

Escorted to Christ

The principle of being measured

The Bible reveals a divine principle that governs God's relationship with man. That principle is the principle of measurement. God works with fallen man on the basis of this principle. First, He measures man according to His standard. Then, this divine measurement becomes a demand upon man. This demand, in turn, reveals man's shortness and failure. Finally, man's realization of his failure is intended by God to escort him to Christ. In other words, the measurement and the subsequent demand of God is for one thing — to escort us to Christ to experience Him as our all.

God desires to be man's life-supply. The way He fulfills this desire is by first measuring man to expose his shortness; second, by this measuring He escorts man out of his own resources into God Himself as his boundless supply.

Thus, in God's economy the measuring Word of God is always intended to produce a standard beyond man's ability and capacity. Indeed, God's Word with its divine measurement and high demand, which far exceeds man's natural capacity, is the same word that escorts man to God Himself over and over again. It is this principle that we see governing God's relationship with fallen man, both in the Old Testament under the law and in the New Testament under the higher demand of the law as revealed in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5—7). Thus, we can say that *man's extremity* becomes *God's opportunity*.

The demand of the law

The demand of the law pushes man beyond his capacity. It exhausts him of his resources. When the law

makes its demand upon the flesh, the flesh cannot do it. This failure results in a sense of discouragement within fallen man. He is discouraged because of his inability to measure up to the law of God. Of course, according to the principle of measurement, this is precisely what God intends to produce in man. Indeed, that weak feeling of inability and our discouragement over it become God's way of escorting us to Another life!

This principle is addressed by the apostle Paul in Galatians 3:21-24: ²¹ "Is then the law against the promises of God? Absolutely not! For if a law had been given which was able to give life, righteousness would have indeed been of law. ²² But the Scripture has shut up all under sin in order that the promise out of faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. ²³ But before faith came we were guarded under law, being shut up unto the faith which was to be revealed. ²⁴ So then the law has become our child-conductor [Greek: escort, or guide] unto Christ that we might be justified out of faith." We can see from these verses that the law has become our escort unto Christ. The law could not *give* life, but it did *lead* and *escort* us to life.

In Romans 7 the apostle Paul is a prime example of a person in whom this principle was operating. He was struggling with the demand of the law expressed in the tenth commandment, "You shall not covet." Unlike the other nine commandments that are related to actions, this particular commandment is a commandment on reactions. Basically, the Ten Commandments are commandments on actions, for example, "You shall not kill," "You shall not commit adultery," and "You shall not steal." These are commandments against certain actions. But God so designed the Ten Commandments that they would

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also include a commandment on reactions. In other words, no one escapes being short when measured by the high demand of God's Word.

The tenth commandment is "You shall not covet," or "You shall not feel that way," or "You shall not react the way you are reacting." It is a commandment on reactions. The tenth commandment shows how deep sin is in our being. Sin is not just in our actions, it is in our reactions. God's law exposes sin to the core of our nature, not merely on the surface of our being. Our very reactions are wrong and come short of the divine measurement. We are void of the divine love in our reactions. Thus, our fleshly reactions show us that we are sinful at a deeper level than outward actions.

With the apostle Paul in Romans 7, the tenth commandment was a demand upon his inner being. What he did not want to do, even what he hated, is what he found himself doing. This chapter reveals the frustration of a man trying to be right, but continuously falling back into the sinful habits and patterns that he was in bondage to. The law as the divine standard and measurement did its work upon Paul — it exposed his inability and weakness.

When we come to the end of Romans 7, we find a man who has been defeated again and again. He is defeated to the point of utter frustration, discouragement, and wretchedness. He cries out in Romans 7:24, "Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from the body of this death?" Thus, the law did a perfect work over Paul — it escorted him to Another life. It guided him out of himself to Christ. It so measured him that he no longer was looking at himself or expecting anything from himself. He was absolutely turned to Another source — Another life. In Romans 7:25 Paul breaks out and says, "Thanks be to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord!" This is an expression of a man who has been escorted to Christ. Amen!

However, many times when believers are being measured by the Lord, instead of being escorted to Christ, they are left in discouragement and depression. They are left with hopeless feelings, feelings of not making it and wanting to give up. Thus, it is imperative to see that the demand of the law is the principle that governs God's dealings with man. This demand is designed by God to produce certain effects in man — feelings of failure and frustration. It is these very feelings that serve to escort us to Christ. God uses our frustration to lead us to Another source and life that we might learn to become a partaker of Christ, our life.

