

# LIVING THE PNEUMATIC CHRIST IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

by Ron Kangas

**I**t is sadly ironic that the vast majority of Christians do not know what the Christian life is. What book on “practical Christian living,” self-improvement, or “possibility thinking” accurately and faithfully presents the New Testament revelation concerning the genuine Christian life? Contrary to popular opinion, the Christian life is a matter neither of imitating Jesus in order to become “Christlike” nor of self-improvement through self-effort aimed at suppressing the negative elements in one’s humanity while attempting to cultivate virtues such as love, kindness, and humility. The Christian life is a matter of living the pneumatic Christ revealed in the Gospel of John. Actually, there is only one real Christian—Christ Himself—and only one way to live the genuine Christian life—to live out the Christ who, as the life-giving Spirit, lives in us. This means that Christ’s history becomes our experience as He lives in us the same kind of life that He lived on earth. The Christian life, therefore, is the pneumatic Christ living in the believers.

The expression *living the pneumatic Christ* may appear awkward to some readers, who may be inclined to ask, “How can you speak of living the pneumatic Christ? Should you not rather talk about the living of Christ?” The living of Christ refers to how Christ Himself lived in His humanity as the God-man, whereas *living Christ* refers not to Christ’s living but to our living Christ by living in Christ, by Christ, through Christ, and with Christ to express, magnify, and manifest the Christ who lives in us. In this matter we are following the pattern of Paul, who declared, “To me, to live is Christ” (Phil. 1:21). Because Christ lived in him (Gal. 2:20), Paul’s life was a life of living Christ. He and Christ had one life and one living. If we would learn to live the pneumatic Christ as He is revealed in the Gospel of John, we need to learn, from this Gospel, how Christ Himself lived, especially how Christ lived because of the Father. If we know how

Christ Himself lived in the days of His flesh, we will know how He intends to live in us, who are His increase, duplication, and continuation. We will also know how we should live in Him and with Him as He lives in us.

## Defining God

As the Word (John 1:1, 14), Christ is the definition, explanation, and expression of God. The God, who the Word is, is not a partial God but the entire God—God the Son, God the Father, and God the Spirit. The New Testament does not say that the Word, who became flesh, was God the Son. Rather, the New Testament indicates that the Word, who was in the beginning, is the entire Triune God. Since the Word is God’s definition, explanation, and expression, the Word, who became flesh—God manifested in the flesh (1 Tim. 3:16)—is God’s definition, explanation, and expression in the flesh. Thus, in His living, Christ, the Word, was the definition, explanation, and expression of God.

## God’s Dwelling Place

In His life on earth, Christ was God’s dwelling place. This means that He lived as the tabernacle of God and as the temple of God (John 1:14a; 2:21). Christ could be God’s dwelling place, God’s tabernacle and temple, because He lived on earth as the embodiment of the Triune God. “In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily” (Col. 2:9). *All the fullness of the Godhead* refers to the entire Godhead, the complete God. Since the Godhead comprises the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, the fullness of the Godhead must be the fullness of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. That all the fullness of the Godhead dwells in Christ bodily means that the Triune God is embodied in Him. As the embodiment of the fullness of the Godhead, Christ is the embodiment of the entire Triune God; the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are all embodied in Him. Hence, He was

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the dwelling place of the Triune God. The life of every believer in Christ should be like this. Individually, our body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within us (1 Cor. 6:19); corporately, we are “a holy temple in the Lord,” “a dwelling place of God in spirit” (Eph. 2:21-22).

### **Coinhering with the Father**

Christ the Son coinheres with the Father. To coexist is to exist together at the same time. To coinhere is to exist in one another, to dwell in one another. For the Father and the Son to coinhere means that, as persons in the Godhead, they dwell in each other. Concerning this, John 14:10 says, “Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me?” In verse 11 the Lord Jesus continues, “Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me.” In 17:21 the Lord prayed, “Even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us.” When Christ the Son was living on earth, His living involved a mutual abiding: He was abiding in the Father, and the Father was abiding in Him. The principle is the same with our living the pneumatic Christ: We abide in Him, and He abides in us (15:4) to live a life of coinherence.

### **One with the Father**

In John 10:30 the Lord Jesus said, “I and the Father are one,” and in 17:22 He prayed, “And the glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, even as We are one.” These verses reveal that the Son is one with the Father. The New Testament, especially the Gospel of John, does not separate the Father and the Son. According to the natural understanding, the Son is the Son, the Father is the Father, and the two are distinctly separate from each other. However, although the Son and the Father are distinct, They cannot be separated. There is a distinction between the Father and the Son, but there is no separation, for the Son and the Father are one. When the Father is present, the Son is present also. Likewise, where the Son is, there the Father is also. The Father and the Son cannot be separated. This is proved by 1 John 2:23: “Everyone who denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who confesses the Son has the Father also.” Since the Father and the Son are one, to deny the Son is to be without the Father, and to confess the Son is to have the Father. Whoever denies the Son has neither the Son nor the Father, but whoever confesses the Son has both the Son and the Father. A further indication of the oneness of the Son and the Father is found in verse 25; the singular pronoun *He* refers to the Son and the Father spoken of in the preceding verse. Because the Son and the Father are one, when we see the Son, we see the Father. When the Son was living on earth, He lived in a way that bore witness to the fact that He and the Father are one. In the same principle, we need to live a life that shows others that we and the pneumatic Christ are one.

