

International Training for Elders and Responsible Ones

September 2025

GENERAL SUBJECT: CRUCIAL ASPECTS OF MATTHEW 5 THROUGH 7

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CRUCIAL ASPECTS OF MATTHEW 5 THROUGH 7

(Thursday—First Morning Session)

Message One

The Blessedness of Being Poor in Spirit and Pure in Heart That We May Be under Christ's Heavenly Ruling as Our New King and That We May See God to Express Him in His Life and Represent Him with His Authority

MC Hymns: 743, 744

Scripture Reading: Matt. 5:3, 8

Matt 5:3 Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens.
Matt 5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

I. “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens”—Matt. 5:3:

- A. To be poor in spirit is not only to be humble but also to be emptied in our spirit, in the depth of our being, not holding on to the old things of the old dispensation but unloaded to receive the new things, the things of the kingdom of the heavens—cf. Luke 6:20.
Luke 6:20 And He lifted up His eyes to His disciples and said, Blessed are the poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.
- B. We need to be poor, emptied, unloaded, in our human spirit that we may realize and possess the kingdom of the heavens—cf. Matt. 19:13-15.
Matt 19:13 Then little children were brought to Him that He might lay His hands on them and pray, but the disciples rebuked them.
Matt 19:14 But Jesus said, Allow the little children and do not prevent them from coming to Me, for of such is the kingdom of the heavens.
Matt 19:15 And after He laid His hands on them, He went on from there.
- C. To be poor in spirit means that we are humble, acknowledging that we have nothing, know nothing, can do nothing, and are nothing—Gal. 6:3; John 15:5b; Isa. 57:15; 66:2:
Gal 6:3 For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.
John 15:5b ... for apart from Me you can do nothing.
Isa 57:15 For thus says the high and exalted One, / Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: / I will dwell in the high and holy place, / And with the contrite and lowly of spirit, / To revive the spirit of the lowly / And to revive the heart of the contrite.
Isa 66:2 For all these things My hand has made, / And so all these things have come into being, declares Jehovah. / But to this kind of man will I look, to him who is poor / And of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word.
1. Those who are poor in spirit have a willing spirit for the things of the Lord and for the things of the church—Psa. 51:12.
Psa 51:12 Restore to me the gladness of Your salvation, / And sustain me with a willing spirit.
 2. Those who are poor in spirit experience the Spirit of joy and the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of Jehovah—Heb. 1:9; Rom. 14:17; Isa. 11:2-3.
Heb 1:9 You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of exultant joy above Your partners";
Rom 14:17 For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.
Isa 11:2 And the Spirit of Jehovah will rest upon Him, / The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, / The Spirit of counsel and might, / The Spirit of the knowledge and fear of Jehovah.
Isa 11:3 He will delight in the fear of Jehovah: / He will neither judge by what His eyes

see, / Nor decide by what His ears hear.

D. All spiritual progress depends on man's hunger—Luke 1:53; Psa. 81:10:

Luke 1:53 The hungry He has filled with good things, and the rich He has sent away empty.

Psa 81:10 I am Jehovah your God, / Who brought you up out of the land of Egypt; / Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.

1. We should be afraid of self-contentment, self-satisfaction, and satisfaction with the things of the past—Phil. 3:13.

Phil 3:13 Brothers, I do not account of myself to have laid hold; but one thing I do: Forgetting the things which are behind and stretching forward to the things which are before,

2. Spiritual stagnation is the result of indifference to one's own spiritual lack; all failure and decadence are the result of self-complacency—cf. Deut. 4:25.

Deut 4:25 When you have brought forth children and grandchildren and have languished in the land, and you have spoiled yourselves by making an idol, the form of anything, and have done that which is evil in the sight of Jehovah your God so as to anger Him;

3. Past victory can never be our present strength—cf. Josh. 7:3-4:

Josh 7:3 And they returned to Joshua and said to him, Not all the people need go up; let about two or three thousand men go up and strike Ai. Do not make all the people labor there, for the enemies are few.

Josh 7:4 So about three thousand men from the people went up there, but they fled before the men of Ai.

- a. We cannot go on without new knowledge of the Lord and a new vision of Him—cf. Acts 26:16; Phil. 3:8b, 10a.

Acts 26:16 But rise up and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a minister and a witness both of the things in which you have seen Me and of the things in which I will appear to you;

Phil 3:8b ... on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as refuse that I may gain Christ

Phil 3:10a To know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, ...

- b. Whenever we find ourselves crying, "I cannot make it," our progress has begun; then God is easily able to create a desire for Him in us—cf. 2 Chron. 20:12.

2 Chron 20:12 O our God, will You not judge them? For we have no strength before this great multitude that is coming against us, and we do not know what to do; but our eyes are upon You.

- c. We should remember that God gives difficulties to us in order to dig more deeply in us so that He can fill us more with Himself—cf. Rom. 8:28-29.

Rom 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

Rom 8:29 Because those whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brothers;

4. Whenever we become empty, the Lord will fill us up; spiritual progress is a matter of being continually emptied out and continually filled up—cf. 2 Kings 4:1-6.

2 Kings 4:1 Now a certain woman from among the wives of the sons of the prophets cried out to Elisha, saying, Your servant my husband is dead, and you know that your servant feared Jehovah. And the creditor has come to take my two children to himself as servants.

2 Kings 4:2 And Elisha said to her, What shall I do for you? Tell me, what do you have in your house? And she said, Your servant has nothing at all in the house, except a jar of oil.

2 Kings 4:3 And he said, Go and borrow vessels outside, from all your neighbors, empty vessels, and not just a few.

2 Kings 4:4 Then go in and shut the door behind you and your sons, and pour out into all those vessels; and each one you fill set aside.

- 2 Kings 4:5 So she went away from him and shut the door behind herself and her sons; and they brought the vessels to her, and she poured out into them.
- 2 Kings 4:6 And when she had filled the vessels, she said to her son, Bring me another vessel. But he said to her, There is no other vessel. And the oil stopped.
- E. “Truly I say to you, Whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a little child shall by no means enter into it”—Luke 18:17:
1. A little child, not filled with and occupied by old concepts, can easily receive a new thought—cf. Psa. 139:17.
Psa 139:17 And how precious are Your thoughts to me, O God! / How great is the sum of them!
 2. People need to be like little children and, with an unoccupied heart, receive the kingdom of God as a new thing.

II. “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God”—Matt. 5:8:

- A. To have a pure heart means that our heart is single, seeking nothing but the Lord Himself, so that Christ may grow in us without frustration—13:19-23.
- Matt 13:19 When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand, the evil one comes and snatches away that which has been sown in his heart. This is the one sown beside the way.
- Matt 13:20 And the one sown on the rocky places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy;
- Matt 13:21 Yet he does not have root in himself but lasts only for a time, and when affliction or persecution occurs because of the word, immediately he is stumbled.
- Matt 13:22 And the one sown in the thorns, this is he who hears the word, and the anxiety of the age and the deceitfulness of riches utterly choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.
- Matt 13:23 But the one sown on the good earth, this is he who hears the word and understands, who by all means bears fruit and produces, one a hundredfold, and one sixtyfold, and one thirtyfold.
- B. If we are pure in heart in seeking God, our reward is that we will see God.
- C. In God’s appearing to him, Job saw God, gaining God in his personal experience and abhorring himself—Job 38:1-3; 42:1-6.
- Job 38:1 Then Jehovah answered Job out of the whirlwind and said,
- Job 38:2 Who is this who darkens counsel / By words without knowledge?
- Job 38:3 Gird up now your loins like a mighty man; / For I will ask of you, and you shall inform Me.
- Job 42:1 Then Job answered Jehovah and said,
- Job 42:2 I know that You can do all things / And that no purpose of Yours can be restrained.
- Job 42:3 Who is this who hides counsel without knowledge? / Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, / Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.
- Job 42:4 Hear now, and I will speak; / I will ask of You, and You shall inform me.
- Job 42:5 I had heard of You by the hearing of the ear, / But now my eye has seen You;
- Job 42:6 Therefore I abhor myself, and I repent / In dust and ashes.
- D. Today our God is the all-inclusive Spirit as the consummation of the processed and consummated Triune God; the God whom we look at today is the consummated Spirit, and we can look at Him in our spirit—2 Cor. 2:10; 2 Tim. 4:22.
- 2 Cor 2:10 But whom you forgive anything, I also forgive; for also what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, it is for your sake in the person of Christ;
- 2 Tim 4:22 The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.
- E. We see God so that we may be constituted with God; seeing God transforms us, and seeing God equals gaining God so that we may become God in life and in nature but not in the Godhead—2 Cor. 3:16, 18; Matt. 5:8; Rev. 22:4.
- 2 Cor 3:16 But whenever their heart turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.
- 2 Cor 3:18 But we all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit.
- Matt 5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

- Rev 22:4 And they will see His face, and His name will be on their forehead.
- F. The more we see God and love God, the more we deny ourselves and abhor ourselves—Job 42:5-6; Isa. 6:5; Luke 14:26.
- Job 42:5 I had heard of You by the hearing of the ear, / But now my eye has seen You;
- Job 42:6 Therefore I abhor myself, and I repent / In dust and ashes.
- Isa 6:5 Then I said, Woe is me, for I am finished! / For I am a man of unclean lips, / And in the midst of a people of unclean lips I dwell; / Yet my eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts.
- Luke 14:26 If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, and moreover, even his own soul-life, he cannot be My disciple.
- G. If we see the Lord, we will see that the things and objects of this world are trash—Phil. 3:7-8; cf. Jer. 15:19.
- Phil 3:7 But what things were gains to me, these I have counted as loss on account of Christ.
- Phil 3:8 But moreover I also count all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, on account of whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as refuse that I may gain Christ
- Jer 15:19 Therefore thus says Jehovah, / If you return, I will restore you; / You will stand before Me; / And if you bring out the precious from the worthless, / You will be as My mouth; / They will turn to you, / But you will not turn to them.
- H. Spiritual progress is the increase of the element of God in us and the decrease of things within us that usurp God's place—1 Tim. 4:15; Col. 2:19.
- 1 Tim 4:15 Practice these things; be in them, that your progress may be manifest to all.
- Col 2:19 And not holding the Head, out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied and knit together by means of the joints and sinews, grows with the growth of God.
- I. As long as there is one thing, one event, or one person that takes possession of us, there is something in our heart usurping the place of God; an idol is anything within us that we love more than the Lord or that replaces the Lord in our life—Prov. 4:23; Ezek. 14:3.
- Prov 4:23 Keep your heart with all vigilance, / For from it are the issues of life.
- Ezek 14:3 Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their hearts and have put the stumbling block of their iniquity before their faces. Should I be inquired of at all by them?
- J. We must be pure; our heart should not be occupied by anything other than God—Matt. 13:19-23.
- Matt 13:19 When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand, the evil one comes and snatches away that which has been sown in his heart. This is the one sown beside the way.
- Matt 13:20 And the one sown on the rocky places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy;
- Matt 13:21 Yet he does not have root in himself but lasts only for a time, and when affliction or persecution occurs because of the word, immediately he is stumbled.
- Matt 13:22 And the one sown in the thorns, this is he who hears the word, and the anxiety of the age and the deceitfulness of riches utterly choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.
- Matt 13:23 But the one sown on the good earth, this is he who hears the word and understands, who by all means bears fruit and produces, one a hundredfold, and one sixtyfold, and one thirtyfold.
- K. Our spiritual progress depends on the degree to which our heart is turned toward God—4:17; 2 Cor. 3:16; cf. 2 Kings 23:25.
- Matt 4:17 From that time Jesus began to proclaim and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of the heavens has drawn near.
- 2 Cor 3:16 But whenever their heart turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.
- 2 Kings 23:25 And before him there was no king like him who turned to Jehovah with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might according to all the law of Moses, and after him no one has risen up like him.
- L. The more a person is in the word of God, the purer he becomes—Psa. 12:6; 119:140; John 17:17.

Psa 12:6 The words of Jehovah are pure words, / Silver refined in a furnace on the earth, / Purified seven times.
 Psa 119:140 Your word is very pure, / And Your servant loves it.
 John 17:17 Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.

III. We should aspire to have an enlarged heart—Psa. 119:32:

Psa 119:32 I run the way of Your commandments, / For You enlarge my heart.

A. Solomon was competent to oversee God's people because he had wisdom and a large heart, which are two aspects of one thing:

1. Although he asked only for the wisdom and knowledge to go out and come in among God's people (1 Kings 3:5-9; 2 Chron. 1:10), God gave him "largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the seashore" (1 Kings 4:29).

1 Kings 3:5 In Gibeon Jehovah appeared to Solomon in a dream at night; and God said, Ask what I should give you.

1 Kings 3:6 And Solomon said, You have shown great lovingkindness to Your servant David my father, because he walked before You in truth and righteousness and in uprightness of heart with You; and You have kept for him this great lovingkindness and have given him a son to sit upon his throne, as it is this day.

1 Kings 3:7 And now, O Jehovah my God, You have made Your servant king in the place of David my father, though I am a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in.

1 Kings 3:8 And Your servant is in the midst of Your people, whom You have chosen, a vast people that cannot be numbered or counted for multitude.

1 Kings 3:9 Give therefore to Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people and to discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?

2 Chron 1:10 Now give me wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people; for who can judge this great people of Yours?

1 Kings 4:29 And God gave Solomon wisdom and very much understanding and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the seashore.

2. The seashore encloses the sea, God having "set the sand as a boundary for the sea" (Jer. 5:22); this shows that Solomon's heart was larger than the sea.

Jer 5:22 Do you not fear Me, declares Jehovah; / Do you not tremble at My presence; / Who have set the sand as a boundary for the sea / By an eternal statute, so it cannot pass over it? / Although its waves toss, they cannot prevail; / Although they roar, they cannot pass over it.

B. We must be genuine ministers of the new covenant, having an enlarged heart with the intimate concern of the ministering life, which is a fruitful life—2 Cor. 7:2-3:

2 Cor 7:2 Make room for us; we have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have taken advantage of no one.

2 Cor 7:3 I do not say this to condemn you, for I have said before that you are in our hearts for our dying together and our living together.

1. With an enlarged heart the apostles were able to embrace all believers regardless of their condition, and with an opened mouth they were able to speak to all believers frankly concerning the real situation into which they had been misled—6:11.

2 Cor 6:11 Our mouth is opened to you, Corinthians; our heart is enlarged.

2. This kind of openness and enlargement is needed to reconcile, to bring back, the misled or distracted believers to God.

IV. In order to maintain the newness of our heart and our spirit, we need to be renewed day by day with the fresh supply of the resurrection life to become as new as the New Jerusalem—4:16-18:

2 Cor 4:16 Therefore we do not lose heart; but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.

2 Cor 4:17 For our momentary lightness of affliction works out for us, more and more surpassingly, an

- eternal weight of glory,
 2 Cor 4:18 Because we do not regard the things which are seen but the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.
- A. Newness is God; the believers should be renewed to be as new as the New Jerusalem since they all are becoming the New Jerusalem by walking in newness of life (Rom. 6:4) and building the New Jerusalem by serving in newness of spirit (7:6).
 Rom 6:4 We have been buried therefore with Him through baptism into His death, in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so also we might walk in newness of life.
 Rom 7:6 But now we have been discharged from the law, having died to that in which we were held, so that we serve in newness of spirit and not in oldness of letter.
- B. While we are in the midst of suffering, we need to receive the renewing; otherwise, the suffering that we pass through means nothing to us; within us there is a refuge—our spirit—Psa. 91:1.
 Psa 91:1 He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High / Will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.
- C. In order to be renewed day by day, we need to be revived every morning—Matt. 13:43; Luke 1:78-79; Prov. 4:18; Judg. 5:31; 2 Cor. 4:16.
 Matt 13:43 Then the righteous will shine forth like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.
 Luke 1:78 Because of the merciful compassions of our God, in which the rising sun will visit us from on high,
 Luke 1:79 To shine upon those sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.
 Prov 4:18 But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, / Which shines brighter and brighter until the full day.
 Judg 5:31 May all Your enemies so perish, O Jehovah. / But may those who love Him be like the sun / When it rises in its might. And the land had rest forty years.
 2 Cor 4:16 Therefore we do not lose heart; but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.
- D. We need to come to the Lord's table in newness (Matt. 26:29); we can be renewed by learning to say, "I'm sorry; forgive me."
 Matt 26:29 But I say to you, I shall by no means drink of this product of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in the kingdom of My Father.
- E. We are renewed day by day through four items: the cross (2 Cor. 4:10-12, 16-18); the Holy Spirit, by which we are reconditioned, remade, and remodeled with the divine life (Titus 3:5); our mingled spirit (Eph. 4:23); and the holy Word of God (5:26).
 2 Cor 4:10 Always bearing about in the body the putting to death of Jesus that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.
 2 Cor 4:11 For we who are alive are always being delivered unto death for Jesus' sake that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.
 2 Cor 4:12 So then death operates in us, but life in you.
 2 Cor 4:16 Therefore we do not lose heart; but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.
 2 Cor 4:17 For our momentary lightness of affliction works out for us, more and more surpassingly, an eternal weight of glory,
 2 Cor 4:18 Because we do not regard the things which are seen but the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.
 Titus 3:5 Not out of works in righteousness which we did but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit,
 Eph 4:23 And that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind
 Eph 5:26 That He might sanctify her, cleansing her by the washing of the water in the word,
- F. Our mingled spirit needs to spread into our mind in order to subdue, take over, and occupy our mind, thus becoming the spirit of our mind; the more the mingled spirit penetrates, saturates, and possesses our mind, the more we let Christ's mind become our mind—Phil.