The demand of the Lord's sayings

The Lord not only measures us by the law, but even more, He measures us by what He taught in Matthew 5—7. The Lord's sayings in this section of the Word reveal a higher demand than the Old Testament law. In Matthew

5:17-20 the Lord says,¹⁷ "Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have not come to abolish, but to fulfill."¹⁸ For truly I say to you, Until heaven and earth pass away, one *iota* or one *serif* shall by no means pass away from the law until all come to pass.¹⁹ Therefore whoever annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called the least in the kingdom of the heavens; but whoever practices and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of the heavens.²⁰ For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall by no means enter into the kingdom of the heavens."

When the Lord speaks of having a surpassing righteousness for entering into the kingdom, He is applying a finer measurement with a much higher demand than the law. The standard of the law could be compared to measuring in "inches," but the Lord's sayings in Matthew 5—7 could be compared to measuring in "picas," which are a fraction of an inch. This means the measurement is much finer and more detailed.

The Lord's word in Matthew 5—7 measures our emotions, our attitudes, our reactions, our exaggerations, our comments about others — He measures it all! He measures our heart, He measures what we think, He measures the fantasies in our mind, He measures how we look at others, He measures lust, He measures anxiety. He measures how we react in situations that touch our selfishness and personal convenience, for example, going two miles instead of one, or giving our outward coat as well as our inner garment. Nothing escapes being measured.

If we were discouraged by the law of Moses, we are even more discouraged by Matthew 5—7. Indeed, the Lord reaches the point of saying in Matthew 5:48, "You therefore shall be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect." Perfection in this verse is the demand to love exactly as the Father loves. It is not merely putting up with our enemies, but praying for them and blessing them. Such a measuring of our love finds us all short, but at the same time escorts us to Christ as our life and life-supply. When we are escorted to Christ, we become *partakers* of His love. This is why the Lord begins Matthew 5—7 with "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens" (Matt. 5:3). When we are poor in spirit we realize, for example, that in ourselves we do not have the divine love toward our enemies; we realize we are nothing, and we can do nothing. It is this sense of nothingness that escorts us to Christ. The Lord's high standard is intended to cause disappointment over ourselves, in order that we would be drawn away from our own energy and strength to the energy and strength of Another life.

When the Lord said, "I have not come to abolish [the law or the prophets], but to fulfill," He meant that *He Himself* would be the fulfillment of all that He taught and

commanded. In other words, it was as though He were saying, “I am living the perfect life. I am overcoming sin, the flesh, the world, and the devil. I am bearing the penalty for sin. I am going to be raised from the dead, and I will become a life-giving Spirit to enter into you and fulfill in you all that I have spoken. Everything is now embodied in Me! Now just learn how to draw from Me, drink of Me, feed upon Me, depend upon Me, and abide in Me. Let your need and sense of nothingness, which comes from being measured by the divine standard, escort you into all that I am!” Amen!

The demand of our environment

Being measured and confronted by the divine demands is always for the purpose of escorting us to Christ. God uses not only the law and the Sermon on the Mount to measure us, but He also uses our environment. Our environment makes demands upon us that cause us to sense our frailty and weakness. How we meet our environments, face them, and interact with them is used by God to escort us to Christ. Environments include your husband, your wife, your children, your money, your job — all persons, matters, and things in your daily life that affect you. In fact, environment, according to the biblical understanding, is simply *that which affects us*. A stormy relationship can affect us, money problems can affect us, taking a thought about a past mistake can affect us. Whatever may affect us — this is environment. Environment is like the law making a demand upon us that is beyond our capacity to handle. Just as the law escorts us to Christ, God intends that our environmental trials would also escort us to Christ. This means that we accept the “all things” of Romans 8:28 as being under God’s sovereignty. Categorically, all things are working together for good, because under the mighty hand of God they escort us to Christ.

Environment, which is measured out by God, is always pushing us a little bit too far. We have environments that we cannot cope with in ourselves. We get discouraged, we get depressed, we turn inward upon ourselves — we sigh, “how can I go on?” or “I can’t make it.” Oh! brothers and sisters, that’s right! That’s exactly right! God intends that our environments push us beyond our limits.