### **Living because of the Father**

In John 6:57 the Lord Jesus testified, “I live because of the Father.” This indicates that the Son did not live His own life but lived the Father’s life. It may be more accurate to say that the Son lived the Father as His life. Today as believers in Christ we should live a life that is not ourselves but Christ. Just as the Lord Jesus lived the Father, we should live Christ. This was Paul’s experience, and he wrote concerning it in Galatians 2:20: “I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me.”

**T**he words *because of the Father* indicate dependence. The Lord Jesus lived on account of the Father and by reason of the Father. This does not mean that He lived merely for the sake of the Father but that He was entirely dependent on the Father in and for His living as the God-man. Contrary to fallen human beings, who depend not on God but on themselves, the Lord Jesus depended not on Himself but on the Father. This means that instead of living a life of independence—the principle of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil—He lived a life of absolute dependence—the principle of the tree of life. If we would learn to live the pneumatic Christ, we must learn to live because of Him, even as He lived because of the Father.

### **Living in Fellowship with the Father**

Christ the Son lived a life of intimate fellowship with the Father. The Father loved the Son, showed Him all things that He Himself was doing (John 5:20), and always heard the Son (11:42). Hearing the Father’s voice and seeing the Father’s form (5:37; 6:46), the Son, in His teaching, simply spoke to the world what He heard and saw from His Father (8:26, 40, 38) in His fellowship with Him. If we would live the pneumatic Christ, the One who was always in fellowship with the Father, we need to have fellowship with the Son, declaring what we have seen and heard (1 John 1:3). The faithful God has called us, the believers in Christ, into the fellowship of His Son (1 Cor. 1:9).

### **Sent by the Father**

More than forty times in the Gospel of John we are told that the Son was sent by the Father. Again and again the Lord Jesus stood on the position of a sent one. For instance, in 3:34 He said, “He whom God has sent speaks the words of God,” and in 4:34 He testified, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to finish His work.” In 5:36 He pointed out that the works which He did, the works which the Father gave Him to finish, testified concerning Him that the Father had sent Him. Just as the Son was sent by the Father, so the believers are sent by the Son. Regarding this the Lord prayed, “As You have

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sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world” (17:18). After His resurrection He spoke a similar word to His disciples: “As the Father has sent Me, I also send you” (20:21). The Father sent the Son with Himself as life and everything to the Son. Likewise, the Son sends the believers with Himself as life and everything to them.

### **Coming and Working in the Name of the Father**

Because the Lord Jesus was sent by the Father, He came in the name of the Father and worked in the name of the Father. John 5:43 says, “I have come in the name of My Father, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, you will receive him.” The Son being in the name, the person, of the Father is equal to the Son being called the Father (Isa. 9:6) and thus being one with the Father and even being the Father in life and expression. Having come in the name of the Father, the Son worked not in His own name but in the name of the Father. This means that it was not He who worked but the Father, for the Son denied Himself, lived the Father, and worked as the Father. In so doing, He set up a pattern for us today. Just as the Son did everything in the Father’s name, we should do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus (Col. 3:17).

### **Having the Father with Him**

In His living as the God-man, the Son had the Father with Him all the time. He lived in the Father’s presence without ceasing. Thus, He could say, “He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone” (John 8:29). He knew that an hour was coming when the disciples would leave Him alone, but He could still say, “Yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me” (16:32). In all that the Son said and did, He enjoyed the Father’s presence in a sweet and intimate way.

### **Coordinating with the Father**

Because the Son worked in the name of the Father and always had the Father with Him, the Son did everything in coordination with the Father. The Father abode in Him and worked in Him for the accomplishment of His economy, and the Son worked with the Father by coordinating with Him in all things. Therefore, in 14:10 the Son could say, “The words that I say to you I do not speak from Myself, but the Father who abides in Me does His works.” The Father and the Son worked together to give life to the impotent man in John 5. As the Son explained that He was equal with the Father in giving life, even on the Sabbath, He said, “My Father is working until now, and I also am working....For whatever that One does, these things the Son also does in like manner” (vv. 17, 19). This required an absolute denial of the self. Christ the Son denied Himself in order to work and coordinate

with the Father. Today believers may claim to serve the Lord and work for the Lord, but who works with the pneumatic Christ even as He worked with the Father? Many build up themselves while working for the Lord instead of denying themselves to work with the Lord.

### **Pleasing the Father**

“I always do the things that are pleasing to Him” (8:29). These words could be spoken only by the Father’s Son, the Beloved, in whom the Father found His delight (Matt. 3:17; 17:5). God delights in His Son, who always does what is pleasing to the Father. The Son did not please Himself but always pleased the Father. This God-pleasing person is now the pneumatic Christ dwelling in our regenerated spirit. Nothing is more pleasing to the Father than our living the pneumatic Christ.