2:5; Eph. 4:23; 1 Cor. 2:16; Rom. 12:2.

Phil 2:5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus,

Eph 4:23 And that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind

1 Cor 2:16 For who has known the mind of the Lord and will instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ.

Rom 12:2 And do not be fashioned according to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and well pleasing and perfect.

- G. We should not live according to the vanity of the mind but according to the spirit of the mind; this is the key to the daily living of the corporate one new man, the secret to having a church life filled with the character of God, the aroma of Christ, and the oneness of the Spirit—Eph. 4:3-4, 17-18, 23.

Eph 4:3 Being diligent to keep the oneness of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace:

Eph 4:4 One Body and one Spirit, even as also you were called in one hope of your calling;

Eph 4:17 This therefore I say and testify in the Lord, that you no longer walk as the Gentiles also walk in the vanity of their mind,

Eph 4:18 Being darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance which is in them, because of the hardness of their heart;

Eph 4:23 And that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind

- H. Our loving the Lord and our exercising our spirit in prayer and in reading the Word day by day change and renew our mind; this is to get rid of all the old concepts concerning the things of the human life and be made new again by the teaching of the Holy Scriptures and the enlightening of the Holy Spirit—Psa. 119:105, 130; 2 Tim. 3:15-17; Deut. 17:18-20.

Psa 119:105 Your word is a lamp to my feet / And a light to my path.

Psa 119:130 The opening of Your words gives light, / Imparting understanding to the simple.

2 Tim 3:15 And that from a babe you have known the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise unto salvation through the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

2 Tim 3:16 All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for conviction, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,

2 Tim 3:17 That the man of God may be complete, fully equipped for every good work.

Deut 17:18 And when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write out for himself a copy of this law in a book, out of that which is before the Levitical priests.

Deut 17:19 And it shall be with him, and he shall read in it all the days of his life, in order that he may learn to fear Jehovah his God by keeping all the words of this law and these statutes and doing them,

Deut 17:20 So that his heart may not be lifted up above his brothers and he may not turn aside from the commandment to the right or to the left; that he and his sons may extend their days over their kingdom in the midst of Israel.

V. The Lord's recovery depends upon our renewed, purified heart and our renewed, strengthened spirit; when our heart is fully possessed by Christ and our spirit is habitually exercised to touch the Lord, God will have a way, and the recovery will be prevailing:

- A. This consummates God's intention in making the believers the new man as the new creation to consummate in the New Jerusalem; as a result of our being renewed, we are made a new creation, which is the new man in Christ—Col. 3:10-11; 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15-17; Eph. 2:10, 15.

Col 3:10 And have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto full knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,

Col 3:11 Where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all and in all.

2 Cor 5:17 So then if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old things have passed away; behold, they have become new.

Gal 6:15 For neither is circumcision anything nor uncircumcision, but a new creation is what matters.

- Gal 6:16 And as many as walk by this rule, peace be upon them and mercy, even upon the Israel of God.
- Gal 6:17 Henceforth let no one trouble me, for I bear in my body the brands of Jesus.
- Eph 2:10 For we are His masterpiece, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand in order that we would walk in them.
- Eph 2:15 Abolishing in His flesh the law of the commandments in ordinances, that He might create the two in Himself into one new man, so making peace,
- B. God's goal is to have the one new man, which ultimately will consummate in the New Jerusalem, the final consummation of the one new man.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

THE NEED TO BE POOR IN SPIRIT AND PURE IN HEART TO EXPERIENCE THE TREE OF LIFE

Scripture Reading: Ezek. 36:26-27; Matt. 5:3, 8; Heb. 4:12; Rom. 1:9; 7:6; 1 Pet. 3:4; Mark 12:30; 4:14-20; 2 Cor. 3:16-18; Jer. 31:33; Heb. 8:10; Psalms 51:6; Heb. 10:22

THE HEART AND THE SPIRIT

We want to see how we have to deal with our heart and our spirit in order to experience the tree of life. The heart and the spirit are referred to many times in both the Old and New Testaments. We need to be clear about the position and function of the heart and about the difference between the heart and the spirit. We need to come back to the pure Word to see the difference between the heart and the spirit.

Ezekiel 36:26-27 shows us that the heart is different from the spirit. *Heart* and *spirit* are not synonyms but are two different things. These verses say, "I will also give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you...And I will put My Spirit within you." The new spirit mentioned here is not the Holy Spirit, because in verse 27 there is another Spirit which will be put into us, into our spirit. The human heart is different from the human spirit. Both of these organs of our human being have to be renewed.

Matthew 5:3 says, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens." The spirit referred to here is our human spirit, not the Holy Spirit. To be poor in spirit does not mean that one has a poor spirit. To be poor in spirit is to have the best spirit. It is not only to have a humble spirit but also to be emptied in our spirit, in the depth of our being, not holding on to the old things of the old dispensation but unloaded to receive the new things, the things of the kingdom of the heavens. Our spirit has to be emptied of many things. Human beings are filled with many things in their spirit. Now that we have turned to the Lord, we have to evacuate our spirit to be poor in spirit. Matthew 5:8 says, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." If the heart were synonymous with the human spirit, there would have been no need for the Lord to give these two different blessings in Matthew 5. Our heart has to be pure, and our spirit has to be emptied. A pure heart and an empty spirit are the two main conditions for the nine blessings spoken by the Lord in Matthew 5.

Hebrews 4:12 says, "The word of God is living and operative and sharper than any twoedged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit and of joints and marrow, and able to discern the thoughts and intentions of the heart." The soul and the spirit are two different entities just as the joints and marrow are. The heart is also another item. With the heart are the thoughts and intentions. Again we see that there is a distinction between the heart and the spirit. Our spirit is the organ for us to contact God (John 4:24), and our heart is the organ for us to love God (Mark 12:30). Our spirit contacts, receives, contains, and experiences God. However, it requires our heart to love God first. In our heart is the mind with the thoughts and the will with the intentions.

Romans 1:9 says, "God is my witness, whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of His Son." Romans 7:6 tells us that we should serve as slaves in "newness of spirit." To serve the Lord is something in the spirit. To love the Lord is something in the heart. The heart is for loving, and the spirit

is for serving. We need to serve in newness of spirit and not in oldness of letter.

THE HIDDEN MAN OF THE HEART

First Peter 3:4 speaks of “the hidden man of the heart in the incorruptible adornment of a meek and quiet spirit, which is very costly in the sight of God.” In our heart there is a hidden man. The hidden man of the heart is the meek and quiet spirit. If a man is hidden in a house, it is obvious that the man and the house are distinct entities. The spirit is hidden in the heart and is the hidden man of the heart. The wives’ adornment before God should be their inner being—the hidden man of their heart, which is their spirit, in meekness and quietness. This is the incorruptible adornment in contrast with the corruptible hair, gold, and garments (3:3). This spiritual adornment is costly in the sight of God. A person may dress in nice clothing, which is the adornment of the outward man, yet this person may have a proud spirit. Outwardly this person is adorned, but inwardly there is no spiritual adornment. Peter charged the sisters not to pay much attention to their outward adornment but to take care of the hidden man of the heart, which is a meek and quiet spirit. Our spirit should be adorned with meekness and with quietness.

LOVING THE LORD WITH ALL OUR HEART

Mark 12:30 says, “You shall love the Lord your God from your whole heart and from your whole soul and from your whole mind and from your whole strength.” The function of the heart is to love. The heart is a loving organ, and we are told to love the Lord our God from our whole heart.

DEALING WITH THE HEART SO THAT CHRIST CAN GROW WITHIN US

The parable of the sower in Mark 4 focuses attention on the human heart. The human heart is the soil for the seed sown by the Slave-Savior. Mark 4:14 says, “The sower sows the word.” The Sower is Christ, and the word is also Christ. This means that the Lord Jesus came to sow Himself into us. He Himself is both the Sower and the seed of life. Verse 15 says, “These are the ones beside the way, where the word is sown; and when they hear, immediately Satan comes and takes away the word which has been sown in them.” “Beside the way” is the place close to the way. It is hardened by the traffic of the way, and it is difficult for the seeds to penetrate it. This typifies a preoccupied heart, hardened by worldly traffic and not open to understand, to comprehend, the word of the kingdom. The soil should not be preoccupied by anything and must be absolutely open for the seed of life, but the wayside has been trodden too much by worldly traffic. This is the heart that has been preoccupied by many other things, thus becoming hardened. The wayside signifies a preoccupied heart.

Verses 16 and 17 say, “Likewise, these are the ones being sown on the rocky places, who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy. Yet they have no root in themselves, but last only for a time; then when affliction or persecution occurs because of the word, immediately they are stumbled.” The rocky places do not have much earth. This signifies a stony heart. There is some ground good for the seed, but this ground is too shallow. Underneath this ground are rocks. It is rather hard for the seed to root deeply into a stony heart. Many times we may be willing to receive the word, but we only receive it superficially because there are some rocks in our heart. Thus, it is hard for Christ as the seed of life to root deeply in us.

Verses 18 and 19 say, “Others are the ones being sown into the thorns; these are the ones who have heard the word, and the anxieties of the age and the deceitfulness of riches and the lusts for other things enter in and utterly choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.” Our lusts for other things can choke the word. You may not think that the anxieties of the age or the deceitfulness of riches trouble you, but what about the lusts for other things? Some may be desirous of a high position or a high degree. The anxieties of the age, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts for other things choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.

Verse 20 says, “These are the ones sown on the good earth: those who hear the word and receive it and bear fruit, one thirtyfold, and one sixtyfold, and one a hundredfold.” The good ground, the good heart, is a heart that is not hardened by worldly traffic, without hidden sins, without the anxieties of the

age and the deceitfulness of riches, and without the lusts for other things. Such a heart is pure, good, and right.

The Triune God, who is the tree of life, has imparted Himself into us to be our enjoyment. He is the seed of life sown into our heart. Our heart is like the soil, the earth. If the soil of our heart is the wayside, trodden by the world and preoccupied by many things, it becomes hardened. Our heart must be released from any preoccupation for the seed of life to be sown in it. Our heart may not be preoccupied, but there may be hidden rocks in our heart. The rocks are hidden sins, personal desires, self-seeking, and self-pity, which frustrate the seed from gaining root in the depth of the earth. We may seemingly be a good brother or a good sister, and yet we are superficial with the Lord because of the rocks in our heart. Thus, it is impossible for the Lord as the seed of life to grow within us deeply. It is also possible for our heart to be full of thorns, which are the anxieties of the age, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts for other things. Some people have their heart set on a better car. Even this desire can hinder and choke the word from becoming fruitful. The thorns frustrate and choke the growth of the seed.

If we are going to have the Lord as the seed of life grow within us to be our full enjoyment, we have to deal with our heart. We have to ask the Lord to be merciful to us. By His mercy we have to deal with all these negative things in our heart. We have to deal with the things preoccupying us, with the hidden rocks, with the anxieties of the age, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts for other things. Then our heart will be good, right, proper, released, and prepared for Christ as the seed of life to grow within us.

TURNING OUR HEART TO THE LORD

Second Corinthians 3:16-18 says, “Whenever their heart turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. And the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. But we all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit.” We may talk about the Lord as the life-giving Spirit, but our enjoying and experiencing the Lord as such a living Spirit depends upon our heart being turned to Him. When our heart turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Actually, our turned-away heart is the veil. To turn our heart to the Lord is to take away the veil. Our heart is the crucial factor in our enjoyment of the Lord as the life-giving Spirit and in our being transformed into the Lord’s image. If we are going to enjoy the Lord as the living Spirit and be transformed by Him, we have to deal with our heart. Our heart has to be turned to the Lord.

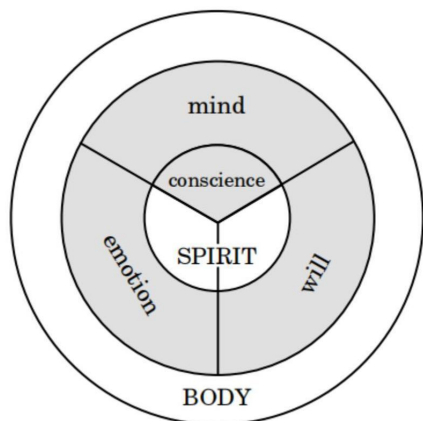
THE PARTS OF MAN

First Thessalonians 5:23 strongly indicates that man is of three parts: spirit, soul, and body. There are many other passages in the Scriptures showing us that man is a tripartite being (see *The Parts of Man* published by Living Stream Ministry). The three parts of the soul are the mind, the knowing part (Psa. 13:2; 139:14); the emotion, the loving part (1 Sam. 18:1; S. S. 1:7); and the will, the deciding part (Job 7:15; 6:7). The mind is for us to think, to know, and to consider; the emotion is for us to love, to hate, to be happy, or to be sorrowful; and the will is for us to decide or to choose. The soul is the very person of a man.

The spirit also has three parts. These are the conscience (Rom. 9:1; cf. 8:16), fellowship (John 4:24; Rom. 1:9), and intuition (1 Cor. 2:11). The conscience is for us to discern right from wrong and either justifies or condemns us. The fellowship is for us to contact God and to commune with God. The intuition means to have a direct sense or feeling in our spirit, regardless of reason or circumstance. The intuition can directly sense the mind, the will, the heart of God. Many times this direct sense is against the knowledge of the mind and the emotion or the feeling in the soul.

The heart is a composition of all the parts of the soul plus one part of the spirit, the conscience. Thus, the heart is made up of the mind, the will, the emotion, and the conscience. Hebrews 4:12 talks about the thoughts and intentions of the heart. The thoughts are in the mind, and the intentions relate to

the will. Hebrews 10:22 tells us that our hearts need to be sprinkled from an evil conscience, and we have seen that we need to love the Lord from our whole heart. The shaded area in the following diagram illustrates the parts composing the heart.



The above diagram shows us that the spirit is enclosed in the heart as the hidden man of the heart. Proverbs 4:23 tells us, “Keep your heart with all vigilance, / For from it are the issues of life.” The heart is the gateway, the entrance and the exit, of the spirit. When the heart is closed, the spirit is imprisoned. When the heart is open, the spirit will be released.

Jeremiah 31:33 says, “This is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares Jehovah: I will put My law in their inward parts and write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they will be My people.” We need to compare this verse with Hebrews 8:10. Hebrews 8:10 says, “I will impart My laws into their mind.” In Jeremiah 31:33 *inward parts* is used for *mind*. This proves that the mind is one of the inward parts. It is also an interpretation of the term *inward parts*. The inward parts include not only the mind but also the emotion and will, which are the composition of the heart. In Jeremiah 31:33 the Lord said that He will put His law in our inward parts. But in Hebrews 8:10 the word *laws* is used. Eventually, the one law becomes many laws. By imparting His divine life into us, God puts the law of life into our spirit, from whence it spreads into our inward parts, such as our mind, emotion, and will, and becomes several laws. The law of life becomes a law of the mind, a law of the emotion, and a law of the will.

