

NORDIC-BALTIC CONFERENCE

(Hybrid: in-person and online)

July 21-24, 2023

Hosted by the church in Oslo

Outlines

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2431 W. La Palma Ave., Anaheim, CA 92801 U.S.A.
P. O. Box 2121, Anaheim, CA 92814 U.S.A.

**GENERAL SUBJECT:
CRUCIAL ASPECTS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE AT THE END OF THE AGE**

Message One

Living to the Lord

Scripture Reading: 2 Cor. 5:14-15; Rom. 14:7-8

- I. In 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 Paul does not speak of living for the Lord, by the Lord, or with the Lord; instead, he speaks of living to the Lord:**
- A. To live to the Lord is to take Him as the aim of our living; in everything we do Christ should be our unique aim—Rom. 14:7-8.
 - B. To live to the Lord means that we are under the leading and constraint of the Lord to fulfill His demand, satisfy His desire, and accomplish His purpose—2 Tim. 1:9; 3:10.
- II. Christ died for our sins so that we may be forgiven, and He died for us so that we may live to Him—1 Cor. 15:3; 2 Cor. 5:14-15:**
- A. Christ's death not only saves us from death so that we do not need to die, but also causes us, through His resurrection, to live no longer to ourselves but to Him:
 - 1. To live to ourselves means that we are under our own control and direction and that we care for our own aims and goals.
 - 2. To live to the Lord means that we are under the Lord's control and direction and that we want to satisfy Him and fulfill His purpose.
 - B. Living to the Lord is deeper in significance than living for the Lord—Rom. 14:7-8:
 - 1. *To the Lord* implies that we are the Lord's possession, that we already belong to Him; *for the Lord* implies that we are still our own and are according to our pleasure and convenience.
 - 2. Living for the Lord implies that I and the Lord are still two; living to the Lord indicates that I am one with the Lord, as the wife is one with the husband in married life.
- III. Living to the Lord is based upon the fact that we are the Lord's; we belong to Him—Rom. 14:8:**
- A. We need to realize that the Lord bought us with the great price of His precious blood—1 Cor. 6:19-20; 1 Pet. 1:18-19.
 - B. Now He is our Lord and Master, and we belong to Him.
 - C. All that we have, all that we do, and all that we are is to Him; everything is wholly to Him, and now we should live to Him.
- IV. As a whole, 2 Corinthians 4 and 5 reveal that to live to the Lord means to live the kind of life that the Lord Jesus lived:**
- A. Paul experienced the putting to death of Jesus so that the life of Jesus might be manifested in his body—4:10-11.
 - B. When we experience the putting to death of Jesus, we can live the kind of life Jesus lived—a crucified life; therefore, to live to the Lord is to live a crucified life.
 - C. When we live to Christ, we do not live by our outer man; rather, we live by our inner man, by our regenerated spirit—v. 16.

D. Living to the Lord in 2 Corinthians 5:14 is equal to walking according to the spirit in Romans 8:4.

**V. The love of Christ constrains us to live to Him and not to ourselves—
2 Cor. 5:14-15:**

- A. The apostles were determined to live to the Lord, to be well pleasing to Him; they were absolutely under the Lord, under His leading, restraint, and control, and everything they did was for the accomplishment of the Lord's desire and purpose—vv. 9, 15.
- B. We should not seek to please ourselves but to please the Lord by living to Him—v. 15.
- C. If we would live to the Lord, we must be constrained by the love of Christ; this love limits us, confining us to the narrow way that leads to the unique aim—Christ Himself—v. 14.

**VI. We live to the Lord through His resurrection, the issue of His death—
v. 15:**

- A. In ourselves, by our natural life, we cannot live to the Lord; only through Christ's resurrection—that is, only through the issue of His death—are we able to live to Him.
- B. To be constrained by the love of Christ means to remain in His death, which brings in the enjoyment of His resurrection, and in the resurrection of Christ, we live to Him—4:10-12; 5:15.

**VII. Our living to the Lord proves that we are His and the He is our Lord,
who died to purchase us to Himself—Rom. 14:7-8; Rev. 5:9:**

- A. Our living to the Lord is a declaration that we belong to Him and that He is our Lord—2 Cor. 5:15.
- B. Since we belong to the Lord, we take Him as the only aim in our life, and we live to Him—*Hymns*, # 504.