### **Loving the Father**

The Son loved the Father and did all things out of love for the Father. In John 14:31 He said, “But this is so that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father commanded Me, so I do.” The Father commanded, and the Son obeyed out of love. It was in love that through the eternal Spirit He “offered Himself without blemish to God” giving Himself up for us, “an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor” (Heb. 9:14; Eph. 5:2). In our living the pneumatic Christ, we need to love Him with the first love, the best love, doing the first works as an expression of our love for Him (Rev. 2:4-5).

### **Not Doing Anything from Himself**

“Truly, truly, I say to you, The Son can do nothing from Himself except what He sees the Father doing” (John 5:19). “I can do nothing from Myself” (v. 30a). “I do nothing from Myself, but as My Father has taught Me, I speak these things” (8:28). These verses reveal that Christ the Son did not do anything from Himself; that is, He did not take His self as the source and origin of His work. The Father was His unique source, and everything the Son did and said issued not from Himself but from the Father. Here we see that the Son always denied Himself to live the Father. This is the kind of person the pneumatic Christ is within us. If we would live Him, we must deny ourselves and do nothing from ourselves, allowing the Lord, who is now the Spirit, to be everything to us and to do everything in us, with us, and through us.

### **Doing the Father’s Will**

The Son always did the Father’s will. He did not seek His own will or do His own will. “I do not seek My own will but the will of Him who sent Me” (5:30b). “I have come down from heaven not to do My own will but the will of

Him who sent Me” (6:38). “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to finish His work” (4:34). Christ the Son put aside His own will, and as the One sent by the Father, He always took the Father’s will. Even at the end of His life, He prayed concerning the Father’s will: “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will” (Matt. 26:39). If we insist on our own will, we cannot live the pneumatic Christ, for He is the One who always seeks and does the will of the Father.

### Speaking the Father’s Word

“The words that I say to you I do not speak from Myself.... The word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father’s who sent Me” (John 14:10, 24). Because He always spoke in such a way, shortly before He died He could say to the Father, “The words which You gave Me I have given to them....I have given them Your word” (17:8, 14). The Son did not speak His own word but spoke whatever the Father said to Him and commanded Him to speak: “I have not spoken from Myself; but the Father who sent Me, He Himself has given Me commandment, what to say and what to speak....The things therefore that I speak, even as the Father has said to Me, so I speak” (12:49, 50b). Therefore, His teaching had its source not in Himself but in the Father: “My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me. If anyone resolves to do His will, he will know concerning the teaching, whether it is of God whether I speak from Myself” (7:16-17). The Son did not speak from Himself but spoke what He received from the Father. The principle is the same with the Spirit of reality: “When He, the Spirit of reality, comes, He will guide you into all the reality; for He will not speak from Himself, but what He hears He will speak; and He will declare to you the things that are coming. He will glorify Me, for He will receive of Mine and will declare it to you” (16:13-14). The apostles followed the same principle, speaking words given by the Spirit (Matt. 10:19-20; Mark 13:11; Luke 12:11-12). Paul learned to speak in this way: “We have received...the Spirit which is from God, that we may know the things which have been graciously given to us by God; which things also we speak, not in words taught by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit” (1 Cor. 2:12-13; cf. John 14:26; 15:26). The Son spoke what He received from the Father; the Spirit speaks what He receives from the Son; and now we need to speak the divine things in “words taught by the Spirit.” Our daily life is filled with speaking, but what is the source of our words? Christ is now the speaking Spirit within us, and in our speaking we need to

As a human being the Lord Jesus has the soul-life, and as God He has the divine life. He laid down His soul-life, His human life, so that we could have His divine life, the eternal life. The more we live this Christ, the more we will be able and willing to lay down our soul-life so that the divine life within us might be supplied to the Body of Christ.

be one spirit with Him (1 Cor. 6:17). Then in our speaking we will express the pneumatic Christ, the One who does not speak from Himself but from the Father.

### Laying Down His Soul-life

Christ the Son, as the good Shepherd, laid down His soul-life for us. “I am the good Shepherd; the good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep” (John 10:11). The Greek word for *life* here is *psuche*, which refers to the soul

and to the soul-life. The same word is used in verse 15, where the Lord says again that He lays down His life for the sheep; in verse 17, which says that the Father loves the Son because He lays down His life; and in verse 18, where the Lord tells us that no one takes His life away from Him but that He lays it down of Himself. As a human being the Lord Jesus has the soul-life, and as God He has the divine life. He laid down His soul-life,

His human life, so that we could have His divine life, the eternal life (v. 10). “In this we know love, that He laid down His life on our behalf, and we ought to lay down our lives on behalf of the brothers” (1 John 3:16). We can do this only by living in the organic union with the very Christ who laid down His soul-life for us and who is now the pneumatic Christ in our spirit. The more we live this Christ, the more we will be able and willing to lay down our soul-life so that the divine life within us might be supplied to the Body of Christ (2 Cor. 4:10-12). If we live in this way, we will experience the fulfillment of John 12:25: “He who loves his soul-life loses it; and he who hates his soul-life in this world shall keep it unto eternal life.”