This experience of being pushed beyond what we’re able to do becomes our guide to escort us to Christ. This was Paul’s experience in 2 Corinthians 1:8-10: ⁸ “For we do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, of our affliction which befell us in Asia, that we were excessively burdened, beyond our power, so that we despaired even of living. ⁹ Indeed we ourselves had the response of death in ourselves, that we should not base our confidence on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead; ¹⁰ Who has

delivered us out of so great a death, and will deliver us; in whom we have hoped that He will also yet deliver us.” Here Paul allowed his “despair of living” to escort him to the God who raises the dead, knowing that He would deliver him. Thus, again and again, every kind of demand in our environment is actually a divine escort in disguise to lead us to Christ.

A further example of the Lord’s speaking concerning what He intends to accomplish through environmental dealings is found in Deuteronomy 8:2-3: ² “And you shall remember that the LORD your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. ³ So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD.”

When the Lord said, “to humble you and test you,” He meant “to measure you.” When He said, “to know what was in your heart,” He meant that in their hearts, the children of Israel would discover murmuring and rebellion manifesting itself, and they would find themselves coming short of God’s standard. In other words, all their negative reactions to their environment were allowed by God to escort them to live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

The fact that the Lord allowed them to hunger and then fed them with manna signifies that they were pushed beyond their capacity in order that they would be escorted to eat divine food. Not to “live by bread alone” meant not to live by the natural life, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord. God was seeking to escort them in the wilderness to learn to live by Him as their source and supply.

In the same way, God humbles us through environments that we just can’t cope with. It’s at these junctures that we need to quickly recognize our escort! The feelings of not being able to cope *are* the escort. Our escorts which lead us to Christ come in the form of frustrations, desperate feelings, and failures. We need to recognize these escorts and allow them to guide us to live by manna! That is, we allow them to guide us to live by Christ as our bread!

The law is beyond our capacity. The Lord’s sayings in Matthew 5—7 are beyond our capacity! Our environments also push us beyond our capacity! All of these things are absolutely God’s favor to us, because He is not leaving us to ourselves. He exhausts us. He allows us to be defeated and feel discouraged. But the problem is this — we do not see that discouragement is our escort to Christ! May the Lord open our eyes to see what is happening to us in the midst of our reactions, that we might

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Access to God by the Blood of Christ

Guilt and fear are two emotions that believers often cope with in their Christian life. When we are newly saved or when we are in the enjoyment of the Lord's presence, we sometimes feel that we could never sin again because the Lord is so real and living to us! We can hardly imagine living again in the flesh or for worldly pleasures. We want to give our whole life to the Lord to please Him. Yet, after a short while, we find that our old nature and our fallen flesh have risen up, and we have sinned. Perhaps we became angry and spoke some harsh words, or we said something that was not accurate and was even misleading, or we allowed our minds to indulge in lustful thoughts for long periods of time, or we listened to and engaged in off-color conversations or gossip. Whatever it may be, we find that as Christians we still commit sins. And with sin comes a guilty conscience.

As a believer our conscience has become enlivened by the Holy Spirit and is much more sensitive than when we were unbelievers. Thus, when a Christian sins, his conscience is smitten with shame and guilt. And with guilt comes fear. What often happens is that we lose our boldness toward God. Before, we had confidence in our fellowship with God; but now we feel timid and fearful. We become convinced that He must surely be disappointed and unhappy with us. Hence, to relieve our feelings of guilt and fear, we resort to performing good works to outweigh our sins; or we let time pass, hoping that our sins will slowly fade from our memory.

Regrettably, the lives of many believers are characterized by this fruitless cycle — sin, guilt, fear, and the employment of various methods to relieve our conscience. Yet, God never intended that we live the Christian life in this way. In fact, God desires to break this cycle in order to release us and to usher us into continual fellowship with Him. How does God do this? What is God's answer for the guilty conscience of the believer?

We must first realize that all our activities to appease God and restore our fellowship are of no value to Him. They are utterly useless. Regardless of how sincere or diligent we may be in our attempts to relieve our conscience and gain boldness before Him, such efforts amount to nothing in the heavenly evaluation.

We must see that in regard to our sins, only one thing has any effect before His throne — and that one thing is the blood of Jesus Christ.

The Blood Is Precious to God

Why does God regard the blood of Christ? Because it is so valuable to Him. The apostle Peter tells us that the blood of Jesus is "precious blood, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot." The blood of Christ is so precious because Christ lived a perfect human life. He never sinned. He lived every moment of every day in perfect obedience to the Father. The blood of every other man is common to God because all other men have sinned. But Christ was the Lamb of God without blemish and without spot. As a result, His blood is perfect. Moreover, the blood of Christ is precious to God because it is the blood of His Son. Jesus Christ was not only a genuine man, but He was also the Son of God. He was not only human, but also divine. Hence, His blood has eternal and universal value before God.