Message Two

**All Things Working Together for Good
to Those Who Love God
and Who Are Called according to His Purpose**

Scripture Reading: Rom. 8:26-29

I. The Spirit intercedes for us and all things are working together for us so that we may be conformed to the image of the firstborn Son—Rom. 8:26-29:

- A. The Spirit's intercession is not mainly according to the will of God but according to God Himself—vv. 26-27.
- B. The Spirit intercedes for us that we may be fully conformed to the image of Christ—vv. 27, 29.
- C. Christ is the pattern, and the Spirit prays that everything that happens to us will mold us into this pattern, the image of God's firstborn Son—v. 29.

II. As a result of the Spirit's intercession, "all things" work together for good, that is, for the fulfillment of God's purpose—vv. 26, 28:

- A. The working together of all things outside of us always follows the groaning of the Spirit within us—vv. 27-28.
- B. God the Father is sovereign, arranges everything, and knows what is best for us; He answers the Spirit's intercession by causing all things to work together for good—that we would be conformed to the image of the firstborn Son of God for the corporate expression of the Triune God—vv. 28-29.
- C. We need to realize that the reason we pass through sufferings is that God has a purpose and that our sufferings are the "all things" that are working together for the accomplishment of this purpose—v. 18.
- D. According to the context, the good mentioned in verse 28 refers to our being conformed to the image of Christ as the firstborn Son of God—v. 29.
- E. We are not in our own hands but in the Lord's hands, and He has placed us in the process by which His purpose of conformation is being fulfilled; those who realize that they are in the process of God's purpose will have genuine peace—John 10:28-29; Rom. 8:28-29; 15:33; 16:20.

III. God has called us with the purpose of conforming us to the image of His Son, and the way to cooperate with God in His purpose is to love Him—8:28-29:

- A. To love God is to cooperate with Him, and to cooperate with Him is to give Him an opportunity to work out His purpose in us and with us—Mark 12:30.
- B. If we love God, everything will work together for our profit, that is, for our conformation—Rom. 8:29.
- C. Whether all things are a profit or loss to us depends on our love for God; the secret is to love Him—v. 28; 1 Cor. 2:9:
 - 1. "You shall love the Lord your God from your whole heart and from your whole soul and from your whole mind and from all your whole strength"—Mark 12:30.
 - 2. "We love because He [God] loved us"—1 John 4:19.
 - 3. None of us can love God out of ourselves.

4. God first loved us in that He infused us with His love and generated within us the love with which we love Him and one another.

Message Three

**More Than Conquering
through the One Who Loves Us**

Scripture Reading: Rom. 8:18, 31-39; 5:5, 17, 21

I. “We more than conquer “through Him who loved us”—Rom. 8:37.

- A. Because of God’s unchanging love for us and the fact that Christ has accomplished everything on our behalf, neither tribulation nor persecution can suppress or defeat us; rather, in all these things we more than overcome and conquer through Him who loved us—v. 37.
- B. The love of Christ in Romans 8 is for those who are suffering—v. 18:
- C. Whatever problem we may have, the answer is always the love of Christ—v. 37.
- D. It is the love of Christ that enables us to overcome all tribulation and anguish.
- E. Instead of being defeated, we more than conquer through the One who loves us—v. 37:
 - 1. We are being put to death and are accounted as sheep for slaughter—v. 36.
 - 2. Nevertheless, in all these things we more than conquer through Him who loved us.
 - 3. Our Lord who loves us has more than conquered all these things; this should be the common experience of all Christians—v. 37; 1 John 5:4.
 - 4. Through our loving One we not only conquer—we can be conquerors, conquering all negative things, even death—Acts 2:24; Rev. 1:17b-18.

II. Only one kind of love is genuine, and that is the love that is the issue of the dispensing of the Triune God—Rom. 8:35, 39; 15:30:

- A. Because the Spirit has the attribute of love, the more we are under His dispensing, the more genuine love we have—1 John 4:8, 16:
 - 1. Actually, the more the Spirit is dispensed into us, the more we become love in the sense of being constituted with the divine love—Rom. 15:30; Eph. 4:15-16.
 - 2. Then we will have the love that is the expression of the Spirit, and we will respond to others with love—Gal. 5:22.
- B. The pouring out of the love of God into our hearts is a matter of the essence of God—Rom. 5:5:
 - 1. Because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts, the heart of every believer is a heart of love.
 - 2. In our experience and enjoyment of God as the Father in His love, we experience and enjoy the dispensing of love as the nature of God’s essence into our hearts.
- C. In Ephesians 3:19 Paul speaks of the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ:
 - 1. The love of Christ surpasses knowledge, yet we can know it by experiencing it.
 - 2. Just as Christ is immeasurable, so His love is immeasurable—vv. 18-19:
 - a. If we compare what we have so far experienced of the immeasurable love of Christ to all that there is to experience, it is like comparing a raindrop to the ocean.
 - b. Christ in His universal dimensions and in His immeasurable love is like a vast, limitless ocean for us to experience—vv. 18-19.