### Doing the Father’s Work

The Lord Jesus not only spoke the Father’s word—He also did the Father’s work. Christ the Son did not carry out His own agenda and do His own work for His own purpose and interests. His food was to finish the work of the Father who sent Him (John 4:34). In healing one who was blind from birth, He said to His disciples, “We must work the works of Him who sent Me” (9:4). The works which the Father had given Him to finish testified concerning Him that the Father had sent Him (5:36). Toward the end of His earthly ministry, He could say to the Father, “I have glorified You on earth, finishing the work which You have given Me to do” (17:4). Once again we see that in living the Father, Christ the Son denied Himself, not only working with the Father and working in the name of the Father but actually doing the

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work of the Father. The work that He carried out was an expression of the work that His Father was doing within Him. The principle should be the same with us today. Our “work for the Lord” should not be our work but the work of the indwelling, pneumatic Christ.

### Seeking the Father’s Glory

The Gospel of John has much to say about glory. The glory of God is the expression of God; it is God Himself expressed. Self-glory is the expression, or exhibition, of the self. Christ the Son could say of Himself, “I do not receive glory from men” (5:41). He neither sought nor received human glory. In this matter He was altogether different from the religionists of His day, regarding whom He asked, “How can you believe when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that is from the only God?” (v. 44). Elsewhere He spoke of glory in relation to speaking from the self: “He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of Him who sent Him, this One is true, and unrighteousness is not in Him” (7:18). Unlike the religious preachers in His day and ours, the Son did not seek glory for Himself by speaking from Himself as the source. Rather, He sought the glory of the Father who sent Him, speaking the Father’s word for His expression. Instead of seeking His own glory (8:50) or of glorifying Himself, He allowed the Father to glorify Him through death and resurrection.

John 12:43 speaks of certain Pharisees who believed in the Lord Jesus but did not confess Him because “they loved the glory of men more than the glory of God.” Today’s religious world is replete with those who love the glory of men more than the glory of God, those who long to be adored and idolized even as they speak and work allegedly for God. However, the Lord’s word remains true and applicable: Those who speak from themselves seek their own glory. Where are those believers today who, like the Son of God, care not for their glory but for the glory of the Father? Where are those who are willing to learn to live Christ for the expression of God? We either live ourselves for our glory or we live Christ for God’s glory. There is no middle ground. If we would live the pneumatic Christ, we must live in union with the One who always sought the glory of the Father.

### Expressing the Father

Hebrews 1:3 reveals that Christ the Son is the “effulgence of God’s glory and the impress of His substance.” This clearly indicates that the Son is the expression of God. “The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him” (John 1:18), expressing Him in His life, nature, and glory. In His living, Christ the Son—the One who lived because of the Father, spoke the word of the Father, did the work of the Father, and sought

the glory of the Father—expressed the Father. One day Philip said to the Lord Jesus, “Lord, show us the Father and it is sufficient for us” (14:8). The Lord replied, “Have I been so long a time with you, and you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how is it that you say, Show us the Father?” (v. 9). To see the Son is to see the Father. The Lord went on to explain, “Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak from Myself, but the Father who abides in Me does His works” (v. 10). The Father was in the Son and worked in the Son, and the Son, denying Himself, spoke the Father’s word and did the Father’s will and work for the Father’s glory. Thus, the Son was in His actual and practical living on earth the expression of the Father. He lived the Father in order to be the expression of the Father. Now Christ the Son is the pneumatic Christ, the life-giving Spirit, in us, and we need to live Him for His corporate expression.

### Living a Divine and Mystical Human Life

Although we have considered various aspects of Christ’s living as the God-man, actually the divine-human living of Christ the Son presented in the Gospel of John is indescribable:

There are no human words available in any language to describe the wonderful One whose life is recorded in these four Gospels. When Christ came out to minister, He acted, He lived, He worked, He moved, and He ministered in such a way that no vocabulary in any language can describe....In all of human history and all of human culture, there ha[s] never been such a One as this unique One, and there ha[s] never been such a life as the life of this One. Therefore, there is no vocabulary available for us to describe Him. Human eyes ha[ve] never seen such a One or such a life. Therefore, there are no human words adequate to describe this One or His life. (Lee, *Training* 40-41)

The living of Christ the Son, the living of the God-man, is indescribable, yet it is nevertheless helpful to point out that the God-man living of Christ the Son was divine and mystical. *Divine* refers to God’s side, and *mystical* refers to the human side. To be divine is to do everything in God, with God, by God, and through God, and to be mystical is to have a humanity that is permeated with divinity and to live in such a way that divinity is expressed in humanity. “All that He [Christ the Son] did was divine and mystical. God was living through Him. He was God manifested in the flesh” (Lee, *God-man* 92). As a divine-human person, Christ is mysterious, and His living on earth was altogether mystical, for His divinity was manifested in and through His humanity. His words and works were divine, yet they were in a human life and thus caused that human life to be mystical. Christ the Son lived a divine and mystical human life:

Every part of the Lord's living on this earth is a divine fact. Whatever God does is a divine fact, and the divine facts were lived in a human life, making that human life mystical. Something divine in humanity is mystical....Jesus was a God-man, and all that He said and did are divine facts accomplished in His human life mystically. (108)

The living of Christ the Son on earth was divine and mystical, and His living in us must be the same. The mysterious God-man now dwells in us as the life-giving Spirit, the pneumatic Christ, and as He lives in us and we live Him, we live a divine and mystical human life. This is the genuine Christian life.

