***

For you to be coral you need to see the four points above. First, you must know that the divine union you have with the Lord is inseparable. You can never be separated from the Lord. Whether you feel good, or whether you feel defeated and discouraged makes no difference. You are one with Christ.

Second, you must appreciate the normalcy of the surrounding unhealthiness. It is very normal that what surrounds you is not healthy. When you are in your office, you hear all sorts of unhealthy talk. When you go to the shopping mall, you see all sorts of unhealthy things. But even if you feel defeated or overcome by the unhealthiness, remember that you cannot be separated from the Lord. The unhealthiness around you is normal. Let the environment bring you to Christ.

Third, you need to have the ability to draw the “life-juice” from the church life no matter what condition the church life is in. You may feel that it is only when the church life is “good” that you can get something out of it. But actually every church life has “life-juice” for you to grow. Perhaps in your locality the saints come to the meetings late. Many saints barely make the meetings at all. The saints that do come don’t even function. This is not necessarily healthy, but it is normal. You might think, “The church life where I am is so dead. What is the point of even coming to the meetings?” You should come to the meetings to gain life, receive life, release life, and impart life. The situation of your church life is the best for you. You may wish that you

were in another local church, but the church life where you are is actually the best place for you to draw out the “life-juice.” Otherwise you will not be able to enter into the experience of coral.

Finally, in order to grow you should never depart from the light, which is the living presence of Christ. In order to grow, coral must be attached to the ground. That means you must be attached to Christ and the church life. Then this coral must be in the light. That means you must remain in the Lord’s presence. All of these things together will cause you to grow in life.

**Having the Wool: Enjoying the Salvation of Christ Daily,
Both Judicially and Organically.**

*Applying the Effectiveness of the Blood of Jesus
to all Matters in our Daily Life*

*Though your sins are like scarlet, they will be as
white as snow; though they are as red as
crimson, they will be like wool.*

— Isaiah 1:18b

*Hiding Under the Blood of Jesus
and Declaring Him as Our Righteousness*

*Taking Christ in Our Daily Life through Both Defeats
and Victories, both Failures and Strengths*

Maturing in Christ with His Person and Maturity

*And His head and hair were as white as white
wool, as snow.*

— Revelation 1:14a

The next experience of the virtuous woman for us to apply is the wool. What is wool? It is enjoying the salvation of Christ daily, both judicially and organically. Judicially the Lord accomplished

redemption once for all. But our enjoyment of that judicial redemption is life-long. We need to apply the effectiveness of the blood of Jesus on all matters in our daily life. Isaiah 1:18 says, “Though your sins are like scarlet, they will be as white as snow; though they are as red as crimson, they will be like wool.” The word “wool” here shows the Lord’s cleansing ability. Suppose you feel that you are a defeated sister. You need to simply remember this verse. “Though you sins are as red as crimson, they will be like wool.”

What characterizes the woman of worth? She knows the meaning of wool. She purchases the wool and operates in the principle of wool. That means she constantly realizes, “The Lord is able to cleanse me. His blood can cleanse me from all my sinfulness and from all my weaknesses. I am nothing, and I am not able to do anything. But I can abide in the Lord’s cleansing blood.” Praise the Lord that we can all apply the effectiveness of the blood of Jesus. Furthermore, we can hide under the blood of Jesus and declare Him as our righteousness. What is the difference between these first two points? If you lose your temper, and then say, “Lord, cleanse me,” that is applying the effectiveness of the blood of Jesus. You become white as wool. But if you lose your temper again and again and again, you need to hide under the blood of Jesus and declare Him as your righteousness. You may vow never to lose your temper, and you may ask the Lord to keep you from losing your temper. You may repeat the verse, “I am crucified with Christ.” Yet your temper comes out again. At such a time you need to hide under the blood. Trust and declare that the Lord is your righteousness. You can tell the Lord, “Lord, I can’t help it. This is just who I am. But thank You that You are my Savior. I declare, Lord, that You are my righteousness.”

Then we need to take Christ in our daily life through both defeats and victories, both failures and strengths. This will eventually cause us to mature in Christ with His person and maturity. The Old Testament tells us, in Isaiah chapter one, that the Lord’s cleansing blood can make us white as wool. This happened the moment we were saved. But the New Testament tells us in

Revelation the Lord Jesus has hair like wool. Here wool represents Christ in His maturity. The more we experience the wool in the Old Testament, by being cleansed and hiding under the blood, the more we will experience the wool of the New Testament. We will take Christ in our daily life, and eventually mature in Christ with His person and maturity. This is the secret of growing in life. We should tell the Lord, “Lord, I am not so good. Actually, I am terrible. But I am thankful I am so terrible. Because of my condition, I really need Your cleansing blood. The more I apply Your blood and hide under Your blood, the more I enjoy You. Then by enjoying You I will be brought into maturity. Lord, I am terrible, but I am growing and maturing. Thank You, Lord.” This is how to apply the wool.