Psalms 51:6 says, “Behold, You delight in truth in the inward parts; / And in the hidden part You would make known wisdom to me.” Again, the inward parts are the mind, the emotion, and the will. Truth is something in the inward parts, and wisdom is something in the hidden part. Wisdom is deeper than truth. God desires that we would have truth in our mind, emotion, and will. In our spirit, which is the hidden part, the hidden man of the heart, He makes wisdom known to us.

OPENING OUR HEART TO THE LORD BY REPENTING AND CONFESSING

We have seen that the Lord’s intention is to sow Himself as the seed of life into us. We are the living earth, the living soil, the living ground. The spirit is enclosed by the heart, so if the Lord is going to come into us, our heart has to be opened. We can open our heart to the Lord by repenting and confessing. The word *repent* in the Greek language means to have a change of mind or a turn of mind. Our mind was originally not toward the Lord but toward something else, and our mind was fixed. Now we have to repent, which means that we have to have a change of mind, and we have to turn our mind. This means that the mind is open to the Lord. Following our repentance, we will always confess. We need to confess all our failures, sins, and shortcomings to the Lord. Confession is the exercise of the conscience. When we repent by turning our mind, we will immediately confess by exercising our conscience. Then there is an opening of the heart. When we mean business to repent to the Lord and confess all our failures before God, our emotion will immediately be moved and touched. We will tell the Lord, “Lord Jesus, I love You.” When our emotion is moved, our will makes a decision for the

Lord. We will say, "Lord, from today I want nothing besides You. I want You to be my aim, my goal, and my one desire. I only want to seek after You." The mind of the heart turns, the conscience of the heart is opened, and the emotion and will of the heart follow. Thus, the whole heart is open to the Lord, and the Lord has a way to come into our heart. It is by repenting and confessing that we open our heart to the Lord. This is revealed in the Scriptures and proven by our experience.

The sad thing is that with many of us, soon after the Lord came into us, we became closed to Him. Then the Lord was imprisoned in our spirit and had no way to make His home in our heart. After we got saved, it may have been that gradually our emotion became closed to Him, our will became closed to Him, our mind became closed to Him, and our conscience became closed to Him. Thus, the Lord was imprisoned in our spirit. This is why both in the Old and New Testaments the Lord always calls us to repent. In the seven epistles to the churches in Revelation 2 and 3 the Lord tells the saints again and again to repent. Day by day and morning and evening we have to repent. To repent means to turn our mind to the Lord, to open our mind. Following this, our conscience will be exercised in a thorough confession of our sins. Then our emotion will follow to love the Lord, and our will will follow to choose the Lord. The result will be that our heart will be fully opened to the Lord, and the Lord will have a way to fill us with Himself. This is the way to deal with our heart to make it the good ground for the Lord as the seed of life to grow in.

If we deal with the Lord in this way, all our preoccupations will be rid from our being. The rocks and the thorns in our heart will be dealt with. Then our heart will be good and pure. The enemy is always looking for opportunities to make our heart the wayside. Many times we allow things to tread on the soil of our heart which make our heart hardened. We may be preoccupied by our wife, our children, or our parents. Sometimes we may be in a meeting listening to the word of God, but God's word cannot penetrate us. This is because our heart is preoccupied. Our heart can be preoccupied with earthly things, with things other than Christ Himself. We may feel that a brother or sister is really for the Lord, but we may not realize that their heart contains some hidden rocks, thus making it impossible for the seed of life to take root within them. Also, the thorns, which are the anxieties of the age, the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts for other things, can grow together with the seed and choke the growth. The Lord is ready and available, but our heart is not so available. Our heart is not pure. This is why we have to deal with our heart. The heart has to be purified.

Hebrews 10:22 tells us that our hearts need to be sprinkled from an evil conscience. We must have a conscience without any accusation or offense. Our conscience has to be cleansed and purged. Then our heart will be released from every preoccupying thing to be the good soil for the Lord Himself. All four parts of our heart have to be dealt with. The mind must be always turned to the Lord. The emotion must be always loving the Lord and fervent, zealous, for the Lord. The will must be submissive and pliable yet strong. Finally, the conscience must be purged and must be without any offense. Then we will have a proper heart. We must try to learn these lessons in life and help the children of God learn all these lessons. These are the necessary lessons for us to enjoy the Lord.

DEALING WITH THE LORD TO BE POOR IN SPIRIT

Besides dealing with the Lord to be pure in heart, we need to go on even deeper to be those who are poor in spirit. It may be that our spirit is not empty for something more of the Lord to be deposited into us. According to Matthew 5, we have to deal with our spirit first. The first condition for the nine blessings in Matthew 5 is to be poor in spirit. We need to pray, "O Lord, empty me. Evacuate and empty my spirit of anything other than Yourself. Even empty my spirit of the old experiences of Yourself." We should not be filled up with our old experiences of Christ. Our old experiences of Christ can hinder us from experiencing Christ in a new, fresh, and up-to-date way. Our spirit has to be emptied. This is the real humility. It is possible for a person to be humble outwardly yet still be so proud in his spirit. The real humility is a matter in the spirit. This is why Peter tells us that there is the need for a meek and quiet spirit. The real meekness is in the spirit. A person may be quiet outwardly but may be full of opinions inwardly.

Day by day we have to learn the lesson to deal with the Lord to be poor in spirit by emptying our spirit of many old things such as old knowledge and old experience. If our heart is not open, the Lord has no possibility to dispense Himself into us. If our spirit is full, the Lord also has no way to impart something fresh of Himself into our being. We have to be poor in spirit and pure in heart. We need to ask the Lord to empty our spirit and clear up our heart. Then the Lord will have the free way in us and the adequate room in our being to fill us.

**A PROPER HEART AND A PROPER SPIRIT
TO EXPERIENCE AND ENJOY CHRIST AS THE TREE OF LIFE**

The heart acts in cooperation with the spirit, but the spirit is the organ for us to directly receive and contact the Lord. If we are going to contact the Lord, we must exercise our spirit. If we are going to serve the Lord, we must exercise our spirit. If we are going to receive the Lord, to take the Lord in, we must exercise our spirit. But the exercise of our spirit depends on the condition of the heart. If the condition of our heart is wrong, it is hard for us to exercise our spirit. One thing we should never do with the saints in the church is to play politics. We should not have two faces, pretending to be one way to a brother's face but undermining him behind his back. Our heart must be honest and sincere for us to experience the Lord. We have to be faithful, honest, and frank. If we feel that something needs to be said, we should say it faithfully, honestly, and properly. We are the children of God, the children in light. Our heart must be honest and pure. Our conscience must be purged. If our heart is condemning us, how can we pray in a proper way?

We all need to look to the Lord that we would learn the lesson of dealing with all these negative things in our being. We need to ask the Lord to grant us a pure heart with a mind that always turns to Him and that is set upon Him. We need to ask the Lord to grant us a conscience that is always exercised to confess our failures and our sins before Him. Then the Lord will have the way to make our emotion so fervent and zealous for Him with a will that is submissive, pliable, and strong. May we also deal with the Lord to be poor in spirit. We need to be hungry and thirsty for more fresh, new, and up-to-date experiences of the Lord. We should not be settled or fixed but be emptied in our spirit all the time. Then we will experience and enjoy Christ, and He will have the opportunity, the capacity, and the space to grow within us. May the Lord grant us a proper heart and a proper spirit for us to experience and enjoy Him as the tree of life. (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1965, vol. 2, "The Tree of Life," pp. 183-193*)

CRUCIAL ASPECTS OF MATTHEW 5 THROUGH 7

(Thursday—Second Morning Session)

Message Two

The Blessedness of Those Who Mourn, of Those Who Are Meek, and of Those Who Are the Peacemakers, Called the Sons of God

JL Hymns: 944

Scripture Reading: Matt. 5:4-5, 9

Matt 5:4 Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.
Matt 5:5 Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.
Matt 5:9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God.

I. “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted”—Matt. 5:4:

- A. To mourn is to feel or show deep sorrow or regret:
 - 1. The entire situation of the world is negative toward God’s economy.
 - 2. God’s glory is insulted, Christ is rejected, the Holy Spirit is frustrated, the church is desolate, self is corrupt, and the whole world is evil.
 - 3. Satan, sin, self, darkness, and worldliness predominate among all people on the earth.
 - 4. God wants us to mourn over such a situation.
- B. A saint who is poor in spirit and seeks God will mourn because the surroundings, the present generation, and the people in the world do not want God, resist God, and rebel against God:
 - 1. The Lord promised that those who mourn on behalf of God will be comforted.
 - 2. Our grieving heart is comforted by gaining God and by coming under His rule; however, our comfort will be greater and richer in the coming kingdom and in eternity future.
- C. A believer who lives in the reality of the kingdom of the heavens often mourns:
 - 1. A saint does not mourn over the tribulations that he suffers but over not gaining God.
 - 2. The object of such mourning is God and His dominion.
 - 3. Such mourning is noble and holy.
 - 4. Those who mourn will be comforted by God.
- D. If we are poor in spirit, surely we will mourn:
 - 1. We will feel sad and sorrowful for the poor situation among God’s people and even for our own condition.
 - 2. The situation among God’s people today is really worthy of mourning.
 - 3. For the kingdom life we also need to mourn.
 - 4. We need to mourn concerning ourselves, our society, and today’s Christianity.
 - 5. When we look at Christ, we are happy and rejoicing, but when we look at ourselves and others around us, we have to mourn.

II. “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth”—v. 5:

- A. To be meek means not to resist the world’s opposition but to suffer it willingly.
- B. If we are poor in spirit and mourn for the pitiful situation of others, spontaneously we will be meek:
 - 1. Toward all people we must be meek.
 - 2. To have the virtue of meekness means that we do not invade others or fight with them:
 - a. Instead, we are willing to give in.
 - b. The meek give in, do not fight, and do not invade others’ territory.

- C. While we are being meek toward other people, we must fight against the power of darkness—Eph. 6:12:
- Eph 6:12 For our wrestling is not against blood and flesh but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenlies.
1. The enemy is not other people.
 2. It is Satan and his angels, the evil powers in the air—2:2.
Eph 2:2 In which you once walked according to the age of this world, according to the ruler of the authority of the air, of the spirit which is now operating in the sons of disobedience;
- D. If we are meek, willing to suffer the world's opposition in this age, we will inherit the earth in the coming age—Heb. 2:5-8; Luke 19:17, 19; Matt. 11:28-30; Num. 12:3.
- Heb 2:5 For it was not to angels that He subjected the coming inhabited earth, concerning which we speak.
- Heb 2:6 But one has solemnly testified somewhere, saying, "What is man, that You bring him to mind? Or the son of man, that You care for him?"
- Heb 2:7 You have made Him a little inferior to the angels; You have crowned Him with glory and honor and have set Him over the works of Your hands;
- Heb 2:8 You have subjected all things under His feet." For in subjecting all things to Him, He left nothing unsubject to Him. But now we do not yet see all things subjected to Him,
- Luke 19:17 And he said to him, Well done, good slave. Because you have become faithful in the least, have authority over ten cities.
- Luke 19:19 And he said to this one as well, And you, be over five cities.
- Matt 11:28 Come to Me all who toil and are burdened, and I will give you rest.
- Matt 11:29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.
- Matt 11:30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.
- Num 12:3 Now the man Moses was very meek, more than anyone else who was on the face of the earth.
- E. The Lord Jesus said of Himself, "I am meek...in heart"—Matt. 11:29:
1. In facing opposition, the Lord Jesus was always meek.
 2. Paul in 2 Corinthians speaks of the meekness of Christ—10:1:
2 Cor 10:1 But I myself, Paul, entreat you through the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who (as you say) in person am base among you, but while absent am bold toward you,
 - a. Meekness is a virtue of the humanity of Christ by the divine life.
 - b. Christ's meekness is not a simple matter, for it is in His humanity and by the divine life.
 - c. When the Lord Jesus was on earth, He lived a human life by the divine life.
 - d. Through this mingling of divinity and humanity the virtue of meekness was manifested.
 3. Christ's meekness is seen in the way He entered Jerusalem as described in Matthew 21:1-11:
Matt 21:1 And when they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Bethphage at the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples,
Matt 21:2 Saying to them, Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied and a colt with her; untie them and lead them to Me.
Matt 21:3 And if anyone says anything to you, you shall say, The Lord has need of them; and immediately he will send them.
Matt 21:4 Now this took place in order that what was spoken through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying,
Matt 21:5 "Say to the daughter of Zion, Behold, your King is coming to you, meek and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, a foal of a beast of burden."
Matt 21:6 And the disciples went and did as Jesus directed them,
Matt 21:7 And led the donkey and the colt. And they put their garments on them, and He sat upon them.

- Matt 21:8 And most of the crowd spread their own garments in the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them in the road.
- Matt 21:9 And the crowds who went before Him and those who followed cried out, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!
- Matt 21:10 And when He entered into Jerusalem, all the city was stirred, saying, Who is this?
- Matt 21:11 And the crowds said, This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth of Galilee.
- He was “meek and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, a foal of a beast of burden”—v. 5.
 - This signifies the meek and lowly state in which the Lord was willing to present Himself.
 - Christ the heavenly King did not come with haughty splendor but with gentle, humble meekness.
 - The Lord Jesus came not to fight but to be a meek King.

F. Those who are meek will inherit the earth—5:5:

Matt 5:5 Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

- If we live in the reality of the kingdom of the heavens and partake in the kingdom, we will inherit the kingdom of God—1 Cor. 6:9a, 10b; Gal. 5:21b; Eph. 5:5b.
 1 Cor 6:9a Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? ...
 1 Cor 6:10b ... will [not] inherit the kingdom of God.
 Gal 5:21b ... that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.
 Eph 5:5b ... has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.
- Inheriting the kingdom of God is different from entering into the kingdom of God through regeneration:
 - Having entered into the kingdom by being regenerated, we now need to grow and develop in the divine life.
 - As a result of this growth and development, we will inherit the kingdom of God.
 - We cannot inherit the kingdom of God unless we grow to maturity in the proper development in the divine life.

III. “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God”—Matt. 5:9:

- Satan, the rebellious one, is the instigator of all rebellion.
- For the kingdom of the heavens, under its heavenly ruling, we must be those who make peace among men—Heb. 12:14:
 Heb 12:14 Pursue peace with all men and sanctification, without which no one will see the Lord;
 - Our Father is the God of peace (Rom. 15:33; 16:20), having a peaceful life with a peaceful nature.
 Rom 15:33 Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.
 Rom 16:20 Now the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.
 - As those born of Him, if we would be peacemakers, we must walk in His divine life and according to His divine nature.
 - In this way we will express His life and nature and be called the sons of God.
- The blessed peacemakers will be called the sons of God—Matt. 5:9:
 Matt 5:9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God.
 - The believers are children of God, and then they gradually grow up to become sons of God.
 - In His salvation God makes sinners into sons.
 - The central thought of the book of Romans is that in His salvation God is making sinners His sons with His life and nature so that they may become constituents of the

Body of Christ for His expression:

- a. Romans 8, in particular, emphasizes sonship:
Rom 8 be omitted.
 - 1) Verse 14 says, “As many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.”
 - 2) This indicates that we may know that we are sons of God by the fact that we are led by the Spirit.
 - 3) The leading of the Spirit marks us out as being sons of God in the growth of life.
 - b. Verse 19 continues, “The anxious watching of the creation eagerly awaits the revelation of the sons of God”; this verse speaks of the manifestation, or the appearing, of the sons of God.
4. Galatians 3:26 says, “You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus”:
 - a. Faith in Christ brings us into Christ and makes us one with Christ, in whom is the sonship.
 - b. We must be identified with Christ through faith so that in Him we may be sons of God.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

CONCERNING THE NATURE OF THE KINGDOM PEOPLE

Those Mourning to Be Comforted

Although we should be very happy to hear that we are in the kingdom of the heavens today [Matt. 5:3], in the very next verse the Lord Jesus told us to mourn. Matthew 5:4 says, “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.” It does not seem logical to say that those who mourn are blessed and happy. However, if we pray for a certain period of time, with a spirit filled with the King and the kingdom, we will begin to mourn over the negative situation of today. The entire situation of the world is negative in relation to God’s economy. Satan, sin, self, darkness, and worldliness predominate among all people on earth. God’s glory is insulted, Christ is rejected, the Holy Spirit is frustrated, the church is desolated, self is corrupted, and the whole world is evil. Hence, God wants us to mourn over such a situation. Because the kingdom is in us, we are subdued, controlled, and ruled by the indwelling King. If, while we are under this rule, we look at the environment and the situation of today’s world, we will sigh and mourn.