Because of these two factors — Jesus' perfect human life and His being the eternal Son of God — the blood of Christ has great value in the heavenlies. The Bible tells us that after Jesus died on the cross for our sins, His blood was offered to the Father at His throne in heaven to redeem us. And God's righteousness was satisfied by Jesus' blood. God's wrath for sin was appeased. The blood of Jesus was effective to propitiate God for all our sins.

There Is Power in the Blood

Therefore, there is power in the blood of Christ! It takes great power to cleanse us from the stain of our sins. It takes great power to satisfy God's righteousness. It takes great power to obtain redemption and forgiveness of sin. It takes great power to purify our conscience. And praise the Lord, there is ample power in the blood of Christ to do all this for us.

Sometimes we think that our sins are too great or too numerous to be forgiven. We surmise that God can forgive most sins, but the one which we have committed is just too large even for the blood of Christ. However, the Scripture says, "the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin." Notice that it says *all* sin. Not just small sins, but *all* sins. The only reason we would even consider that our sins are too great for the

blood of Christ is because we have not really seen how powerful and efficacious the blood is before God. In eternity we will appreciate much more the preciousness and power of the blood of Christ. In fact, the Bible reveals that much of our worship, praise, and singing in eternity will be related to the blood.

But while we are on this earth, we need to see that only the blood can truly cleanse our conscience and release us from the guilt of sin. If we confess our sins to God, He is faithful to forgive us and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Again, there is no power in our human methods to deal with our sins. God's appointed way is the blood of His Son. God values the blood. Now the eyes of our heart need to be enlightened to see what He sees. We need the Spirit to show us how precious and powerful is the blood of Christ. We need to value the blood as the Father does. And as our appreciation for the blood increases, we will realize that our sins are no match for the blood of Christ. His blood has the power to cleanse *any* sin!

Access to God

The New Testament clearly reveals that because of the blood of Christ, we have constant access to the throne of God, to God's holy presence. We can maintain continual fellowship with the Spirit, based on the blood. Our access has nothing to do with our condition or our record of performance. The sole basis for entrance to the Lord's presence is the ever-efficacious blood of Christ.

Suppose I had a good week — I lived a pretty good and victorious Christian life. I faithfully read my Bible. I fasted and prayed. I did not argue with my spouse. That "good week" does not qualify me to have bold access to God. Or, suppose I had a bad week — I lived in the flesh and was defeated. I neglected my Bible. I slept in and had no time for prayer. I had several arguments with my spouse. That "bad week" does not disqualify me from bold access to God. My week has absolutely nothing to do with my access to God. It instead has solely to do with the blood of Christ. And the value of the blood never fluctuates. The power of the blood never wavers. The efficacy of the blood is not increased by my good works, nor is it decreased by my bad works. The blood is simply not affected by my condition or performance. The blood derives its power from the Lamb of God who is appearing before God on our behalf. Its value is eternal and unwavering.

At this moment Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God is seated on the throne in heaven. God the Father is always beholding the Lamb who was slain and who has obtained an eternal redemption for us. The Bible says that Jesus' blood is continually "speaking" in heaven on our behalf. So what the Father both sees and hears is the Lamb, His blood, and the efficacy of His redemption. He does not see our failure or condition. The Father is unceasingly reminded by the Son that all His redeemed children are forgiven and cleansed. The Father is constantly being refreshed by the fact that all His believers have unhindered access to Him. Jesus Christ is our Advocate, our attorney before God, always stating our case. He is our surety, our guaranty, always assuring our bold entrance to God's presence in the Holy of Holies.

Practical Application

Thus, when we sin, we need only do one thing — confess our sin to the Father. Once we have confessed, we then need to exercise our faith to believe the Word of God—that we are indeed cleansed and forgiven! All feelings of guilt and fear should be laid aside. We need not let time pass, nor do we need to perform good works to earn our way back to God. We simply need to believe that the blood of Christ alone has given us access to God.

We then need to come forward to the throne of God. If the blood has given us access, then we must avail ourselves of it. Come by prayer, by calling on His name, by singing and praising Him. Just come forward to the presence and enjoyment of God. Thank Him for the value and power of His blood and for the access it affords you.