**Having the Flax: Possessing the Living Out of
the Humanity of Jesus Through
the Divine Attributes Constituted in Her**

Always Experiencing the Fine Work of the Spirit

*Firmly Attaching Ourselves to
the Lord and to the Church Life*

The virtuous woman not only has wool, but also flax. That means she possesses the living out of the humanity of Jesus through the divine attributes constituted in her. Sometimes you may see a sister that you haven't seen for years. You recognize that there is something growing with her. If you are with her every day, you don't see much. But after a long period of time, you see her growth. You know that flax is there. Something of the Lord's humanity is being lived out of her through the divine attributes constituted in her. For us to apply the flax, we first need to always experience the fine work of the Spirit. Then we need to firmly attach ourselves to the Lord and to the church life.

**Clothing Her Household with Scarlet:
Helping the Saints Experience the Redemptive Work of
Christ Unto the Reigning with Christ.**

Becoming a Source of Compassion and Understanding

*Willing to be with the Young Ones, Weak Ones,
and Defeated Ones*

Helping them to Enjoy the Redemptive Work of Christ

Helping them to be in Life to Reign with Christ

We have seen that a virtuous woman focuses on life. But eventually the saints who are with her also focus on life. The previous points - ruby, coral, wool, and flax - speak of the virtuous woman's growth in life as an individual. As the virtuous woman matures, her growth in life affects the whole church. She "clothes her household with scarlet." This means that she helps the saints experience the redemptive work of Christ, even unto the reigning of Christ. Not many sisters have this ability. Sisters, it is easy to see the problems in the church life and among the saints. But do you know how to clothe the saints with scarlet? This is the secret of enjoying the church life. Don't talk about so many problems, and don't put demands on the saints. A woman of worth does not grow only in life, but she clothes her household with scarlet. She becomes a source of compassion and understanding. Instead of seeing all the faults of the saints, she covers them. If someone is weak, or has a lot of problems, or has a peculiar disposition, the virtuous woman understands. Such compassion and understanding is greatly needed in the church life. These are the top virtues. Without these virtues the church life can never be built up. A woman of worth should exercise in such a virtuous way: "I don't care only about my own growth in life. I desire to clothe my household with scarlet. I want to become a source of compassion and understanding. I want to be with the young ones, the weak ones, and even the defeated ones. I want to help them enjoy the redemptive work of Christ. I want

to help them be in life to reign with Christ.” Sisters, if you exercise this way the church life will be blessed.

*She is not afraid of the snow for her household;
for all her household are clothed with scarlet.
— Proverbs 31:21*

In the church life we need sisters who can clothe the other saints with scarlet. It is too easy for us to see the faults in each other, to talk about the problems in the church life, and to expose other saints. We can even kill the very saints we love. Sisters, learn how to clothe your household with scarlet. When you see other sisters who have a lot of problems, remember that the Lord has saved them. The Lord is their Lord. You need to have compassion with understanding. Learn to protect and cover one another. This is a matter of life. It is easy for us to expose people who don't agree with us or who are a problem to us. But the virtuous woman clothes her whole household with scarlet. She doesn't just clothe one or two, or a few of her favorites. She clothes everyone in her household. That means the whole household, the whole church life, is protected by her. If you want to have a healthy and blessed church life, learn this secret. You have to see the saints the way the Lord sees them. No one is perfect, and no one is completely terrible. The Lord knows that everyone needs scarlet. Everyone needs the redemption of Christ. All the dear saints are covered by the Lord with His precious blood. This is a virtue that we all must practice. In the church life we should not only say, “I love you,” we should also say, “I cover you. I protect you. I am with you. If you are weak or defeated, I will exercise understanding and compassion.” If we are growing in life, then we will learn to clothe the other saints in scarlet.

**Making Herself Coverings of Tapestry:
Consecrating Herself for the Advanced Work of the Spirit**

*She makes herself coverings of tapestry; her
clothing is silk and purple.
— Proverbs 31:22*

Having the Ability to Rest in the Work of the Spirit

Acting and Walking in the Work of the Spirit

Bearing a Testimony of Maturity

The virtuous woman not only clothes others, but she makes herself coverings of tapestry. This means that she consecrates herself for a mature work of the Spirit. Because the Lord loves us, He is always working on us. His work is actually the sewing of a tapestry. A tapestry always has a pattern sewn into the fabric. Perhaps it is the pattern of a beautiful flower. That flower is not separate or added to the material, it is sewn into the material. This is actually hard work. A woman who sews a tapestry works according to a pattern. Eventually that pattern is sewn into the tapestry. Similarly, when the Lord looks at us He has a pattern in view. If we want to clothe our household with scarlet, it also means that we will allow the Lord to work on us so that a tapestry can be produced. For us to become a tapestry we need three things. First, we must have the ability to rest in the work of the Spirit. Second, we need to act and walk in the work of the Spirit. Third, we need to bear a testimony of maturity. After the Lord works on our person, eventually there is a pattern that is manifested. This is the testimony of maturity. Others will say about us, “This person is special. She testifies of the Lord.”