This mourning, however, is a blessing, for the Lord said that those who mourn “shall be comforted.” If we mourn according to God and His economy, we will be comforted by being rewarded with the kingdom of the heavens. We will see God’s heavenly ruling over the entire negative situation. Many times I have had the experience of mourning and being comforted. Do not be disappointed. We must mourn, yet we are filled with hope. The King is coming, the enemy will be defeated, and the earth will be regained by Christ. Sooner or later, we will be comforted. Is it not a comfort to see so many in the Lord’s recovery seeking the Lord and His kingdom? What a comfort this is to me! If you have never experienced mourning in your spirit, then you cannot realize how sweet and comforting it is to see so many who care only for the Lord’s kingdom. For this reason we love all the dear saints in the Lord’s recovery. All the churches with all the seeking saints are a real comfort to every mourning spirit.

The Meek to Inherit the Earth

The sequence in these verses is very significant. First, we are poor in spirit to receive the King with the kingdom and to contain Him. Then we mourn over the pitiful situation and are comforted. Following this, we have a word about the meek. Verse 5 says, “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.” Some translators have said that the Greek word rendered “earth” should be “land.”

But whether we translate this as “earth” or “land,” it refers to the coming subdued world. Today the earth is a worldly kingdom under the rule of Satan. But the day is coming when the Lord, the King, will regain this world. Revelation 11:15 says, “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign forever and ever.” The world spoken of in Revelation 11:15 is the earth in Matthew 5:5.

In Matthew 5:5 the Lord said that the meek will inherit the earth. Those who are poor in spirit in verse 3 and who mourn in verse 4 are now the meek in verse 5. Many Christians do not understand what it means to be meek. It does not mean simply to be gentle, humble, and submissive. To be meek means not to resist the world’s opposition but to suffer it willingly. To be meek means not to fight or to resist. If we are meek, willing to suffer the world’s opposition in this age, we will inherit the earth in the coming age, as revealed in Hebrews 2:5-8 and Luke 19:17 and 19.

Today those who fight are those who gain the land. If you do not fight, you will not receive any territory. This is the reason there are so many wars. Nations wage war with one another to gain more territory for themselves. The human way is to obtain the land by fighting for it, but the way of the kingdom of the heavens is to gain it by being meek. There is no need to fight, but there is the need to be meek. Some of the young people have been shouting slogans about taking the earth. The way to take the earth is not by slogans, shouting, or fighting. The way is through meekness. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Are you a fighting one or a meek one? If you would inherit the earth, you must be meek. When the Lord Jesus comes back, He will regain the earth. However, when He was arrested, tried, and crucified at Golgotha, He was meek. As He was nailed to the cross, He did not resist. In every way He was meek, meek to the very end. Eventually, the earth will be gained not by the fighting ones but by the meek ones. Several weeks ago an opposer told one of our brothers, “We are going to stop you!” Time will tell who will be stopped. The fighting ones will be stopped, but the meek ones will not be stopped. Rather, they will inherit the earth. Satan is always fighting, but the Lord Jesus never fights. Instead, He is meek. In this we see that the economy of God is opposite to the economy of man. If you want to gain the earth, you should be meek. If you have not received any territory, this may indicate that you are not yet meek enough. Young people, you must be meek on the campuses. I realize that this is a heavenly language. But the Lord Jesus did not say, “Blessed are those who fight, for they shall gain the earth. The fighters shall take the earth!” Do not say, “Let’s take the earth by fighting for it.” No, you must say instead, “Let’s take the earth by being meek.” You may think that meekness is related to material things. However, if you consider the matter carefully, you will see that meekness is not related to outward material things. Rather, it is related to something inward, to what we are in our very being.

Those Making Peace to Be Called the Sons of God

Matthew 5:9 says, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God.” Satan, the rebellious one, is the instigator of all rebellion. For the kingdom of the heavens, under its heavenly ruling, we must be those who make peace among men (Heb. 12:14).

In all the first seven blessings we see that we should not be fighters or troublemakers; rather, we must be peacemakers, always making peace with others. If we are peacemakers, we will be called the sons of God. The sons of the devil make trouble, but the sons of God make peace. As the Son of God, the Lord Jesus made peace with God and man. Now, as the sons of God, we must follow Him to make peace. Then we will be called the sons of God.

Our Father is the God of peace (Rom. 15:33; 16:20), having a peaceful life with a peaceful nature. As those born of Him, if we would be peacemakers, we must walk in His divine life and according to His divine nature. In this way we will express His life and nature and will be called the sons of God. (*Life-study of Matthew*, pp. 166-169, 172-173)

MOURNING AND MEEKNESS

If we are poor in spirit and mourn for the pitiful situation of others, spontaneously, we will be

meek. Even if your mother-in-law is in a pitiful condition, do not tell her so. Even the condition of your dear wife may not be very positive in the eyes of the Lord. If her heart and her interests are not for the Lord, and she does not care for the Lord's kingdom, her situation is pitiful. You have the Lord Jesus with the heavenly kingdom in your spirit, but what about your wife? You may be in the highest heaven, but she may be in the lowest hell. Furthermore, consider your children. You may love the Lord to the uttermost, but they may not love Him at all. Therefore, you must mourn for your mother-in-law, your wife, and your children. You must also mourn for your relatives, your colleagues, and your neighbors. Where is one who is truly for the Lord? Look at the deplorable condition of the world today, including that of Christianity. The merchants care only for money, the students care only for their education, and the working people care only for promotions and positions. When we are poor in spirit, we will surely mourn for the whole situation. We will mourn for our environment and for the people around us.

Because we mourn for others, we would never fight against them. Instead of fighting them, spontaneously, we will be meek toward them. If you are not yet meek with your wife, it reveals that you have not been possessed by the kingdom of the heavens. This indicates that other things are still occupying you. If you have been fully occupied within by the heavenly kingdom, you will mourn for your wife and be meek toward her. You will be meek toward every pitiful person. If you are a student, you will be meek toward your teachers and classmates. You will be meek toward others because you have a deep feeling within about their pitiful situation. Because you have been praying for them in the way of mourning, whenever you contact them, you will be meek.

A WORD ABOUT MEEKNESS

Let me say a further word about meekness. The New Testament tells us that we do not fight against flesh and blood but against the devil, against the enemy of God. We must fight against the devil, God's enemy, day and night. However, we are not to fight against people, not even against those who oppose us. Toward all men, including the adversaries and opposers, we must be meek. Although we fight Satan and the principalities in the air, we do not fight people. Instead, we love them all. Young people, do not go to the campuses to fight with the students. Never say, "We will defeat the students and take the earth!" Do not go to the campuses to fight—go there to be meek. We need to be so meek that, even if a persecutor hits us on the right cheek, we would turn to him the left cheek. To be meek means not to resist or fight back. However, as we turn our left cheek to the persecutor, we should pray, "Lord, bind the powers of darkness!" While we are being meek toward other people, we must fight against the powers of darkness. The enemy is not the people; it is Satan and his angels, the evil powers in the air. (*Life-study of Matthew*, pp. 178-180)

CRUCIAL ASPECTS OF MATTHEW 5 THROUGH 7

(Thursday—Evening Session)

Message Three

The Prayer That Is Critical to the Kingdom Life

SC Hymns: 785

Scripture Reading: Matt. 6:6, 9-13; Luke 11:1-13; 19:46

- Matt 6:6 But you, when you pray, enter into your private room, and shut your door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you.
- Matt 6:9 You then pray in this way: Our Father who is in the heavens, Your name be sanctified;
- Matt 6:10 Your kingdom come; Your will be done, as in heaven, so also on earth.
- Matt 6:11 Give us today our daily bread.
- Matt 6:12 And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.
- Matt 6:13 And do not bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.
- Luke 11:1 And while He was in a certain place praying, when He ceased, a certain one of His disciples said to Him, Lord, teach us to pray, even as John also taught his disciples.
- Luke 11:2 And He said to them, When you pray, say, Father, Your name be sanctified; Your kingdom come.
- Luke 11:3 Give us each day our daily bread.
- Luke 11:4 And forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone indebted to us. And do not bring us into temptation.
- Luke 11:5 And He said to them, Who among you will have a friend and will go to him at midnight and say to him, Friend, lend me three loaves,
- Luke 11:6 Since a friend of mine has come to me from a journey and I have nothing to set before him;
- Luke 11:7 And that one, from inside, will answer and say, Do not trouble me; the door is already shut and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise up and give you anything?
- Luke 11:8 I say to you, Even though he will not rise up and give him anything because he is his friend, surely because of his shameless persistence he will rise and give him what he needs.
- Luke 11:9 And I say to you, Ask and it shall be given to you; seek and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened to you.
- Luke 11:10 For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it shall be opened.
- Luke 11:11 But what father among you whose son shall ask for a fish will instead of a fish hand him a snake?
- Luke 11:12 Or if he shall also ask for an egg will hand him a scorpion?
- Luke 11:13 If you then being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the Father who is from heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!
- Luke 19:46 Saying to them, It is written, "And My house shall be a house of prayer," but you have made it a den of robbers.

I. The King-Savior was a man of prayer (Luke 3:21-22; 5:16; 6:12; 9:16, 23-24, 28-29; 22:31-32, 39-41, 44; 23:34, 46-47; Psa. 102:7; 109:4), who taught His disciples concerning prayer for the church as the Father's house to be a house of prayer (Luke 19:46; cf. 2:49); when the disciples saw the Lord praying, they asked Him to teach them to pray (11:1):

- Luke 3:21 Now when all the people were baptized and as Jesus was baptized and was praying, heaven was opened,
- Luke 3:22 And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form as a dove upon Him. And a voice came out of heaven: You are My Son, the Beloved; in You I have found My delight.
- Luke 5:16 But He Himself often withdrew in the wilderness and prayed.
- Luke 6:12 And in these days He went out to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God.
- Luke 9:16 And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke them and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd.
- Luke 9:23 And He said to them all, If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me.

- Luke 9:24 For whoever wants to save his soul-life shall lose it; but whoever loses his soul-life for My sake, this one shall save it.
- Luke 9:28 And about eight days after these words, He took with Him Peter and John and James, and went up into the mountain to pray.
- Luke 9:29 And as He prayed, the appearance of His face became different, and His garment dazzling white.
- Luke 22:31 Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has asked to have you all to sift you as wheat.
- Luke 22:32 But I have made petition concerning you that your faith would not fail; and you, once you have turned again, establish your brothers.
- Luke 22:39 And He came out and went according to His custom to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples also followed Him.
- Luke 22:40 And when He came to the place, He said to them, Pray that you do not enter into temptation.
- Luke 22:41 And He withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed,
- Luke 22:44 And being in agony He prayed more earnestly, and His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down upon the ground.
- Luke 23:34 And Jesus said, Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing. And dividing His garments, they cast lots.
- Luke 23:46 And crying with a loud voice, Jesus said, Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit. And saying this, He expired.
- Luke 23:47 Now when the centurion saw what had happened, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this man was righteous.
- Psa 102:7 I watch, and I am like / A lone sparrow on a housetop.
- Psa 109:4 In return for my love they have become my adversaries, / But I am all prayer.
- Luke 19:46 Saying to them, It is written, "And My house shall be a house of prayer," but you have made it a den of robbers.
- Luke 2:49 And He said to them, Why is it that you were seeking Me? Did you not know that I must be in the things of My Father?
- Luke 11:1 And while He was in a certain place praying, when He ceased, a certain one of His disciples said to Him, Lord, teach us to pray, even as John also taught his disciples.
- A. As a man of prayer, the Lord Jesus was always one with God—John 10:30.
John 10:30 I and the Father are one.
- B. As a man of prayer, the Lord Jesus lived in the presence of God without ceasing; He told us that He was never alone, but the Father was with Him; every moment He saw His Father's face—Acts 10:38c; John 8:29; 16:32b; cf. Exo. 33:14; 2 Cor. 2:10.
Acts 10:38c ...for God was with Him.
John 8:29 And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him.
John 16:32b ... yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.
Exo 33:14 And He said, My presence shall go with you, and I will give you rest.
2 Cor 2:10 But whom you forgive anything, I also forgive; for also what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, it is for your sake in the person of Christ;
- C. As a man of prayer, the Lord Jesus trusted in God and not in Himself, under any kind of suffering and persecution—1 Pet. 2:23b; Luke 23:46.
1 Pet 2:23b ... but kept committing all to Him who judges righteously;
Luke 23:46 And crying with a loud voice, Jesus said, Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit. And saying this, He expired.
- D. As a man of prayer, the Lord Jesus was a man in whom Satan, the ruler of the world, had nothing (no ground, no chance, no hope, no possibility in anything)—John 14:30b.
John 14:30b ... for the ruler of the world is coming, and in Me he has nothing;

II. The pattern of prayer that the Lord taught the disciples in Matthew 6 is the prayer that expresses God's will:

- Matt 6 be omitted.
- A. Matthew 6:9-13 is the Lord's instruction to us to "pray in this way" to "our Father who is in the heavens" (v. 9a); this pattern of prayer can be divided into three sections:
Matt 6:9 You then pray in this way: Our Father who is in the heavens, Your name be sanctified;

- Matt 6:10 Your kingdom come; Your will be done, as in heaven, so also on earth.
- Matt 6:11 Give us today our daily bread.
- Matt 6:12 And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.
- Matt 6:13 And do not bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.
1. The three basic prayers concerning God are related to the Divine Trinity; “Your name be sanctified” is related mainly to the Father; “Your kingdom come,” to the Son; and “Your will be done,” to the Spirit—vv. 9b-10a:
 - a. This is being fulfilled in this age, and it will be ultimately fulfilled in the kingdom age when the name of God will be excellent in all the earth, the kingdom of the world will become the kingdom of Christ, and the will of God will be accomplished—Psa. 8:1; Rev. 11:15.

Psa 8:1 O Jehovah our Lord, / How excellent is Your name / In all the earth, / You who have set Your glory over the heavens!

Rev 11:15 And the seventh angel trumpeted; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign forever and ever.
 - b. After the rebellion of Satan and the fall of man, Christ came to bring the heavenly rule to earth so that the earth could be recovered for God’s interest so that the will of God could be done on earth as in heaven (Matt. 6:10b); the kingdom people must pray for this until the earth is fully recovered for God’s will in the coming kingdom age.

Matt 6:10b ... Your will be done, as in heaven, so also on earth.
 2. The three requests concerning our need are protective prayers: “Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one”—vv. 11-13a:
 - a. *Daily bread* indicates a living that is by faith; we should live, by faith, on the Father’s daily supply.
 - b. The kingdom people should ask the Father to forgive their debts, their failures, their trespasses, as they forgive their debtors to maintain peace (by the arbitrating peace of Christ); we have to clear up any separating factors between us and God and between us and others—vv. 14-15; Col. 3:15.

Matt 6:14 For if you forgive men their offenses, your heavenly Father will forgive you also;

Matt 6:15 But if you do not forgive men their offenses, neither will your Father forgive your offenses.

Col 3:15 And let the peace of Christ arbitrate in your hearts, to which also you were called in one Body; and be thankful.
 - c. Because we know our weakness, we should ask the Father not to bring us into temptation but to deliver us from the evil one, the devil, and from the evil that is out of him (by being filled with the Spirit)—John 17:15; Eph. 5:16-18; 6:13.

John 17:15 I do not ask that You would take them out of the world, but that You would keep them out of the hands of the evil one.