### Opposed by Religion

This divine and mystical life is contrary to religion and is opposed by it. Christ is versus religion, and religion opposes Christ. The Gospel of John clearly and emphatically reveals that Christ is versus religion. The Son of God and the life that He lived were opposed by religion. This opposition is exposed in chapter five, which records the Lord's enlivening on the Sabbath of the impotent man, who had been thirty-eight years in his sickness. The Lord said to him, "Rise, take up your mat and walk," and immediately he became well and thus he took up his mat and walked. The religionists were offended and condemned him for taking up his mat on the Sabbath (vv. 8-9). Once they were informed that it was Jesus who had made him well, they persecuted Him "and sought to kill Him, because He did these things on the Sabbath" (v. 16). Concerning this case of healing, Christ the Son testified, saying, "My Father is working until now, and I also am working" (v. 17), indicating that the Son was equal to the Father in giving life. Then the religionists "sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath but also called God His own Father, making Himself equal with God" (v. 18). The Lord Jesus did not heal an impotent man on the Sabbath as an act of defiance; on the contrary, He was simply living the Father, being one with Him, speaking His word, and doing His work. However, such a living expression of the Father in the Son is contrary to religion and is hated by it. In the days of His flesh, religion opposed the incarnate Christ, and today religion opposes the pneumatic Christ and those who endeavor to live Him.

**O**n the one hand, the Gospel of John unveils the divine and mystical living of Christ the Son; on the other hand, this Gospel indicates that we, the children of God regenerated by Him in the resurrection of Christ

(1 Pet. 1:3), can live the pneumatic Christ for the Father's satisfaction and for the building up of the Body of Christ to consummate the New Jerusalem. If we would learn to live the pneumatic Christ, we need to know and experience a number of matters to which we will now devote our attention.

### Believing into Christ

If we would live Christ, the first thing we must do is believe into (not merely in) Christ. To believe in Christ is to believe that He is true; to believe into Christ is to receive Him and to be united with Him as one. "To believe into Christ is to have our being merged into His that we two may be one organically" (see note 1 on Phil. 1:29, Recovery Version). We believe into Christ not with our natural believing ability but with the faith of Christ—Christ Himself as our faith—infused into

us. In this way we receive into our being Christ so that we may be born of God to become children of God possessing the divine life and the divine nature (John 1:12-13). John 3:15 says, "That every one who believes into Him may have eternal life." This means that by believing into Christ, we have eternal life, the divine, uncreated life of God. Furthermore, believing into Christ brings us into union with Christ, that is, into a spiritual, organic union with Him. In this organic union we may have one life and one living with the pneumatic Christ. As Paul testifies in Galatians 2:20, as those who have been crucified with Christ and who have Christ living in us, we now live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved us and gave Himself up for us.

### Loving the Lord Jesus

Loving the Lord and believing into Him are closely related. By believing into the Lord we receive Christ and are joined to Him; by loving the Lord we experience Christ, enjoy Christ, and live Christ. Only the first and best love for the Lord (Rev. 2:4), not religious duty or legal obligation, can motivate us to abide in Him and live Him. If we love Him, we will keep His commandments (John 14:15). If we love Him, we will experience His inner manifestation: "He who has My commandments and keeps them, he is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him" (v. 21). Loving the Lord is also crucial for the building up of a mutual abode for the believer and the Triune God: "If anyone loves Me,

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he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make an abode with him” (v. 23). The love with which we love the Lord Jesus is not our natural, human love. Rather, we love only because He first loved us (1 John 4:19), for we love Him with the love of God, with God’s love for us infused into us and wrought into us to produce in us a love for Him. Thus, the faith by which we are joined to the Lord and the love by which we enjoy the Lord are Christ Himself infused into us and then becoming in us our faith and our love. From this we see that in our living the pneumatic Christ, He is everything to us; He is everything we need for living Him.

### Living because of Christ

To live the pneumatic Christ is to live because of Christ. “Because I live, you also shall live” (John 14:19). As the context of chapter fourteen makes clear, Christ’s living here refers to His living after His resurrection. After His resurrection, in which He was raised from the dead with a spiritual body of flesh and bones that could be seen and touched and through which He became the life-giving Spirit, Christ can live in His believers. Because He lives in us, we also live. We live because of Him and in total dependence upon Him as our life and our life supply. Our living is based upon His living and is an expression of it. Again we need to refer to Galatians 2:20. In this verse Paul first says, “Christ...lives in me,” and then he says, “I now live.” Because Christ lived in Paul, Paul could live Christ. This kind of living is not by self-effort but “in faith, the faith of the Son of God.” To live in faith is to do in Christ and with Christ what we cannot do in ourselves. If we depend on the indwelling, pneumatic Christ, we will live because of Him. His living will become our living as we live Him in faith.