- D. The love mentioned in Ephesians 4:15-16—the inner substance of God—is the love of God in Christ that becomes the love of Christ in us, not only enabling us to love but also causing us to become love through the dispensing of the Triune God of love—the love of God, the love of Christ, and the love of the Spirit—Rom. 8:39, 35; 15:30.
- E. God’s everlasting love in Christ is a banner spreading over us, displaying and exhibiting that we who are loved by God are more than conquerors—8:37.
- F. “Do not fear the things that you are about to suffer” (Rev. 2:10a), for in all these things we will more than conquer through the One who loves us—our beloved Lord Jesus Christ, “Lord of lords and King of kings” (17:14).

Message Four

Loving the Lord's Appearing

Scripture Reading: 2 Tim. 4:8, 10, 18; Rom. 12:2; Rev. 17:14; 22:20

I. If the Lord's second coming is precious to us, we will love His appearing—2 Tim. 4:8:

- A. Loving the Lord's appearing and loving the Lord Himself are inseparable—1 Cor. 2:9; 2 Tim. 4:8.
- B. If we are waiting for the Lord to come, we should be those who love His appearing—1 Thes. 1:10; 2 Tim. 4:8.
- C. The Lord's appearing, His coming back, is a warning, an encouragement, and an incentive to us—vv. 1, 18:
 - 1. We should love the Lord's appearing and look forward to it with earnest expectation and joy—Rev. 22:20.
 - 2. We should have a living that loves the Lord's appearing; this causes us not to be discouraged but to remain faithful to the end—2 Tim. 4:8; Rev. 17:14.

II. Loving the Lord's appearing is in contrast to loving the present age—2 Tim. 4:8, 10:

- A. An age is a part, a section, or an aspect of the world system of Satan, which is used by him to usurp and occupy people and keep them away from God and His purpose—1 John 5:19; 2:15.
- B. In 2 Timothy 4:10 *the present age* refers to the world that surrounds, attracts, and tempts us; we cannot contact the world unless we contact the present age of the world.
- C. Demas loved the present age; due to the attraction of the present age, he forsook the apostle Paul—v. 10.
- D. In Romans 12:2 Paul exhorts us to not be fashioned according to this age but to be transformed by the renewing of the mind:
 - 1. *This age* in verse 2 denotes the present, practical part of the world, which stands in opposition to the Body life and replaces the Body life—vv. 4-5.
 - 2. To be fashioned according to this age means to adopt the modern fashions of the present age; to be transformed is to allow an organic element to be wrought into our being, thus producing an inward metabolic change—v. 2; 2 Cor. 3:18.
 - 3. Because the present age opposes the church, which is God's will, we must not be fashioned according to it—Rom. 12:2.
 - 4. If we are to live in the Body of Christ, we should not follow the present age or be fashioned according to this age or conformed to it—vv. 4-5.
- E. If we love the present age, we will take sides with the world; if we love the Lord's appearing, we will take sides with Him and fight with Him for His interests—2 Tim. 4:1-2, 4-8, 10.

III. Those who love the Lord, wait for His coming, and love His appearing will overcome—1 Cor. 2:9; 2 Tim. 4:8; Rev. 22:20; 17:14:

- A. Loving the Lord's appearing is a proof that we love the Lord and live for Him today; hence, it also becomes a condition for us to receive His reward—2 Tim. 4:8, 18.
- B. To love the Lord's appearing does not mean that we should not live a normal life; rather, the more we love His appearing, the more we need to live a normal life today—Matt. 24:40-42; 2 Thes. 1:10; 3:6-12; 1 Tim. 5:8.
- C. As those who love the Lord Jesus, take Him as our life, live Him, and magnify Him, we should await His coming and love His appearing; this should be our heart's desire and our living as those who hope to enter into His joy, be saved into the Lord's heavenly kingdom, and receive the crown of righteousness—2 Tim. 4:8, 18.