Eph 5:16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

Eph 5:17 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

Eph 5:18 And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissoluteness, but be filled in spirit,

Eph 6:13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.
 3. The prayer to the Father concludes with three reverent praises as extolling prayers: “For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen”—the kingdom is of the Son, which is the realm in which God exercises His power, and the power is of the Spirit, which carries out God’s intention so that the Father may have His

corporate expression in glory—Matt. 6:13b:

- a. Thus, the pattern of the Lord's prayer begins with the Divine Trinity and ends with the Divine Trinity.
 - b. It also begins with God the Father and ends with God the Father; God the Father is the beginning and the end, the Alpha and the Omega.
- B. Such a critical prayer increases our seeking of the kingdom of the heavens as the Father's heart's desire and affords us our need of the divine supply of grace to fulfill all the supreme and strict requirements of the kingdom of the heavens for God's good pleasure.

III. If we pray according to the Lord's instructions in Luke 11:1-13, the result will be that we pray ourselves into God:

- Luke 11:1 And while He was in a certain place praying, when He ceased, a certain one of His disciples said to Him, Lord, teach us to pray, even as John also taught his disciples.
- Luke 11:2 And He said to them, When you pray, say, Father, Your name be sanctified; Your kingdom come.
- Luke 11:3 Give us each day our daily bread.
- Luke 11:4 And forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone indebted to us. And do not bring us into temptation.
- Luke 11:5 And He said to them, Who among you will have a friend and will go to him at midnight and say to him, Friend, lend me three loaves,
- Luke 11:6 Since a friend of mine has come to me from a journey and I have nothing to set before him;
- Luke 11:7 And that one, from inside, will answer and say, Do not trouble me; the door is already shut and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise up and give you anything?
- Luke 11:8 I say to you, Even though he will not rise up and give him anything because he is his friend, surely because of his shameless persistence he will rise and give him what he needs.
- Luke 11:9 And I say to you, Ask and it shall be given to you; seek and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened to you.
- Luke 11:10 For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it shall be opened.
- Luke 11:11 But what father among you whose son shall ask for a fish will instead of a fish hand him a snake?
- Luke 11:12 Or if he shall also ask for an egg will hand him a scorpion?
- Luke 11:13 If you then being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the Father who is from heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!
- A. Often in our experience we are distracted from God; we do not stay in God—we do not remain in Him; this is why we need to pray ourselves into God.
- B. Because we are easily distracted from God, we should spend time every morning with Him, praying ourselves into Him—Psa. 5:3; Isa. 50:4.
- Psa 5:3 O Jehovah, in the morning / You will hear my voice; / In the morning I will set forth my words in order to You, / And I will watch.
- Isa 50:4 The Lord Jehovah has given me / The tongue of the instructed, / That I should know how to sustain the weary with a word. / He awakens me morning by morning; / He awakens my ear / To hear as an instructed one.
- C. If our way of praying distracts us from the Lord and does not bring us into Him, we should change our way of praying so that we pray ourselves into Him.
- D. When we pray ourselves into God, we receive His riches (represented by the loaves, the fish, and the egg) into our being for our supply—Luke 11:5-13:
- Luke 11:5 And He said to them, Who among you will have a friend and will go to him at midnight and say to him, Friend, lend me three loaves,
- Luke 11:6 Since a friend of mine has come to me from a journey and I have nothing to set before him;
- Luke 11:7 And that one, from inside, will answer and say, Do not trouble me; the door is already shut and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise up and give you anything?
- Luke 11:8 I say to you, Even though he will not rise up and give him anything because he is his friend, surely because of his shameless persistence he will rise and give him what he

- needs.
- Luke 11:9 And I say to you, Ask and it shall be given to you; seek and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened to you.
- Luke 11:10 For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it shall be opened.
- Luke 11:11 But what father among you whose son shall ask for a fish will instead of a fish hand him a snake?
- Luke 11:12 Or if he shall also ask for an egg will hand him a scorpion?
- Luke 11:13 If you then being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the Father who is from heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!
1. Loaves represent the riches of the land; fish, the riches of the sea; and eggs, the riches of something both in the air and on the earth; the Holy Spirit is the totality of these riches.
 2. When we have prayed ourselves into God to remain in Him, we receive the Holy Spirit as our life supply (signified by the loaves, the fish, and the egg) so that we can feed ourselves and all those under our care—1 John 5:16a; 2 Cor. 3:6; Acts 6:4.

1 John 5:16a If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin not unto death, he shall ask and he will give life to him, to those sinning not unto death. ...

2 Cor 3:6 Who has also made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant, ministers not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

Acts 6:4 But we will continue steadfastly in prayer and in the ministry of the word.
- E. When we pray ourselves into God and receive His rich supply, which is the bountiful supply of the all-inclusive Spirit as the reality of the unsearchable riches of Christ, we are filled and occupied with this supply so that there is no room in us for demons, evil spirits, or darkness—Luke 11:14.
- Luke 11:14 And once He was casting out a demon, and it was dumb. And when the demon had gone out, the dumb man spoke, and the crowds marveled.
- F. Because we are filled with the riches of the divine supply, we become persons whose hearts are full of light, not having any dark part, and we can illumine others—vv. 33-36; Matt. 5:8.
- Luke 11:33 No one, after lighting a lamp, puts it in the cellar or under the bushel, but on the lampstand, in order that those who enter in may see the light.
- Luke 11:34 The lamp of the body is your eye. When your eye is single, your whole body also is full of light; but when it is evil, your body also is dark.
- Luke 11:35 Watch out therefore that the light which is in you is not darkness.
- Luke 11:36 If therefore your whole body is full of light and does not have any dark part, the whole will be full of light as when the lamp with its rays illuminates you.
- Matt 5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.
- G. To pray means that we realize that we are nothing and that we can do nothing; this implies that prayer is the real denial of the self—Mark 8:34; 9:29; Col. 4:2; Gal. 2:20; Phil. 3:3; 4:6-7, 11-13.
- Mark 8:34 And He called the crowd to Him with His disciples and said to them, If anyone wants to follow after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me.
- Mark 9:29 And He said to them, This kind cannot come out by any means except prayer.
- Col 4:2 Persevere in prayer, watching in it with thanksgiving,
- Gal 2:20 I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.
- Phil 3:3 For we are the circumcision, the ones who serve by the Spirit of God and boast in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh,
- Phil 4:6 In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;
- Phil 4:7 And the peace of God, which surpasses every man's understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.
- Phil 4:11 Not that I speak according to lack, for I have learned, in whatever circumstances I am, to be content.
- Phil 4:12 I know also how to be abased, and I know how to abound; in everything and in all

- things I have learned the secret both to be filled and to hunger, both to abound and to lack.
- Phil 4:13 I am able to do all things in Him who empowers me.
- H. To pray is actually to declare, “Not I, but Christ”; our prayer testifies that we do not exercise our self-effort to deal with any situation—Gal. 2:20.
- Gal 2:20 I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.
- I. Even such a short prayer of calling upon the name of the Lord—“O Lord Jesus!”—indicates “no longer I, but Christ”—Rom. 10:12-13.
- Rom 10:12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord is Lord of all and rich to all who call upon Him;
- Rom 10:13 For “whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

IV. In order for God to listen to our prayers, we need to pray toward God’s interests, signified by the Holy Land, the holy city, and the holy temple—1 Kings 8:48:

- 1 Kings 8:48 And if they return to You with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their enemies, who have carried them captive, and they pray to You toward their land that You have given to their fathers, the city that You have chosen, and the house that I have built for Your name;
- A. The Holy Land typifies Christ as the portion allotted by God to the believers (Col. 1:12; 2:6-7; Deut. 8:7); the holy city signifies the kingdom of God in Christ (Psa. 48:1-2); and the holy temple signifies God’s house, the church, on the earth (Eph. 2:21; 1 Tim. 3:15).
- Col 1:12 Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you for a share of the allotted portion of the saints in the light;
- Col 2:6 As therefore you have received the Christ, Jesus the Lord, walk in Him,
- Col 2:7 Having been rooted and being built up in Him, and being established in the faith even as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.
- Deut 8:7 For Jehovah your God is bringing you to a good land, a land of waterbrooks, of springs and of fountains, flowing forth in valleys and in mountains;
- Psa 48:1 Great is Jehovah, / And much to be praised / In the city of our God, / In His holy mountain.
- Psa 48:2 Beautiful in elevation, / The joy of the whole earth, / Is Mount Zion, the sides of the north, / The city of the great King.
- Eph 2:21 In whom all the building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord;
- 1 Tim 3:15 But if I delay, I write that you may know how one ought to conduct himself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and base of the truth.
- B. During the Babylonian captivity Daniel prayed three times a day by opening his windows toward Jerusalem; this indicates that God will listen to our prayer when our prayer to God is toward Christ, the kingdom of God, and the house of God as the goal in God’s eternal economy—Dan. 6:10.
- Dan 6:10 Now when Daniel came to know that the writing had been signed, he went to his house (in his upper room he had windows open toward Jerusalem) and three times daily he knelt on his knees and prayed and gave thanks before his God, because he had always done so previously.
- C. This means that no matter for whom we are praying, our prayers should be aimed at the interests of God, that is, at Christ and the church as God’s interests on earth, for the fulfilling of God’s economy.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

THE DIVINE FACTS IN THE MYSTICAL HUMAN LIFE OF THE FIRST GOD-MAN

**In His Supreme Teaching on the Mount,
the First God-man Teaching His Disciples Twice concerning Prayer**

Matthew's record is concerning the first God-man as the King-Savior in the kingdom of the heavens. We have seen the divine fact of His fasting in the wilderness for forty days and forty nights. Now we want to see His supreme teaching on the mount concerning prayer. Many Bible scholars call this the Sermon on the Mount, but I do not like the word *sermon*. Instead, I use the term *supreme teaching*. No teaching in human history is higher than this one. In His supreme teaching on the mount, the first God-man as the King-Savior in the kingdom of the heavens taught His disciples twice concerning prayer. The first time was in the middle of the supreme teaching, and the second time concluded His supreme teaching.

***The First Time Unveiling the Heavenly Vision concerning the Prayer
That Is Critical to the Kingdom Life***

Many so-called churches today recite the prayer that the Lord taught us to pray in Matthew 6 (vv. 5-18), but most do not understand the real significance of what they are reciting. This prayer is critical to the kingdom life, a life that lives in the kingdom of the heavens. This one prayer also is accompanied by four negative charges as warnings.

The Prayer

The prayer is as follows: "Our Father who is in the heavens, Your name be sanctified; Your kingdom come; Your will be done, as in heaven, so also on earth. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen" (vv. 9-13). The praying ones must be children of God, born of God, so they have the authority, the right, to call God their Father. We cannot call a person our father if we are not born of him. We have a Father in the heavens who has begotten us. This brief but critical prayer covers a number of crucial items.

The Father's Holy Name to Be Sanctified

To be sanctified means to be separated and distinct from all that is common. On the fallen earth there are many false gods. The worldly people consider our God as being in common with those gods. If we pray for our Father's name to be sanctified, we should not just utter this with our words. For His name to be sanctified, we should express Him in our living. We must live a sanctified life, a daily life separated from being common. To pray such a prayer requires us to be sanctified persons, those who are separated from being common. We should be distinct, separate, from all the people around us. In other words, we should be holy. As sanctified people, we should pray, "Our Father, Your name be sanctified."

The Father's Heavenly Kingdom to Come

Today the world is not God's kingdom but His enemy's kingdom. This is why the Bible says that Satan is the ruler of today's world (John 12:31). In Satan's kingdom, the world, there is no righteousness, no peace, and no joy. Romans 14:17 says that the reality of the kingdom life is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. In Satan's kingdom today, there is no joy, because there is no peace. In the United Nations, peace is talked about all the time, but there is no peace, because there is no righteousness. Peace is the issue of righteousness. In his second Epistle, Peter says that the unique thing that dwells in the new heavens and new earth is righteousness (3:13). In the coming kingdom, the millennium, the primary thing will be righteousness. There is no righteousness in today's world, because this is the kingdom of Satan, the evil ruler.

The Father's Divine Will to Be Done on Earth as in Heaven

Today Satan's will is being done on the earth through evil men. Hitler, Mussolini, and Stalin tried to carry out his will along with most of the rulers on this earth today. Thank the Lord that Satan's will is not fully carried out. Hitler, Mussolini, and Stalin were destroyed. Napoleon wanted his will to be

done, but he did not succeed. We need to pray for the Father's divine will to be done on earth as in heaven. This is to bring the heavenly ruling, the kingdom of the heavens, to the earth. Then the Father's will surely will be done on the earth.

These three things—the name, the kingdom, and the will—are the attributes of the one Triune God. The name is of the Father, because the Father is the source; the kingdom is of the Son, and the will is of the Spirit. To pray in this way is to pray that the Triune God will be prevailing on the earth as He is prevailing in the heavens.

The Care of the Supply of Our Necessity, Our Daily Bread

In His prayer the Lord covered our daily necessity. He taught us to pray for our bread only for one day. We are to ask our Father to give us today, not tomorrow or next month, our daily bread. He does not want His people to worry about tomorrow. He wants them to pray only for today's needs. When I was younger, we co-workers in China sometimes came to the end of our material supply, and we did not know how we would live the next day. Something always came to meet our need for that day. The Lord is faithful to take care of the supply of our daily necessity.

The Father's Forgiving of Our Debts as We Have Done with Our Debtors

In the Lord's prayer we see that we need to take care of our relationship with others. As we ask the Father to forgive us our debts, we should forgive our debtors. We are in debt with God, and we also have debtors who owe us something. To maintain a peaceful relationship with others, we have to forgive them. Thus, we have to clear up any separating factors between us and God and between us and others.

Not Bringing Us into Temptation but Delivering Us from the Devil, the Evil One

Sometimes our God, who is faithful and who takes care of us, brings us into a situation of temptation to test us as the Spirit of God did the Lord Jesus (Matt. 4:1). But because we know our weakness, we should pray, "Do not bring us into temptation." This indicates our knowledge of our weakness. To pray for deliverance from the evil one is to deal with Satan. The Lord's prayer takes care of the Triune God, of our daily necessity, of our relationship with God and with others, and also of Satan.

Recognizing and Praising Reverently That the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory Belong to the Father Forever

The prayer to the Father concludes in this way: "For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen" (6:13). Here is the realization and praise of God's kingdom, power, and glory. This also refers to the Triune God. The kingdom is of the Son, which is the realm in which God exercises His power. The power is of the Spirit, which carries out God's intention so that the Father can express His glory. This indicates that the prayer that the Lord taught us to pray begins with the Triune God, in the sequence of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, and ends also with the Triune God, but in the sequence of the Son, the Spirit, and the Father. Thus, the prayer taught by the Lord in His supreme teaching begins with God the Father and ends also with God the Father. God the Father is both the beginning and the end, the Alpha and the Omega.

Such a critical prayer surely increases our seeking of the kingdom of the heavens as the Father's heart's desire and affords us our need of the divine supply of grace to fulfill all the supreme and strict requirements of the kingdom of the heavens for the Father's good pleasure. On the one hand, we are seeking for something according to the Father's heart's desire. On the other hand, we have the supply to fulfill something for the Father's good pleasure.

The Four Negative Charges as Warnings

Not Praying as the Hypocrites Do

The Lord warned His disciples not to pray as the hypocrites do with a mask. They love to make a show publicly that they may be seen by men and receive glory from them according to the lust of their

fleshly desire. Instead, the disciples should enter into their private room, shutting their door and praying to the Father in the heavens to be seen by Him in secret and repaid by Him (vv. 5-6). We have to learn to be secret persons. We should pray in our private place to be seen by the Father in secret, not by others for an outward public display. If we pray properly, God will repay us as a reward. The hypocrites have received their reward already, but we want to receive our God's repayment.

Not Praying as the Gentiles Do

The disciples should not pray as the Gentiles do, babbling empty words, supposing that in their multiplicity of words they will be heard. This is because the Father of the disciples knows the things that they need before they ask Him (vv. 7-8). Some have accused us by saying that our pray-reading of the Word is repetitious, but pray-reading is spiritual breathing. Breathing is always repetitious. If we do not repeat our breathing, we will die.