### Eating Christ

Those who live the pneumatic Christ are those who eat Christ, feeding upon Him daily as their life supply. John 6:57 is a most significant verse: “As the living Father has sent Me and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me.” A note on this verse in the Recovery Version is instructive:

To eat is to take food into us that it may be assimilated organically into our body. Hence, to eat the Lord Jesus is to receive Him into us that He may be assimilated by the regenerated new man in the way of life. Then we live by Him whom we have received. It is by this that He, the resurrected One, lives in us. (John 14:19-20)

If we take this matter of eating Christ seriously and study John 6 carefully, we will see that the practical way to eat Christ is to contact Him through the Word by taking it as

spirit and life. My emphasis here, however, is not on the way to eat Christ but on our urgent need to eat Christ. If we would live Him, we must eat Him, digest Him, and assimilate Him as both the generating life (the bread) and the redeeming life (the Lamb). Just as we cannot live our human life without partaking of physical food, so we cannot live the Christian life without partaking of Christ. To live the pneumatic Christ requires that, in humility and utter dependence, we come to Him, open to Him, and feed on Him. Then we will live because of Him.

### Knowing That Christ Is in Us

If we would live the pneumatic Christ, we need to know that Christ dwells in us as the life-giving Spirit. Concerning this, the revelation in John 14 is of vital importance. As the first Comforter, the incarnate Christ said, “I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, that He may be with you forever, even the Spirit of reality” (vv. 16-17). Then the Lord went on to indicate that the One who is called “another Comforter” is actually Christ Himself in resurrection as the Spirit. “He abides with you and shall be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I am coming to you” (vv. 17-18). The *He* who is the Spirit of reality in verse 17 becomes the *I* in verse 18. Thus, “He...shall be in you” means that Christ as the Spirit of reality will be in us. As verse 20 tells us, this is something that we can know: “In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.” *That day* refers to the day of Christ’s resurrection, when He breathed Himself into His disciples and entered into them as the Spirit. It is as the resurrected Christ, the pneumatic Christ, that He now dwells in us, and the more we experience Him as resurrection and in resurrection, the more we know that we are in Him and that He is in us as the Spirit. Knowing that He lives in us, we can learn, through His patient inward shepherding and discipling, how to live Him.

### Abiding in Christ

According to 14:20 we are in Christ and Christ is in us. This thought is continued in John 15, which speaks of Christ as the true vine with the believers as the branches (v. 5). For us to be branches in the vine means that we have been grafted into Christ to have an organic union with Him. Formerly, we were wild branches, but through faith we have been grafted into Christ. In 1 Corinthians 1:30 Paul tells us that it is of God that we are “in Christ Jesus.” God has put us in Christ, transferring us from Adam to Christ. In our experience this transfer is effected through our believing into Christ. Now that we are in Christ, we should abide in Him.

Regarding our position or standing, once we are in Christ we cannot remove ourselves from Him. However, regarding our daily spiritual experience, we may not abide in

Christ, that is, we may not actually remain in Him and dwell in Him by being one spirit with Him and by living in fellowship with Him. Paul's aspiration was to be found in Christ (Phil. 3:9), not in himself or in something other than Christ, and we should have the same aspiration today in our pursuit of Christ.

If we do not abide in Christ, taking Him as our dwelling place, we cannot live Him. Living Christ requires that experientially we maintain a relationship of coinherence, a relationship of mutual indwelling in which we abide in the Lord and He abides in us. If we abide in Christ, He will abide in us, and then we can live out the Christ who lives in us. This is to live a life of coinherence with the pneumatic Christ.

### Experiencing the Lord's Peace and Joy

The pneumatic Christ wants to be everything to us in our Christian life. We should not have anything or do anything apart from Him. In Christ we have everything, for we "have been made full in Him" (Col. 2:10). Apart from Him, we have nothing, we are nothing, and we can do nothing (John 15:5). The more we abide in the Lord, enjoying fellowship with Him, the more He dispenses Himself into us and infuses us with all that He is and has. In particular, He imparts Himself to us as our peace and our joy.

**T**he Lord is especially concerned that we would have genuine peace. In 14:27 He said, "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you." Here we see two kinds of peace: the peace given by the (religious) world and the peace given by Christ. In 16:33 He again addressed our need of peace: "These things I have spoken to you that in Me you may have peace." We are in Him who is peace, and He is in us as peace. The first word uttered by the resurrected Christ to His disciples was "Peace be to you" (20:19). After showing them His hands and His side, He said to them again, "Peace be to you" (v. 21). Eight days later, the resurrected Christ manifested Himself again, and once more He said, "Peace be to you" (v. 26). The pneumatic Christ is our peace.