Finally, come to Him with all boldness. There is no need to be timid. God is not impressed with our timid groveling over sin — He is impressed with those who appreciate the value of the blood and approach Him with boldness.

Scripture References:

The blood of Christ is precious: 1 Pet. 1:18-19; John 1:29; Exo. 12:5-7; Heb. 4:15

The power and efficacy of the blood: Rom. 3:24-25; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:20; Heb. 9:11-14, 24; 12:24; 1 John 1:7—2:2; Rev. 1:5; 5:9; 7:14; 22:14

Bold access to God by the blood: Heb. 4:16; 10:19-22; Eph. 2:13, 18; 3:12

— Kirk Eland

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seize our discouragement and let it escort us to Christ.

Have you had any escorts lately? Praise the Lord! There is great hope in our escorts. They turn defeat into hope. The most defeated can use their very defeat as an escort to Christ. Whatever the Lord may expose in our lives — our reasoning mind, our divided heart, our motives — causes us to feel undone, naked, and defeated before Him. We need to realize at that time that the Lord is simply escorting us to Himself. Paul indicates this in Hebrews 4:13: “And there is no creature that is not manifest before Him, but all things are naked and laid bare to the eyes of Him to whom we are to give our account.” Following this verse in which we are exposed to the core of our being, Paul says in Hebrews 4:16, “Let us therefore come forward with boldness to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace for timely help.” This speaks of being escorted to Christ *at the very time* of being naked and laid bare. Thus, all the demands and all the defeats are our personal escorts to Christ.

The demands of the law, the demands of the Sermon on the Mount, and the demands of our environment are all arranged by God to lead us out of our own limited capacity and ability. God’s intention is to bring us into Another life. He wants us to touch the life that has already made it into glory! Touch the life Who is the victory! Touch the life that now dwells in our spirit!

Now we need to know how to turn to Christ in the midst of our problems and defeats. That is, we need to know how to touch the spirit and how to partake of the One that we are being escorted to. Without this turn to Christ we will still languish in ourselves. But brothers and sisters, there’s an installation in us! It is the installation of the Triune God. The Father is in the Son, the Son flows as the Spirit, and the Spirit is joined to our spirit (John 14:20; 7:37-39; 1 Cor. 6:17). When we open our mouths and contact such a God, we open ourselves to all the riches of the Godhead as our supply. Amen!

There is nothing that is too hard for Christ. He has already been perfected for us and become the source of our salvation (Heb. 5:9). So what should we do with our defeatedness, our sense of discouragement, our reactions that say “I can’t do that! I can’t be that way! I can’t love that way!”? Simply allow all these to become escorts to lead us to Christ.

The demand of the church life

The demand of the church life is another kind of experience that God uses to escort us to a richer and deeper Christ. This demand comes with the revelation of the church that is according to the New Testament apostles. Once we see the church by revelation, we see how short we are in our ability to live such a life. The most basic point related to the demand of the church life is to love like

Christ loves. The church life requires loving one another, not only *with* Christ’s love, but *in* His love — loving as Christ loves, loving all the saints for the building up of His unique one body. This requires the divine love, the kind of love that is beyond our capacity, the kind of love that we don’t have in ourselves.

The kind of church life described in the New Testament requires a higher and deeper love than we have in our natural life. We are called to love sinners. We are called to love those who are unfinished, who are still in the process of being transformed. We are called to love weak and oftentimes failing saints. Divine love is Calvary love — the love demonstrated on the cross. It is love that flows out to despicable kinds of people — ugly people, hateful people, dirty people, rebellious people, deceived people. The love of God in Christ is all-embracing and full of forbearance and longsuffering.

To have the church life that is unveiled in the pages of the New Testament demands this kind of divine love. It is a church life that is beyond the reach of our natural man. In ourselves we do not have the capacity to love one another the way Christ loves us. But that’s okay! When we see the demand of the church life with its measurement, it should produce a sinking feeling in our self-life. But that sinking feeling, if properly understood, is really an escort to guide us to Christ. While we are sinking in a feeling of despair over ourselves, we begin to confess our inability and emptiness by saying, “Lord, there is nothing in myself that could live the church life with the disposition of the divine love toward all the saints. But I thank You, Lord, for Your life in my spirit that can strengthen me. By Your strengthening You can make home in my heart to love through me with Your love.” This kind of sinking, yet confessing, prayer is an escort to Christ. When we are overwhelmed with the demand of the church life we are put more and more into contact with Another life that can supply us with divine love. Thus, the demand escorts us to Christ. Amen!