Forgiving Men's Offenses

If His disciples forgive men's offenses, their heavenly Father will forgive the disciples also; otherwise, their Father will not forgive their offenses. This annuls their prayer to their heavenly Father (vv. 14-15).

Not Fasting like the Sullen-faced Hypocrites

His disciples should not fast like the sullen-faced hypocrites, disfiguring their faces so that their fast may appear to men. The disciples should fast by anointing their head and washing their face so that their fast may not appear to men but to their Father who is in secret and who sees it and will repay them (vv. 16-18).

The Second Time Being in the Conclusion of His Supreme Teaching concerning the Kingdom of the Heavens

Now we want to consider the second time the Lord taught the disciples concerning prayer in His supreme teaching on the mount. The second time is in the conclusion of His supreme teaching concerning the kingdom of the heavens, when He made a promise to the seekers of the kingdom of the heavens in Matthew 7:7-8. The Lord said, "Ask [indicating the prayer at a distance] and it shall be given to you; seek [indicating the pursuit of what is prayed for] and you shall find; knock [indicating the reaching of the goal of what is sought] and it shall be opened to you." Such a promise assures the seekers of the kingdom of the heavens that they will be given an open door to enter into all the blessings in the kingdom of the heavens.

When we read the supreme teaching of the Lord on the mount recorded in Matthew 5—7, we may be disappointed and think that we cannot make it because of the supreme, strict requirements. So at the conclusion, there is a prayer that is actually a promise. The Lord promised us that if we ask, we will receive; if we seek, we will find; and if we knock, it will be opened to us. If we ask, seek, and knock, we will enter into all the blessings in the kingdom of the heavens for our supreme and strict kingdom life. This promise affords us the grace that we need to fulfill the supreme and strict requirements. The door will be opened wide for us to enter into all the blessings of the kingdom of the heavens. (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1994–1997*, vol. 3, "The God-man Living," pp. 536-541)

CRUCIAL ASPECTS OF MATTHEW 5 THROUGH 7

(Friday—First Morning Session)

Message Four

Blessed Are the Merciful, for They Shall Be Shown Mercy and Receive Mercy

RM Hymns: 26

Scripture Reading: Matt. 5:7; Rom. 9:15a, 16; Eph. 2:4; James 2:13; Heb. 4:16

Matt 5:7 Blessed are the merciful, for they shall be shown mercy.
Rom 9:15a For to Moses He says, "I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, ..."
Rom 9:16 So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy.
Eph 2:4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,
James 2:13 For the judgment is without mercy to him who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.
Heb 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.

I. "I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy'...So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy"—Rom. 9:15a, 16:

- A. Mercy is the most far-reaching of God's attributes, going further than His grace and love—Matt. 9:13:
Matt 9:13 But go and learn what this means, "I desire mercy and not sacrifice," for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners.
1. According to our natural condition, we were far removed from God, totally unworthy of His grace; we were eligible only to receive His mercy—Eph. 2:4.
Eph 2:4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,
 2. Our disobedience affords God's mercy an opportunity, and God's mercy brings us to salvation—Rom. 11:32.
Rom 11:32 For God has shut up all in disobedience that He might show mercy to all.
- B. Our concept is that the one who wills will gain what he wills to obtain and that the one who runs will gain what he runs after—9:16:
Rom 9:16 So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy.
1. If this were the case, God's selection would be according to our effort and labor.
 2. On the contrary, God's selection is of God who shows mercy; we do not need to will or to run, for God has mercy on us.
 3. If we know God's mercy, we will neither trust in our effort nor be disappointed by our failures; the hope for our wretched condition is in God's mercy—Eph. 2:4.
Eph 2:4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,
- C. If we would serve God in His New Testament economy, we need to know that it is wholly a matter of God's sovereign mercy—Rom. 9:15-16; Heb. 4:16:
Rom 9:15 For to Moses He says, "I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion."
Rom 9:16 So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy.
Heb 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.
1. If we know God's sovereignty, we will thank Him for His mercy:
 - a. The expression *sovereign mercy* means that God's mercy is absolutely a matter of God's sovereignty.
 - b. Being a vessel of mercy is not the result of our choice; it originates with God's sovereignty—Rom. 9:18, 23.
Rom 9:18 So then He has mercy on whom He wills, and He hardens whom He

- wills.
- Rom 9:23 In order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He had before prepared unto glory,
- c. God's mercy is in His sovereignty; the only thing we can say to explain God's mercy to us is that in His sovereignty, He has chosen to be merciful to us—vv. 15-16, 23.
- Rom 9:15 For to Moses He says, "I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion."
- Rom 9:16 So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy.
- Rom 9:23 In order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He had before prepared unto glory,
2. In God's sovereign mercy, our hearts are inclined toward Him; because of His mercy to us, we seek Him day by day—Jer. 29:13; Deut. 4:29; Isa. 55:6.
- Jer 29:13 And you will seek Me and find Me if you search for Me with all your heart;
- Deut 4:29 And from there you will seek Jehovah your God, and you will find Him if you search for Him with all your heart and with all your soul.
- Isa 55:6 Seek Jehovah while He may be found; / Call upon Him while He is near.
3. The more we see that everything related to us is a matter of God's mercy, the more we will bear our responsibility before the Lord; however, even our willingness to bear responsibility is of God's mercy.
4. Because of God's mercy, we responded to His gospel when others did not, we received a word about Christ as life when others refused to receive it, and we took the way of the Lord's recovery when others drew back from taking this way.
5. Regarding His recovery, God has mercy on whom He will have mercy.
- D. Romans 9 reveals the principle that everything depends on God's mercy—vv. 15-16:
- Rom 9 be omitted.
- Rom 9:15 For to Moses He says, "I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion."
- Rom 9:16 So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy.
1. The apostle Paul applies this principle to the Israelites, showing us that everything that happened to them was of God's mercy—vv. 16, 23.
- Rom 9:16 So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy.
- Rom 9:23 In order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He had before prepared unto glory,
2. There must be at least one time when we see God's mercy and definitely touch His mercy—Eph. 2:4; Matt. 9:13:
- Eph 2:4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,
- Matt 9:13 But go and learn what this means, "I desire mercy and not sacrifice," for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners.
- a. Concerning this matter, our eyes need to be opened to see that everything depends on God's mercy.
- b. Whether we see this all at once, or we realize it through a process, the minute we touch this matter, we touch not a feeling but a fact; this fact is that everything depends on God's mercy.
- E. "Let us therefore come forward with boldness to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace for timely help"—Heb. 4:16:
1. Both God's mercy and His grace are the expression of His love.
2. When we are in a pitiful condition, first His mercy reaches us and brings us into a state where God is able to favor us with His grace.
3. God's mercy and grace are always available to us; however, we need to receive and find them by exercising our spirit to come forward to the throne of grace—v. 16.

Heb 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.

- F. In His sovereignty God the Father has had mercy on us; therefore, we must praise and worship Him for His sovereign mercy:
1. “Father, we enjoy Thy mercy, / Ever fresh and ever new; / Every morning shed upon us, / It refreshes as the dew. / How we taste it! How we taste it! / Giving Thee the praises due”—*Hymns*, #26, stanza 5.
 2. “Father, Thy mercy with Thy love and grace / Did we obtain; / And in Thy mercy, with Thee face to face, / We’ll e’er remain; / And for Thy mercy we would worship Thee / Through all our days and through eternity”—*Hymns*, #25, stanza 3.

II. “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall be shown mercy”—Matt. 5:7:

- A. To be righteous is to give one what he deserves, whereas to be merciful is to give someone better than he deserves.
- B. For the kingdom of the heavens, we need to be not only righteous but also merciful.
- C. To receive mercy is to receive what we do not deserve.
- D. If we are merciful to others, the Lord will give us mercy (2 Tim. 1:16, 18), especially at His judgment seat—James 2:12-13.
- 2 Tim 1:16 May the Lord grant mercy to the house of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chain;
- 2 Tim 1:18 May the Lord grant him to find mercy from the Lord in that day. And in how many things he served me in Ephesus, you know best.
- James 2:12 So speak and so do as those who are to be judged by the law of freedom.
- James 2:13 For the judgment is without mercy to him who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.
- E. We must learn to be righteous with ourselves and merciful toward others.

III. “Grace, mercy, peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord”—2 Tim. 1:2:

- A. Only in 1 and 2 Timothy, among all his Epistles, did the apostle include God’s mercy in the opening greeting.
- B. God’s mercy reaches farther than His grace.
- C. In the degraded situation of the churches, God’s mercy is needed.
- D. This mercy brings in God’s rich grace, which is sufficient to deal with any degradation.

IV. “The judgment is without mercy to him who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment”—James 2:13:

- A. To despise a poor brother is to have no mercy.
- B. Anyone who despises a poor brother in this way will not receive mercy when he appears before the judgment seat of Christ—Rom. 14:10; 2 Cor. 5:10:
- Rom 14:10 But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God,
- 2 Cor 5:10 For we must all be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done through the body according to what he has practiced, whether good or bad.
1. When we come before the Lord to be judged, He will not show mercy to us, because we have not shown mercy to our brother.
 2. We need to show mercy, for mercy triumphs over judgment.
 3. If we have mercy on our brother today, we will receive mercy from the Lord at His judgment seat.

V. We should bow down before the Lord and worship Him for His mercy—Psa.

145; Isa. 63:9; John 10:10; Rom. 3:24; 11:32; 2 Cor. 4:1; Eph. 2:4-5:

- Psa 145:1 I will extol You, O my God and King; / And I will bless Your name forever and ever.
Psa 145:2 Every day I will bless You, / And I will praise Your name forever and ever.
Psa 145:3 Great is Jehovah, and much to be praised; / And His greatness is unsearchable.
Psa 145:4 One generation will laud Your works to another, / And they will declare Your mighty acts.
Psa 145:5 Upon the glorious splendor of Your majesty / And upon Your wondrous works I will muse.
Psa 145:6 And men will speak of the might of Your awesome deeds, / And I will declare Your greatness.
Psa 145:7 They will utter the memory of Your great goodness / And will sing for joy of Your righteousness.
Psa 145:8 Jehovah is gracious and compassionate, / Long-suffering and great in lovingkindness.
Psa 145:9 Jehovah is good to all, / And His compassions are upon all His works.
Psa 145:10 All Your works will praise You, O Jehovah; / And Your faithful ones will bless You.
Psa 145:11 They will speak of the glory of Your kingdom / And tell of Your power,
Psa 145:12 To make known to the sons of men Your mighty acts / And the glorious splendor of Your kingdom.
Psa 145:13 Your kingdom is an eternal kingdom, / And Your dominion is throughout all generations.
Psa 145:14 Jehovah upholds all who are falling / And raises up all who are bowed down.
Psa 145:15 The eyes of everyone wait for You, / And You give them their food in due season.
Psa 145:16 You open up Your hand / And satisfy the desire of every living thing.
Psa 145:17 Jehovah is righteous in all His ways, / And faithfully kind in all His doings.
Psa 145:18 Jehovah is near to all who call upon Him, / To all who call upon Him in truth.
Psa 145:19 He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him, / And He will hear their cry and save them.
Psa 145:20 Jehovah preserves all who love Him, / But He will destroy all the wicked.
Psa 145:21 My mouth will speak the praise of Jehovah, / And all flesh will bless His holy name forever and ever.
Isa 63:9 In all their affliction He was afflicted, / And the Angel of His presence saved them; / In His love and in His mercy / He redeemed them, / And He bore them up and carried them / All the days of old.
John 10:10 The thief does not come except to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life and may have it abundantly.
Rom 3:24 Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;
Rom 11:32 For God has shut up all in disobedience that He might show mercy to all.
2 Cor 4:1 Therefore having this ministry as we have been shown mercy, we do not lose heart;
Eph 2:4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,
Eph 2:5 Even when we were dead in offenses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)
A. The more we worship the Lord for His mercy, the more we will be uplifted.
B. What a mercy that God has selected us, predestinated us, called us, and placed us in His recovery!
C. For the future we trust not in ourselves but in Him and in His marvelous mercy.
D. Our going on with the Lord is a matter not of our willing or running but of God's mercy.
E. God's mercy works in a wonderful way.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

CONCERNING THE NATURE OF THE KINGDOM PEOPLE

The Merciful to Be Shown Mercy

Matthew 5:7 says, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall be shown mercy." To be righteous is to give one what he deserves, whereas to be merciful is to give someone better than he deserves. For the kingdom of the heavens, we need to be not only righteous but also merciful. To be shown mercy is to receive what we do not deserve. If we are merciful to others, the Lord will grant us mercy (2 Tim. 1:16, 18), especially at His judgment seat (James 2:12-13).

To be righteous is to deal with ourself in a strict way. We must be righteous in dealing with ourselves. We should not give ourselves any excuse. Toward others, however, we must be merciful. If

we are diligent to seek the surpassing righteousness, we will eventually become merciful toward others. In our seeking we will find that our natural man is weak and that we are prone to failure. If you do not realize the pitiful condition of your natural man, you will never have mercy on others. Instead of showing mercy to them, you will condemn them when they fail or fall. The reason you condemn them is that you do not know yourself. If you know yourself, whenever someone fails, you will say, "Lord, have mercy on me and on my brother. We all are weak vessels and cannot fulfill Your requirements. Lord, even though my brother has offended me, I would still be merciful toward him." If you have never failed, you will never be merciful. If you are always successful in your pursuit of holiness and perfection, you will have no sympathy toward others when they fail. You will always condemn them. But if you know how weak you are and how many mistakes you have made, you will be merciful to others.

There is a promise for us in Matthew 5:7. The promise is that those who are merciful will be shown mercy. If you judge your brother without mercy today, you will not be shown any mercy at the judgment seat of Christ. Because you judge others unmercifully, Christ will judge you unmercifully. But if you have mercy on your brother, the Lord will have mercy on you at His judgment seat. Thus, the kingdom people are strict in dealing with themselves but very merciful in dealing with others. Once again, this is not an outward matter but a matter related to our inward being. (*Life-study of Matthew*, pp. 171-172)

RIGHTEOUS WITH OURSELVES, MERCIFUL TOWARD OTHERS

Although we must be strict with ourselves in righteousness, we must learn to be merciful to others and not to place demands on them. It is wrong for any Christian to place demands on others. If you are truly strict with yourself, then you will know how to be merciful to others. But do not try to be merciful to others without first being righteous with yourself. Every sloppy person is merciful to others because he has already been merciful to himself. If he sleeps late every morning, he will be very merciful to others who sleep late. This kind of mercy is not mercy at all; it is absolutely wrong. No one who is sloppy knows how to be merciful to others. Only a strict person, a righteous person, knows how to be merciful. If you would be merciful to others according to the fifth blessing, you must first be righteous toward yourself according to the fourth blessing.

We must be righteous and strict with ourselves, never making excuses for ourselves. But when others offend us, thereby exposing their shortage, we must be merciful toward them. All those who are self-righteous condemn others and never let them go. The word spoken by the Lord on the mount is completely different from this. To ourselves, we must be righteous and strict, serious and sober. But toward others, we must be merciful. In Himself God is righteous. However, if He were righteous to the uttermost in dealing with us, we would all be killed. Although God is righteous in relation to Himself, He is full of mercy in dealing with us. As fallen sinners, we surely need God's mercy. We also must learn to be righteous with ourselves and merciful toward others. This matter of being righteous toward ourselves and merciful toward others is not first a matter of outward behavior; it is first a matter of our inward attitude, of our inward being.

As a brother taking the lead, either as an elder in the church or as a brother in the brothers' house, you may find it difficult to be strict with yourself and yet be merciful toward others. Suppose everyone is supposed to be home by a certain time. To come home later than that time is not righteous. Likewise, it is not right to inconvenience others. However, when some young people come home, they like to throw their shoes anywhere they please. I knew of one co-worker, a preacher and teacher of the Bible, who used to throw his socks without any concern for where they landed around the room. One time this brother and I were guests in a certain home. The hostess, quite concerned, spoke to me about this brother's sloppiness. What a shame that was to me! Some of the brothers living in the brothers' houses may act the same way.