He is also our joy, even the fullness of joy. On at least three occasions the Lord expressed His desire that His disciples would have fullness of joy. In 15:11 He said, "These things I have spoken to you that My joy may be in you and that your joy may be made full." *These things* are the things related to abiding in Christ as the true vine. Being

branches in the divine vine is a matter of joy, a matter of Christ's joy being in us to become our joy and of our joy being made full. In 16:24 the Lord said, "Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask and you shall receive, that your joy may be made full." Here joy is related to asking and receiving in the Lord's name. In His prayer concerning His glorification, He said to the Father, "These things I speak in the world that they may have My joy made full in themselves" (17:13). As we consider these three passages, we see that Christ's being our joy is related to abiding in Him, to asking in His name, and to His word, His speaking.

This joy is, paradoxically, sometimes the issue of periods of pain, sorrow, and suffering. Even though we must pass through times of anguish, times of weeping and lamenting, eventually, in the pneumatic Christ and in the reality of His resurrection, our sorrow is turned into joy.

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When the disciples saw the Lord in resurrection, having their first contact with the pneumatic Christ, they rejoiced, and their sorrow was turned into joy. The principle is the same in our experience of the pneumatic Christ today. Whenever we contact Him in the reality of resurrection, He infuses us with Himself as joy. Once again, sorrow is turned into joy, His joy is made full in us, and our joy is made full in Him.

### Being Guided into All Reality

As the hymn says, "Christ is the one reality of all, / Of Godhead and of man and all things else" (*Hymns* 452). To live Christ, therefore, is to live a life in the divine reality." For this we need the Spirit of reality to guide us into Christ as reality: "When He, the Spirit of reality comes, He will guide you into all the reality" (16:13). For the Spirit of reality to guide us into all the reality means that He makes Christ with all that He is and has real to us. If we would live the pneumatic Christ, on the negative side we must be delivered from pretense, unreality, and hypocrisy. On the positive side, we need to be constituted with Christ as the divine reality and thereby become those who live a life of truthfulness, which is the divine reality becoming our genuineness and sincerity.

Christ is reality and He is also light. In Him, and also in our living of Him, the divine light and the divine reality are intimately related. If we would enter into the divine reality, we need to live under the shining of the divine light, for this light, the hidden source of reality, infuses



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the divine reality into our being to constitute us with reality, making us persons who are truthful, sincere, and genuine. Through the shining of the divine light, we thus become real in Christ, even as He is real. As a result, we begin to live a life of truthfulness as a testimony to the fact that we are living the pneumatic Christ, who Himself is reality, and that the Spirit of reality is guiding us into all reality and thereby causing us to become truthful and genuine in the revealed divine reality.

### Denying Our Soul-life

The greatest hindrance to our living the pneumatic Christ is our love for our soul-life (Job 2:4; Rev. 12:11). When Christ was incarnated, His divine life with the divine glory was concealed within Him as in a grain of wheat (John 12:24). His divine life was thus contained in and constrained by the shell of His humanity. When He was crucified, the shell of His humanity was broken, enabling the divine life within this shell to be released. The breaking of the shell through death was the laying down of His soul-life. In His resurrection the divine life released through His death was imparted into us to make us the many grains as the increase and reproduction of Christ. Now we, like the Lord Jesus in the days of His flesh, are grains containing the divine life within the shell of our humanity.

In order to live the pneumatic Christ, who is the divine life in our regenerated spirit, we must be willing to lay down our soul-life. This means that the shell of our humanity must be broken so that the divine life can be expressed in our living. The problem is that we may love our soul-life more than we love the pneumatic Christ in our spirit, and therefore we may refuse to lay down, or lose, our soul-life for His sake. However, it is possible to be infused with the divine love to such an extent that, loving the Lord supremely and giving Him the first place, the preeminence, in all things, we become willing to hate our soul-life and follow Him through death and into resurrection for His glorious, corporate expression. Concerning this way of serving Him, the Lord Jesus said, "He who loves his soul-life loses it; and he who hates his soul-life in this world shall keep it unto eternal life. If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there also My servant will be. If anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him" (12:25-26).

We need to follow the pneumatic Christ in the sense that we experience Him living again in us the life He lived on earth—a life of laying down, of losing, the soul-life though the cross for the release of the divine life. It is costly to live the pneumatic Christ. This requires that we pay a price, the price of our own soul-life. Only when we die in this way can we live the pneumatic Christ as we allow Him to live in us.

### Living a Divine and Mystical Human Life

We have pointed out that Christ's living as the God-man was divine and mystical. God lived in Him, and He did everything in God, with God, by God, and through God, manifesting His divinity in His humanity. As a result, Christ the Son lived a divine and mystical human life. As those who are the reproduction and multiplication of Christ and who desire to live the pneumatic Christ, we also should live a divine and mystical human life. "We should be persons living a life which is divine yet mystical. Our life should be divine yet human—not merely human, but mystically human" (Lee, *God-man* 92). This means that every believer in Christ should be a divine and mystical person, one who, although human, lives divinely, with divinity manifested in a mystical, human way.