**Clothed with Fine Linen and Purple Cloth:
Becoming Constituted with the Humanity of Jesus
and Being Royal**

*She makes herself coverings of tapestry; her
clothing is silk and purple.
— Proverbs 31:22*

Furthermore, the virtuous woman is clothed with fine linen and purple cloth. This means that she is becoming constituted with the humanity of Jesus, and that she is royal. When we grow in life, our living should eventually be like fine linen. There should be the fine expression of Christ. Also, our living should be like purple cloth. There should be something royal and dignified about us. This is greatly needed in the church life. Sisters who focus on life and grow into maturity will be clothed with fine linen and purple cloth. There will be something fine, dignified, and royal in their humanity.

**Making Fine Linen and Selling It: Bringing Other Saints
into the Fine Humanity of Jesus**

*She makes fine linen and sells it; and delivers
girdles unto the merchant.
— Proverbs 31:24*

The virtuous woman not only is clothed with fine linen herself. She makes fine linen and sells it. She brings other saints into the fine humanity of Jesus.

***She is Not Only a Good Example, but Also a Model for the
Saints to Pattern Themselves After***

The virtuous woman is a wonderful example. However, she is not only a good example, but also a model for the saints to pattern themselves after. In other words, when you see the virtuous woman you have an admiration for her. She causes you

to think, “I hope one day I can be like her. Whatever priced she paid, I would like to pay the same price. If she can mature like this, I would like to have the same maturity.” The young sisters in the church life not only need good examples, they need models to pattern themselves after. They need to see the fine humanity in the mature sisters, which causes them to desire to pay the price for the same maturity.

She Is Able Not Only to Impart Life, But Also to Teach

***She Not Only Pays the Price for Maturity Herself,
but also Encourages All the Saints to Pay the Price***

The virtuous woman is not only able to impart life, but also to teach. And she not only pays a price for maturity, she encourages all the saints to pay the price. Whenever she is present, other saints realize that they need to pursue Christ. Sisters, as you go on in the church life you should be very strong and desperate. “I not only want to be an example, I also want to be a model. I will pay a price. I hope that by my paying a price, the other saints will also be willing to pay a price.” Then you will be a marvelous pattern.

***The Godly Living of the Humanity of Jesus
in Her Generates the Desire in Many Saints to
Pay a Price to Attain the Same Living***

The virtuous woman lives out the humanity of Jesus. The godly living of the humanity of Jesus in her generates the desire in many saints to pay a price to obtain the same living. There are two Hebrew words for fine linen. The first word is *shesh*, used in verse 22, which comes from *shayish*, the word for alabaster. This shows that fine linen is not only for covering but is also a matter of constitution. Remember the flask of alabaster that was broken upon the Lord? The word for alabaster and the word for fine linen are the same. This means that the weaving of the fine linen eventually becomes your constitution. In other words, the living out of the humanity of Jesus just becomes your very person. Fine linen is not only for a covering, it is also a matter of constitution.

Furthermore, the second word is *cadiyn*, used in verse 24, which comes from a root meaning “to envelop” (“to cover”). This fine linen is a material for people to possess, which shows that people must grow into their constitution. Young sisters, do you desire to pay a price for the high spiritual things? Do you know that to grow in life requires a high price? Then do you realize that it takes time for you to grow into your constitution? Growing in life ends up with the matter of constitution. Eventually the Lord Jesus will work on you by “sewing” on you. Then the fine linen will not be something theoretical to talk about, but it will be like alabaster. It will be your very constitution. It will not be something outward, but something inward. Your experience of fine linen will be something so real and subjective, yet it will also be so practical and applicable for other people to learn from. When you are young, it is easy to say, “I am for the Lord! I am for the Lord’s testimony! I don’t care about my future! I only care for the Lord’s interests!” This is precious, and it is truly fine linen. But it will still take you many years for that fine material to become a piece of stone, like alabaster. It takes many years of paying a price for the fine linen to become your constitution. Sisters, can we all tell the Lord that we desire such maturity of life? Not only do we want fine linen, but we want our fine linen to be as alabaster. This is the consummation of our growth in life.

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