Other brothers may be unhappy about being required to wash dishes; therefore, they may not clean them thoroughly. This is not righteous. It is never righteous to take advantage of others, to invade

their rights. Not doing an adequate job in washing dishes is taking advantage of others. If you are such a one, you are not a righteous person. If you are a leader in the brothers' house, you must be strict with yourself about the time, about excessive talking, about noise, about washing dishes, and about many other things. Do not say that this is too much. It may seem too much to you, but it is not too much to Christ who lives within you. In everything you do, you must be strict with yourself.

However, as one taking the lead in the brothers' house or in any aspect of the church life, you must also be merciful. Sometimes a leader may warn a sloppy one about his dishwashing, saying, "This is your first warning about the way you wash the dishes. After two more warnings, you will have to move out." Remember the word of the Lord Jesus about how many times you must forgive your brother (Matt. 18:21-22). Even if a certain brother does not clean the dishes thoroughly after you have spoken to him a number of times, you must still be merciful to him. Do not drive away even such a sloppy and pitiful brother. Instead, be merciful to him. This does not mean that you go to the opposite extreme and say, "I have learned that I must be merciful toward this brother. Therefore, from now on, I will never talk to him about the way he does the dishes. Let him do the dishes any way he wants. We'll just have to tolerate it in order to keep him." This attitude is not right either. You need to take care of such a sloppy brother day after day. Let him have a turn at washing the dishes. But each time he does so, you must be patient and merciful toward him.

It is easy for us to be either strict or sloppy. But we must learn to be strict on the one hand and merciful on the other. If we give others a strict dealing, we must immediately be merciful toward them. This is an important lesson for elders to learn. The kingdom people are both righteous and merciful. When you are righteous, you must be absolutely righteous; and when you are merciful, you must be very merciful. Although righteousness and mercy are two opposite poles, they must meet in your experience. Your righteousness must come together with your mercy. (*Life-study of Matthew*, pp. 180-182)

CRUCIAL ASPECTS OF MATTHEW 5 THROUGH 7

(Friday—Second Morning Session)

Message Five

The Kingdom People Having the Experience of Praying in Private to Contact Their Heavenly Father in Secret to Have Some Secret Enjoyment of Him

NL/EC Hymns: 784

Scripture Reading: Isa. 37:31; Matt. 6:5-6; 14:22-23; Psa. 42:7; S. S. 4:12

- Isa 37:31 And the remnant of those who have escaped of the house of Judah will again take root downward and bear fruit upward.
- Matt 6:5 And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites, because they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners, so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, They have their reward in full.
- Matt 6:6 But you, when you pray, enter into your private room, and shut your door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you.
- Matt 14:22 And immediately He compelled the disciples to step into the boat and to go before Him to the other side, while He sent the crowds away.
- Matt 14:23 And after He sent the crowds away, He went up to the mountain privately to pray. And when night fell, He was there alone.
- Psa 42:7 Deep calls unto deep / At the sound of Your water spouts; / All Your waves and Your billows / Pass over me.
- S. S. 4:12 A garden enclosed is my sister, my bride, / A spring shut up, a fountain sealed.

I. “When you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites, because they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners, so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, They have their reward in full. But you, when you pray, enter into your private room, and shut your door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you”—Matt. 6:5-6:

- A. We need the experience of praying in our *private* room and shutting our door; our Father is *in secret*, and He *sees in secret*; the kingdom people, as children of the heavenly Father, must live in and care for the Father’s secret and hidden presence.
- B. The kingdom people, who live in an emptied and humbled spirit and walk in a pure and single heart under the heavenly ruling of the kingdom, are not allowed to do anything in the flesh for the praise of men, but must do all things in the spirit for the pleasing of their heavenly Father.
- C. The effect of our praying in secret is that the flesh and the self are killed; if people in society and even in degraded Christendom are not allowed to make a show of their good deeds, they will not do them; the self loves to be glorified, and the flesh loves to be gazed upon.
- D. We all need some secret growth in life, some secret experiences of Christ; we need to pray to the Lord, worship the Lord, contact the Lord, and fellowship with the Lord in a secret way.
- E. We should pray much yet not let others know how much we pray; if we pray every day without telling others or letting them know about it, it means that we are healthy and that we are growing.
- F. The kingdom people must have some experience of prayer in their private room, contacting their heavenly Father in secret, experiencing some secret enjoyment of the Father, and receiving some secret answer from Him—v. 6.

- Matt 6:6 But you, when you pray, enter into your private room, and shut your door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you.
- G. Any time we exhibit ourselves in our righteous deeds, we are not healthy; such an exhibition greatly frustrates our growth in life.
 - H. Our human life loves to make a display, a public show, but God's life is always hidden; a hypocrite is one who has an outward manifestation without having anything within.
 - I. We can never practice living a hidden life in secret in our natural life; it is possible only in the divine life, the life that does not enjoy making a show; if we are serious about being the kingdom people, we must learn to live by the hidden life of our Father.

II. We need to learn from the pattern of the Lord living a hidden life in His going up to the mountain privately to pray—14:23; cf. Luke 6:12:

Matt 14:23 And after He sent the crowds away, He went up to the mountain privately to pray. And when night fell, He was there alone.

Luke 6:12 And in these days He went out to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God.

- A. The Lord did not remain in the issue of the miracle with the crowds (the miracle of feeding five thousand men, apart from women and children), but He went away from them to be with the Father privately on the mountain in prayer—Matt. 14:14-23:

Matt 14:14 And going forth, He saw a great crowd, and He was moved with compassion for them and healed their sick.

Matt 14:15 Now when evening fell, the disciples came to Him, saying, This place is deserted and the hour is already late. Send the crowds away that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves.

Matt 14:16 But Jesus said to them, They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.

Matt 14:17 And they said to Him, We do not have anything here except five loaves and two fish.

Matt 14:18 And He said, Bring them here to Me.

Matt 14:19 And after commanding the crowds to recline on the grass, He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed them and broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples to the crowds.

Matt 14:20 And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve handbaskets full.

Matt 14:21 And those who ate were about five thousand men, apart from women and children.

Matt 14:22 And immediately He compelled the disciples to step into the boat and to go before Him to the other side, while He sent the crowds away.

Matt 14:23 And after He sent the crowds away, He went up to the mountain privately to pray. And when night fell, He was there alone.

1. The Lord compelled the disciples to leave Him in order that He might have more time to pray privately to the Father—vv. 22-23.

Matt 14:22 And immediately He compelled the disciples to step into the boat and to go before Him to the other side, while He sent the crowds away.

Matt 14:23 And after He sent the crowds away, He went up to the mountain privately to pray. And when night fell, He was there alone.

2. He needed to pray privately to His Father who was in the heavens so that He might be one with the Father and have the Father with Him in whatever He did on earth for the establishing of the kingdom of the heavens; He did this not in the deserted place but on the mountain, leaving all the people, even His disciples, so that He might be alone to contact the Father.

- B. We should treasure three phrases—*to be with the Father, on the mountain, and in prayer*:

1. To pray with others is good, but often we need to pray by ourselves; when we pray with others, we cannot enjoy the Lord as deeply as when we pray to the Lord privately.

2. Even the Lord Jesus told us that when we pray, we should enter into our private room

and shut our door and pray to the Father who sees in secret (6:6); then we have the sensation of how intimate He is to us and how close we are to Him.

Matt 6:6 But you, when you pray, enter into your private room, and shut your door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you.

3. We have to learn to leave the crowds, our family, our friends, and the saints in the church to go to a higher level on a “high mountain”; we have to be separated from the crowd and the earthly things, to be with the Father privately and secretly to have intimate fellowship with Him.

III. Psalm 42:7 says, “Deep calls unto deep”:

- A. Others can respond deep within to only what issues from deep within us; anything that is not from the depths will never reach the depths of others.
- B. If our life has no depth, our superficial work will only affect other lives superficially; only “deep calls unto deep”; the kingdom life is a life in the depths, a life that can “take root downward and bear fruit upward”—Isa. 37:31; cf. Acts 6:7; 12:24; 19:20.

Acts 6:7 And the word of God grew, and the number of the disciples in Jerusalem multiplied greatly; and a large number of the priests obeyed the faith.

Acts 12:24 But the word of God grew and multiplied.

Acts 19:20 Thus, the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.

- C. On the one hand, we need to allow Christ as the seed of life to take root deep in the soil of our heart as the good earth (Matt. 13:23); on the other hand, we, as living plants in Christ, need to take root deep in the soil of the all-inclusive Christ as the reality of the good land (1 Cor. 3:6, 9; Col. 2:6-7):

Matt 13:23 But the one sown on the good earth, this is he who hears the word and understands, who by all means bears fruit and produces, one a hundredfold, and one sixtyfold, and one thirtyfold.

1 Cor 3:6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God caused the growth.

1 Cor 3:9 For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's cultivated land, God's building.

Col 2:6 As therefore you have received the Christ, Jesus the Lord, walk in Him,

Col 2:7 Having been rooted and being built up in Him, and being established in the faith even as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

1. The good earth signifies the good heart that is not hardened by worldly traffic, that is without hidden sins, and that is without the anxiety of the age and the deceitfulness of riches; we need to daily allow the Lord to deal with these things in our heart so that we can grow with the growth of God—v. 19.

Col 2:19 And not holding the Head, out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied and knit together by means of the joints and sinews, grows with the growth of God.

2. Because we have been planted in Christ as the reality of the good land, we need to take time to absorb Him (especially in our times with Him in the morning).

- D. While the sower sowed, some seeds fell beside the way, some on the rocky places, some into the thorns, and some into the good earth; this shows us four different ways for man to receive the word—Matt. 13:4-8, 18-23:

Matt 13:4 And as he sowed, some seeds fell beside the way, and the birds came and devoured them.

Matt 13:5 And others fell on the rocky places, where they did not have much earth, and immediately they sprang up because they had no depth of earth.

Matt 13:6 But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered.

Matt 13:7 And others fell on the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked them.

Matt 13:8 But others fell on the good earth and yielded fruit, one a hundredfold, and one sixtyfold, and one thirtyfold.

Matt 13:18 You therefore hear the parable of the one who sowed.

Matt 13:19 When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand, the evil one comes and snatches away that which has been sown in his heart. This is the one sown beside the way.

Matt 13:20 And the one sown on the rocky places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy;

Matt 13:21 Yet he does not have root in himself but lasts only for a time, and when affliction or persecution occurs because of the word, immediately he is stumbled.

Matt 13:22 And the one sown in the thorns, this is he who hears the word, and the anxiety of the age and the deceitfulness of riches utterly choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.

Matt 13:23 But the one sown on the good earth, this is he who hears the word and understands, who by all means bears fruit and produces, one a hundredfold, and one sixtyfold, and one thirtyfold.

1. The Lord Jesus tells us that among these different conditions, one is the rocky places; there is a little earth on the surface, but underneath there are rocks; when the seed falls into this kind of ground, it springs up quickly, but as soon as the sun comes out, it withers because of the lack of root—vv. 5-6.

Matt 13:5 And others fell on the rocky places, where they did not have much earth, and immediately they sprang up because they had no depth of earth.

Matt 13:6 But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered.

2. A root is growth that occurs beneath the soil; leaves are growth that occurs above the soil; in other words, roots are the hidden life, whereas leaves are the manifest life; the trouble with many Christians is that, while there is much apparent life, there is the lack of a secret, hidden life.
3. The Christian who does not have anything in the depth of his being has no root; he will not be able to stand in the day of trial and temptation; may God work in us so that we can take root downward.
4. To be without root is to be without any hidden treasure, hidden life, or hidden experiences; it is essential that some of our experiences remain covered; to uncover everything is to lose everything—cf. Isa. 39:2-8.

Isa 39:2 And Hezekiah was glad for them and showed them his treasury, the silver and the gold, and the spices and the fine oil, and his whole armory and everything which was found among his treasures; there was nothing in his house or in all his dominion that Hezekiah did not show them.

Isa 39:3 Then Isaiah the prophet came to King Hezekiah and said to him, What did these men say? And from where have they come to you? And Hezekiah said, They have come to me from a distant land, from Babylon.

Isa 39:4 And he said, What have they seen in your house? And Hezekiah said, They have seen everything that is in my house; there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shown them.

Isa 39:5 Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, Hear the word of Jehovah of hosts:

Isa 39:6 The days are now coming when everything that is in your house and that your fathers have laid up as a treasure unto this day will be carried away to Babylon; nothing will be left, says Jehovah.

Isa 39:7 And they will take away some of your sons who will issue from you, whom you will beget, and they will become eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.

Isa 39:8 And Hezekiah said to Isaiah, The word of Jehovah which you have spoken is good. He said moreover, Indeed there will be peace and truth in my days.

IV. In order to live a life in the depths, it is necessary to have direct and intimate fellowship with the Lord; Song of Songs 4:12 says, “A garden enclosed is my sister, my bride,/A spring shut up, a fountain sealed”:

- A. At this point in her spiritual progress, the Lord’s loving seeker has become a garden for Christ’s private satisfaction.
- B. She is not an open garden but an enclosed garden; all that she has is for her Beloved’s

- delight and for no one else.
- C. If today's believers would close up a little more and seal up tighter, their work would become more prevailing.
 - D. May the Lord grant us grace and do a deeper work in us through the cross so that we may strike deep roots and live a hidden life in the depths to fulfill God's requirements and satisfy His heart.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

THE DIVINE FACTS IN THE MYSTICAL HUMAN LIFE OF THE FIRST GOD-MAN

Training His Disciples to Learn from Him in the Miracle of Feeding Five Thousand People

Going Up to the Mountain Privately to Pray

After performing the miracle, the Lord went up to the mountain privately to pray (Matt. 14:23; cf. Luke 6:12).

Not Remaining in the Issue of the Miracle with the Crowds

The Lord did not remain in the issue of the miracle with the crowds but went away from them to be with the Father privately on the mountain in prayer. If we go to a certain place and have a great success, would we leave right away, or would we remain in this big success to enjoy it? We need to see and follow the pattern of the Lord Jesus. He did not remain in the issue of the great miracle that He performed. Instead, He went up to the mountain privately to pray. The word *privately* is very meaningful. This means He did not let the people know that He was going to pray. Otherwise, they would have followed Him. He went away from them to be with the Father privately in prayer. I like these three phrases: *to be with the Father*, *on the mountain*, and *in prayer*. We should learn from the Lord's pattern here by exercising to be with Him on the mountain in prayer. His looking up to heaven means that He had no trust in Himself. His going up to the mountain means that He wanted to be with the Father in prayer.

To pray with others is good, but often we need to pray by ourselves. When we pray with others, we cannot enjoy the Lord as deeply as when we pray to the Lord privately. Even the Lord Jesus told us that when we pray we should enter into our private room and shut our door and pray to the Father who sees in secret (Matt. 6:6). Then we have the sensation of how intimate He is to us and how close we are to Him. We have to learn to leave the crowds, our family, our friends, and the saints in the church to go to a higher level on a "high mountain." We have to go higher, far away from the earthly things on a lower level. We need to get to a higher level, separated from the crowd, to be with the Father privately and secretly to have intimate fellowship with Him. This is the significance of being on the mountain in prayer.

Asking the Father to Bless All Those Who Participated in the Enjoyment of the Issue of the Miracle

We need to consider why the Lord Jesus went to the mountain right after this miracle.

John 6:27 gives us the reason. This verse says that after performing the miracle, the Lord said, "Work not for the food which perishes, but for the food which abides unto eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you; for Him has the Father, even God, sealed." The Lord told the ones whom He fed not to seek the food that perishes but to seek the food that abides unto eternal life. I believe the Lord Jesus went to the mountain to pray in this way: "Father, I pray to You under Your blessing. Through Your blessing, You fed the five thousand, but Father, they are just seeking for the food that perishes. I do look unto You that You would bless them that they would seek the food that abides unto eternal life. Father, You know that I am Your sent One. Only I can give them the food that abides unto eternal life,

but they do not know Me in this way. They know only that I can perform a miracle to feed them with physical food. But they do not know that it is only I who can give them food that is of the eternal life.” I believe that the Lord prayed to bless them further in this way.