A believer in Christ, having been born of God to have the life and nature of God, is a divine and human person. The living of such a person is a mystery; it is human, yet it is divine and mystical. When we love others, we should love them by God and with God and thereby love them in a way that is divine and mystical. In His living on earth, Christ did everything in God, with God, by God, and through God, and now He wants to live this way in us. Thus, if we live the pneumatic Christ, we will be one spirit with the Lord to do everything in God, with God, by God, and through God. Then we will be divine and mystical persons living a divine and mystical human life as the expression of the indwelling Christ.

### Caring for the Corporate Expression of Christ

The fourth and final article in this series on the pneumatic Christ in the Gospel of John will consider the corporate expression of the pneumatic Christ unveiled in this Gospel. Here I simply wish to point out that in our exercise to live the pneumatic Christ, we need to care for the church as the corporate expression of Christ. The normal Christian life is lived in a corporate context—the church as the house of the living God and as the organic Body of Christ.

Every believer in Christ is not an isolated, individualistic unit but a part of the whole: a sheep in the one flock, an abode in the Father's house, a branch in the true vine, a member of the mystical Body. As members of the Body, we possess not a member life but a Body life. If we realize this, we will know that as members we cannot live in detachment from the Body, as branches we cannot live apart from the vine, as abodes we cannot live outside the house, and as sheep we cannot live in isolation from the flock. The more we are one with the pneumatic Christ, experiencing Him, enjoying Him, and living Him, the more we will be concerned for the corporate expression of Christ. Any believers who do not care for the Body of

Christ are abnormal and deficient in their living of Christ. The genuine Christian life is a life of living the pneumatic Christ for the Body of Christ.

### Suffering the Opposition of Today's Religion

Those who are serious about living the pneumatic Christ must be prepared to suffer the opposition of today's religion, especially the opposition of traditional, organized Christianity with its incomplete, or unbalanced, theology and its defective understanding of the Christian life. Religion opposed the incarnate Christ, and it continues to oppose the pneumatic Christ, even going so far as denying the truth of the pneumatic Christ and the reality that as the life-giving Spirit Christ dwells within the believers. Speaking of the religious world, the Lord Jesus said, "If the world hates you, know that it has hated Me before you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you" (John 15:18-19). "If they have persecuted Me," the Lord went on to say, "they will persecute you also" (v. 20). As the context makes clear, this persecution from the religious world is directed at the vine with the branches—the corporate, organic expression of Christ. During the Lord's life on earth, religion opposed the incarnate Christ, and today religion opposes the corporate expression of the pneumatic Christ and those who live the pneumatic Christ in and for His corporate expression.

### A Pattern of Living the Pneumatic Christ

We have considered, admittedly in the way of an outline or sketch, certain salient features of Christ's living as the God-man and a number of matters related to the believers' living the pneumatic Christ. Now, in conclusion, we need to be reminded that Paul's experience as recorded in the New Testament presents a pattern of living the pneumatic Christ. Paul, the greatest sinner, was gained by Christ and learned to live Christ in the Body and for the Body.

Paul received a full revelation of God's eternal economy. Paul came to see that God the Father does not want His children to imitate Christ; rather, God wants to make His children the duplication and continuation of Christ. In Romans Paul shows us that Christ the firstborn Son is the prototype and that the many sons of God as the brothers

of Christ (8:29) are the reproduction, duplication, and continuation of Christ. This means that instead of trying outwardly to imitate Christ or striving to improve ourselves to be like Christ, we need to live Christ, that is, to have one life and one living with Him as He lives in us and through us. Christ the Son lived once on the earth and now, according to the desire and intention of God, He is seeking the opportunity to live again in us as the members of His mystical Body.

We need to experience the pneumatic Christ living again in us the life He lived on earth—a life of laying down, of losing, the soul-life though the cross for the release of the divine life. This requires that we pay a price, the price of our own soul-life. Only when we die in this way can we live the pneumatic Christ as we allow Him to live in us.

Paul is a pattern of this God-man living (1 Tim. 1:16), demonstrating that such a divine and mystical human living is both possible and necessary. Wherever he was, Paul lived Christ and magnified Christ (Phil. 1:20-21). As a note on Acts 28:9 in the Recovery Version points out, in various situations and circumstances, including storm and shipwreck, Paul lived the pneumatic Christ:

All during the apostle's long and unfortunate imprisonment-voyage, the Lord kept the apostle in His ascendancy and enabled him to live a life far beyond the realm of anxiety. This life was fully dignified, with the highest standard of human virtues expressing the most excellent divine attributes, a life that resembled the one that the Lord Himself had lived on the earth years before. This was Jesus living again on the earth in His divinely enriched humanity! This was the wonderful, excellent, and mysterious God-man, who lived in the Gospels, continuing to live in Acts through one of His many members! This was a living witness of the incarnated, crucified, resurrected, and God-exalted Christ! Paul in his voyage lived and magnified Christ.

Jesus living again on earth—Christ continuing to live in His many members: This is what God the Father desires to see. May the Lord hasten the day when God's children learn to live the pneumatic Christ for the Father's rest, delight, and satisfaction. **AC**

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