In the book of Ezekiel we see this principle of measurement at work. The last chapters of this book, describing the details of the temple, are a portrayal in typology of the church life in the New Testament. For example, in Ezekiel 43:10-12 we read,¹⁰ “Son of man, describe the temple to the house of Israel that they may be ashamed of their iniquities; and let them measure the pattern.”¹¹ And if they are ashamed of all that they have done make known to them the design of the temple and its arrangement, its exits and its entrances, its entire design and all its ordinances, all its forms and all its laws. Write it down in their sight, so that they may keep its whole design and all its ordinances, and perform them.¹² This is the law of the temple: The whole area surrounding the mountaintop shall be most holy. Behold, this is the law of the temple.” When Ezekiel had the vision of the temple,

he was to measure the pattern. This means that everything related to the temple was measured according to the divine plan with its divine dimensions. That measurement exposed the state of the children of Israel. If they would allow the measurement to produce shame for their iniquities, then that kind of response would escort them to God and deeper into the details of His building for His satisfaction.

The measuring process is opened up to us in Ezekiel 47:1, 3-5: ¹“Then he brought me back to the door of the temple; and there was water, flowing from under the threshold of the temple toward the east, for the front of the temple faced east; the water was flowing from under the right side of the temple, south of the altar. . . .³ Then, when the man went out to the east with the line in his hand, he measured one thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the water came up to my ankles. ⁴ Again he measured one thousand and brought me through the waters; the water came up to my knees. Again he measured one thousand and brought me through; the water came up to my waist. ⁵ Again he measured one thousand, and it was a river that I could not cross; for the water was too deep, water in which one must swim, a river that could not be crossed.” Thus, Ezekiel had a wonderful, marvelous escort that brought him through the measuring process.

We are all being measured. Our mind is measured under certain environments. For example, when we consider the matter of giving to the Lord, we are being measured. Our reasoning comes in, “I can’t give.” This environment is for the purpose of being escorted through the waters and brought into another level of life. In other words, this escort is an escort into life-supply. This supply will take us in our experience into a deeper Christ — a Christ beyond what we can ask or think. Here in Ezekiel there is a measurement over the house, and the measurement is according to the divine standard. Ezekiel is measured and escorted through the waters into more life-supply for a purpose — that water could flow out of the temple, God’s house.

In the New Testament we are measured by the demand of the church life revealed by the apostles. It is not the kind of church life found in present-day Christianity with its shallowness and outwardness. The kind of church life in the New Testament is not denominational. It has nothing to do with being a Baptist, a Methodist, a member of a Free Church, a charismatic, etc. The church life revealed in the Bible is without division. All genuine believers are members one of another. All are organically related to each other by Christ, and Christ alone! And all are being built up with one another in love, experiencing the cross with one another and practically meeting together in the oneness of the Spirit.

In contrast, in today’s divided church, the self-life is not touched that deeply. In fact, you can remain in many

places in the professing Christian world and never really be measured by the Lord. It is not a church life that demands everything in your life. It does not push you beyond the limit of yourself. It is only a convenient, so-called church life that totally centers on meeting your need, rather than creating a need in you to be escorted to Another life.

The church that is according to man’s thought does not escort you to Christ. But the revelation of the church in the divine thought pushes you beyond your capacity, with the goal of escorting you to Christ. For example, the measurement of the church in the book of Ephesians goes far beyond our limited concept of the church. To have such a church life requires a deeper and higher experience of Christ. That is why Paul prays two specific prayers for the believers in Ephesians. We need to see the church by revelation and we need to feel the church by our hearts being full of Christ and His knowledge-surpassing love. Then we experience forgiving one another, enduring, suffering long, keeping the oneness of the Spirit in the bond of peace, and not being blown by the wind of teaching. We find ourselves going beyond what we could ask or think in relation to living a more committed church life. The seeming impossibility of this kind of church life described in Ephesians is in itself an escort to Christ. The church according to God’s thought goes beyond the ability of our natural self and demands that we be escorted to Christ as our life.

When we talk about the church and giving our whole being to the church life, we may feel we can’t make it. We just don’t have the disposition for it. Our coming up short produces a kind of discouragement. Again, we have to say, according to the divine principle of measurement, God uses this discouragement to escort us to Christ.

The church, in God’s thought, requires Another disposition that we do not have in ourselves. That is why we are escorted to Christ. Paul prays this way — that we would be strengthened into our inner man, that Christ would come in and possess us, and even make home and settle down in our heart. It is by our being escorted to Christ that we will have the capacity for the church life.

Oftentimes, we’ve been left with our flat, demoralized feelings. The demand of the law was there, the demand of the Lord’s sayings was present, the demand of our environment was upon us, and the demand of the church life was ever before us. All these things were like high demands, yet we did not realize the demands were our escorts to lead us to “the rock that is higher than I.” Hear what the Psalmist declares to the Lord: “From the end of the earth I will cry to You, when my heart is overwhelmed; lead me to the rock that is higher than I” (Psa. 61:2). This illustrates the proper understanding of being measured and escorted to Christ.

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The demand of the kingdom

The divine principle of demand and measurement, which governs God's relationship with man, extends to the realm of the kingdom. The demand of the kingdom life is indeed beyond man's ability, as we see from the Lord's conversation with the rich young ruler in the Gospels. In Matthew 19:16-17 we read, ¹⁶ "And behold, someone came to Him and said, Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?" ¹⁷ And He said to him, Why do you ask Me concerning what is good? There is only One who is good. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments." Then the Lord graciously presented the various commandments. To this, the young man replied, ²⁰ "All these things I have kept. What do I still lack?" In answer to this question the Lord took the tenth commandment and applied it to the young man's life: ²¹ "Jesus said to him, If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in the heavens; and come, follow Me." The young man's response to this word should have escorted him to Another life. Instead, verse 22 says, "But the young man, hearing this word, went away sorrowing, for he had many possessions."

The young man's reaction to the demand of the kingdom to sell all was typical of fallen man — he was covetous and he was not willing to sell his possessions. In other words, he failed the test. The Lord measured him by the tenth commandment and he was found wanting. The Lord then said to His disciples in verses 23-24, "Truly I say to you, Only with difficulty will a rich man enter into the kingdom of the heavens. ²⁴ And again I say to you, It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." By these words the Lord revealed the high demand of the kingdom life in relationship to man's lust and desires. Then we read how the disciples responded: ²⁵ "And when the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished and said, Who then can be saved?" Again, the Lord had pushed the demand of the kingdom to the utter limits. Who is willing to give up all their possessions for the sake of the kingdom? This demand produced a reaction of astonishment in the disciples. They imagined that it was impossible then for anyone to be saved. Thus, the demand of the kingdom is stringent and absolute, altogether unachievable to the natural man. As we have seen, when God presents this kind of demand, it is His way of escorting man to Himself.

To the disciples' question, "Who can be saved?" the Lord replies: ²⁶ "And looking upon them, Jesus said to them, With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." This word indicates that the sorrowing feelings of the young man over his lack of willingness should not have led him away from the Lord; rather they

should have escorted him to the Lord. By being escorted to the Lord, he could draw from Him all the possibilities in His life. The young man had the right reaction to the demand of the kingdom in that he felt sorrowful over his greediness and recognized that in himself he could not let go of his possessions. At that juncture he should have allowed his inadequate feelings to escort him to the God who makes all things possible.

To properly understand the Christian life we need to apprehend this divine principle that governs God's relationship with man. That is, wherever there is demand from God, there is always supply waiting to meet that demand. We need only to be escorted to the source of the supply. Whether it is the demand of the law, the Sermon on the Mount, our environmental dealings, the church life, or the kingdom — all are to lead us to Christ to interact and fellowship with Him that we might partake of His victorious life.

May this word govern us the rest of our lives, that we would realize again and again that our weaknesses are our escorts out of ourselves into Another life. So, today when our flesh reacts to the Lord's measurement, instead of staying in the reaction, or fueling the reaction, we need to allow the reaction to bring us to Christ in a specific way. Various kinds of reactions — discouragements, defeats, and temptations — are all our escorts to experience more of Christ.

Brothers, yes, your flesh is lustful. Your lustful feelings affect you in a negative way, but walk in the Spirit and you will turn those feelings into paths to Christ. None of us can change our flesh (John 3:6). It is irreparable and unchangeable. However, while we are still in these mortal bodies as redeemed children of God, God uses the flesh to lead us to Christ over and over again! Therefore, when we allow our greatest weakness to escort us to Christ, it will become the factor of our greatest supply of life.

— Bill Freeman

the Christian

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