His going up to the mountain privately to pray indicated His asking the Father to bless all those who had participated in the enjoyment of the issue of the miracle that they would not be satisfied with the food that perishes but that they should seek for the food that abides unto eternal life and recognize that He was not only the Son of Man but also the Son of God who was sent and sealed by the Father and who could give them eternal life. When the five thousand were being fed by Him, they recognized that He was the capable Son of Man, but they did not realize that He was actually the Son of God who was not only sent but also sealed by the Father. He was the One who could give them the very bread that is related to the eternal life. For this reason He had another teaching in John 6. In John 6 the Lord revealed that He is the bread out of heaven, the bread of life. Eventually, He said that this bread is just His word. “The words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life” (v. 63). John 3:34 says that He is the One who speaks the word and gives the Spirit not by measure. To know Him in this way requires a revelation, so He prayed for them privately on the mountain.

Receiving Some Instruction from the Father

His going up to the mountain privately to pray also indicated that He wanted to receive of the Father some instruction concerning how to take care of the five thousand people fed by His miracle.

In this crystallization-study of Matthew 14, we can see how much we need revelation from the Lord to see the intrinsic significance of His word. To see the miracle of feeding five thousand with five loaves and two fish is easy, but to know the deeper lessons that we have to learn from the Performer of this big miracle requires revelation. These lessons are intrinsic, deeper, and of life. To know the great miracle the Lord performed does not give us any life. We can only admire the Lord’s outward doing. But to see all the detailed points concerning the lessons of life in order to learn from the Lord in His way of performing the miracle imparts life to us. We need to learn these living lessons from the Lord so that we can enter into the God-man living. (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1994–1997*, vol. 3, “The God-man Living,” pp. 564-566)

CRUCIAL ASPECTS OF MATTHEW 5 THROUGH 7

(Friday—Evening Session)

Message Six

Being Perfect as Our Heavenly Father Is Perfect

MC Hymns: 943

Scripture Reading: Matt. 5:20, 44-45, 48; John 3:16a;

Eph. 5:29; 1 John 4:8, 16; Rev. 19:7

- Matt 5:20 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.
- Matt 5:44 But I say to you, Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you,
- Matt 5:45 So that you may become sons of your Father who is in the heavens, because He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the just and the unjust.
- Matt 5:48 You therefore shall be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.
- John 3:16a For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, ...
- Eph 5:29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, even as Christ also the church,
- 1 John 4:8 He who does not love has not known God, because God is love.
- 1 John 4:16 And we know and have believed the love which God has in us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God and God abides in him.
- Rev 19:7 Let us rejoice and exult, and let us give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.

I. “You therefore shall be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect”—Matt. 5:48:

- A. We are the Father’s children, having the Father’s divine life and divine nature; hence, we can be perfect as our Father is perfect:
1. The divine life can make us perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect.
 2. We have this perfecting life within us.
 3. We need to turn to our Father and realize that we have His life and nature.
 4. In this way we will be perfect as our heavenly Father.
 5. This is the kingdom life, the kingdom living.
 6. The way to be perfect is to remain in the divine fellowship to receive and enjoy continually the dispensing of the processed Triune God—v. 48.
Matt 5:48 You therefore shall be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.
 7. Since we are sons of the heavenly Father possessing His life and nature, it is logical that we, His sons, should be perfect even as He is perfect.
 8. In order for us to be perfect in this way, we need to enjoy the dispensing of the divine life and nature into us by enjoying the Father Himself—2 Cor. 3:6a.
2 Cor 3:6a Who has also made us sufficient as ministers of a new covenant, ministers not of the letter but of the Spirit; ...
- B. Ephesians 4 is a chapter that speaks of the perfecting of the new man through the growth in life; the new man created by Christ must be perfected in order to function:
Eph 4 be omitted.
1. The organically perfect new man needs to be perfected through the growth in life in order to function in a proper way:
 - a. The new man can become perfect in relation to his function only through receiving the proper nourishment; this is one of the deepest concepts in the book of Ephesians.
 - b. We should all fulfill our responsibility to perfect the new man through nourishing and cherishing—5:29.
Eph 5:29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it,

- even as Christ also the church,
2. In order to be perfected, we need to be constituted with Christ (Col. 3:10-11); this means that as the all-inclusive Christ is wrought into us to be our everything, the organically perfect new man becomes perfect functionally.
 Col 3:10 And have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto full knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,
 Col 3:11 Where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all and in all.
 3. When the new man is perfected, that will be the time for the Lord's coming, and the perfected new man will be the bride—Rev. 19:7.
 Rev 19:7 Let us rejoice and exult, and let us give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.

II. For the kingdom people to be perfect as their heavenly Father is perfect means that they are perfect in His love—Matt. 5:20, 44-45:

- Matt 5:20 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.
 Matt 5:44 But I say to you, Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you,
 Matt 5:45 So that you may become sons of your Father who is in the heavens, because He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the just and the unjust.
- A. The divine love is the nature of God's essence; thus, it is an essential attribute of God:
 1. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son"—John 3:16a:
 - a. Although we are fallen, God still loves us with His divine love, which is Himself (1 John 4:8, 16), because we are vessels created by God according to His own image to contain Himself (Gen. 1:26; Rom. 9:21a, 23).
 1 John 4:8 He who does not love has not known God, because God is love.
 1 John 4:16 And we know and have believed the love which God has in us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God and God abides in him.
 Gen 1:26 And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of heaven and over the cattle and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.
 Rom 9:21a Or does not the potter have authority over the clay to make out of the same lump one vessel unto honor ...
 Rom 9:23 In order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He had before prepared unto glory,
 - b. God so loves us that He gave His only begotten Son, His expression, that we might obtain His eternal life.
 2. "Herein is love, not that we have loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son as a propitiation for our sins"—1 John 4:10:
 - a. In this fact is the higher and nobler love of God.
 - b. The divine love as God's essential attribute is mainly expressed in sending His Son to redeem us and impart God's life into us so that we may become His children.
 3. "God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us"—Eph. 2:4:
 - a. God loves us because we are the object of His selection.
 - b. Because of His great love, God is rich in mercy to save us from our wretched position into a condition that is suitable for His love.
 - c. The nobler love of God as His essential attribute needs His attribute of mercy to reach us in the deep pit of our fallen life.
 - B. "The love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us"—Rom. 5:5b:

1. The love of God is God Himself—1 John 4:8, 16.
1 John 4:8 He who does not love has not known God, because God is love.
1 John 4:16 And we know and have believed the love which God has in us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God and God abides in him.
 2. God as love is the divine essence that has been poured out into our hearts—Rom. 5:5:
Rom 5:5 And hope does not put us to shame, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.
 - a. The pouring out of the love of God into our hearts is a matter of the essence of God.
 - b. Because we have been regenerated, we have love as the nature of God's essence within us.
 - c. As believers, deep in our hearts we have something of the divine essence, and this is God the Father in His love—Matt. 18:35.
Matt 18:35 So also will My heavenly Father do to you if each of you does not forgive his brother from your hearts.
 3. Because the love of God has been poured into our hearts, the heart of a believer in Christ is a heart of love—Eph. 3:17.
Eph 3:17 That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love,
 4. 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—Rom. 5:5, 8; 8:35, 39; 15:30; 2 Cor. 13:14.
Rom 5:5 And hope does not put us to shame, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.
Rom 5:8 But God commends His own love to us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.
Rom 8:35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or anguish or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword?
Rom 8:39 Nor height nor depth nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.
Rom 15:30 Now I exhort you, brothers, through our Lord Jesus Christ and through the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God on my behalf,
2 Cor 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
- C. First Corinthians 12:31—13:8 reveals that love is the most excellent way for us to be anything and to do anything for the building up of the Body of Christ:
- 1 Cor 12:31 But earnestly desire the greater gifts. And moreover I show to you a most excellent way.
 - 1 Cor 13:1 If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels but do not have love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.
 - 1 Cor 13:2 And if I have the gift of prophecy and know all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.
 - 1 Cor 13:3 And if I dole out all my possessions to feed others, and if I deliver up my body that I may boast, but do not have love, I profit nothing.
 - 1 Cor 13:4 Love suffers long. Love is kind; it is not jealous. Love does not brag and is not puffed up;
 - 1 Cor 13:5 It does not behave unbecomingly and does not seek its own things; it is not provoked and does not take account of evil;
 - 1 Cor 13:6 It does not rejoice because of unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth;
 - 1 Cor 13:7 It covers all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.
 - 1 Cor 13:8 Love never falls away. But whether prophecies, they will be rendered useless; or tongues, they will cease; or knowledge, it will be rendered useless.
1. Love is the inward essence of God and the heart of God—1 John 4:16.
1 John 4:16 And we know and have believed the love which God has in us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God and God abides in him.
 2. God is love; we love because He first loved us—vv. 8, 19.

- 1 John 4:8 He who does not love has not known God, because God is love.
 1 John 4:19 We love because He first loved us.
3. God's predestination of us unto the divine sonship was motivated by the divine love—Eph. 1:4-5.
 Eph 1:4 Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blemish before Him in love,
 Eph 1:5 Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,
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 the saints—1 John 4:19-21.
 1 John 4:19 We love because He first loved us.
 1 John 4:20 If anyone says, I love God, and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen.
 1 John 4:21 And this commandment we have from Him, that he who loves God love his brother also.
5. The life that we have received from God is a life of love.
6. Christ lived in this world a life of God as love, and He is now our life so that we may live the same life of love in this world and be the same as He is—3:14; 4:17; 5:1.
 1 John 3:14 We know that we have passed out of death into life because we love the brothers. He who does not love abides in death.
 1 John 4:17 In this has love been perfected with us, that we have boldness in the day of the judgment because even as He is, so also are we in this world.
 1 John 5:1 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been begotten of God, and everyone who loves Him who has begotten loves him also who has been begotten of Him.
7. We must be persons who are flooded with and carried away by the love of Christ; the divine love should be like a rushing tide of great waters toward us, impelling us to live to Him beyond our own control—2 Cor. 5:14.
 2 Cor 5:14 For the love of Christ constrains us because we have judged this, that One died for all, therefore all died;
8. We are God's species because we have been born of Him to have His life and nature—John 3:5-7:
 John 3:5 Jesus answered, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.
 John 3:6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.
 John 3:7 Do not marvel that I said to you, You must be born anew.
- a. We have been regenerated to be God's species, God's kind, and God is love—vv. 3, 5; 1 John 4:16.
 John 3:3 Jesus answered and said to him, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God.
 John 3:5 Jesus answered, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.
 1 John 4:16 And we know and have believed the love which God has in us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God and God abides in him.
- b. Since through regeneration we have become God in His life and nature, we also are love; this means that we do not merely love others but that we are love itself—John 1:13; 13:34.
 John 1:13 Who were begotten not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.
 John 13:34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.
- c. As God's species, we are love because God is love—1 John 4:8.
 1 John 4:8 He who does not love has not known God, because God is love.

- D. First John 4 tells the secret of how to stand boldly before the judgment seat of Christ—abide in love—v. 17:

1 John 4 be omitted.

1 John 4:17 In this has love been perfected with us, that we have boldness in the day of the judgment because even as He is, so also are we in this world.

1. To abide in love is to live a life in which we love Christ—vv. 17-18; 2 Cor. 5:10, 14.
1 John 4:17 In this has love been perfected with us, that we have boldness in the day of the judgment because even as He is, so also are we in this world.
1 John 4:18 There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear because fear has punishment, and he who fears has not been perfected in love.
2 Cor 5:10 For we must all be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done through the body according to what he has practiced, whether good or bad.
2 Cor 5:14 For the love of Christ constrains us because we have judged this, that One died for all, therefore all died;
2. To abide in love is to live a life in which we love others habitually with the love that is God Himself so that He may be expressed in us—1 John 4:16.
1 John 4:16 And we know and have believed the love which God has in us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God and God abides in him.
3. Perfect love is the love that has been perfected in us by our loving others with the love of God; such love casts out fear and has no fear of being punished by the Lord at His coming back—vv. 17-18; cf. Luke 12:46-47.
1 John 4:17 In this has love been perfected with us, that we have boldness in the day of the judgment because even as He is, so also are we in this world.
1 John 4:18 There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear because fear has punishment, and he who fears has not been perfected in love.
Luke 12:46 The master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour which he does not know, and will cut him asunder, and will appoint his portion with the unbelievers.
Luke 12:47 And that slave who knew his master's will and did not prepare or do according to his will, will receive many lashes;

Excerpts from the Ministry:

THE NEW LAW—LOVE YOUR ENEMIES AND PRAY FOR YOUR PERSECUTORS

To Be Perfect as the Heavenly Father

Matthew 5:48 says, “You therefore shall be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.” For the kingdom people to be perfect as their heavenly Father is perfect means that they are perfect in His love. They are the Father’s children, having the Father’s divine life and divine nature. Hence, they can be perfect as their Father is. The demand of the new law of the kingdom is much higher than the requirement of the law of the old dispensation. This higher demand can be met only by the Father’s divine life, not by their natural life. The kingdom of the heavens is the highest demand, and the divine life of the Father is the highest supply to meet that demand. First, the gospel presents in the Gospel of Matthew the kingdom of the heavens as the highest demand, and last it affords us in the Gospel of John the divine life of the heavenly Father as the highest supply, by which we can have the highest living of the kingdom of the heavens. The demand of the new law of the kingdom in Matthew 5 through 7 is actually the expression of the new life, the divine life, which is within the regenerated kingdom people. This demand opens up the inner being of the regenerated people, showing them that they are able to attain to such a high level and to have such a high living.

All the requirements of these changed laws reveal how much the divine life within us can do for us. These laws are not merely a requirement; they are a revelation, showing us that the divine life can even make us perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect. We have this perfecting life within us. We have a life with such a divine nature that it can make us as perfect as our heavenly Father.

We have seen that according to 5:45 the Father causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good and that He sends rain on the just and the unjust. First, the Father causes His sun to rise on the evil, then on the good. If you were the Father, would you cause your sun to rise first on the evil or on the good? Certainly, you would first cause it to rise on the good. This verse also says that the Father sends His rain on the just and on the unjust. Notice that the order in this part of the verse is changed. This indicates that in the eyes of the heavenly Father there is no difference in sending the sunshine first on the evil and then on the good and sending the rain first on the just and then on the unjust.

Let us apply this to the matter of dealing with our children. Even in dealing with your own children, you have your choice. This indicates how natural you are. Suppose you have three children. One of your three children may be lovable, one may be naughty, and one may be neutral. Day after day these three children expose you, revealing how much you dislike the naughty one and blame him. Although you do not like him, the heavenly Father loves him more than the lovable one. He has sent him to expose your natural taste.

We also have our natural taste in the church life. We like the brothers who are gentle and the sisters who are nice. We want all the brothers and sisters to be like this. But this is just a dream, for there will always be some who bother us. Consider the problem of the shortage among the elders. Many brothers are nice and gentle, but they are not capable of being elders. However, the capable ones may be rather sharp. God uses this to expose your natural choice.

Now we understand the implication and significance of the Lord's word in verses 31 through 48. It is not simply a matter of outwardly loving our enemy. No, it is a matter of having our natural being exposed. After we have been exposed, we will say, "Lord, have mercy on me. How I need Your deliverance! I want to stay near to You and trust in You. Then I will be perfect as my Father."

Do not take the Lord's word as a teaching concerning how you should behave. This way will not work. The Lord's word was intended to touch our being, our natural choice, and to expose what we are and where we are. When we have been exposed and subdued, we will give the full opportunity to the divine life to live in us. This will make us perfect even as our heavenly Father is perfect. We cannot imitate the Father. When I was young, I was taught by those in Christianity that our heavenly Father loves those who are bad and that we should love our enemies just as our Father does. Although this sounds good, it actually is like trying to teach a monkey to behave like a person. You may teach a monkey to behave like a kind gentleman. The monkeys, however, will fail to do this because they are not the sons of that man. We are the sons of our heavenly Father. Thus, the Father's life and nature are within us. All the outward enemies, compellers, and opponents expose what we are. Because they expose our natural being, we learn not to trust ourselves any longer but to look to our Father and to realize that we have His life and nature within us. Through this exposure we come to see that we must stay close to Him and live by His life and nature. In this way we will be perfect as our heavenly Father. This is the kingdom life, the kingdom living.

Misunderstanding these verses, many Christians have taken them as instructions concerning their outward behavior. This is the reason so many have been disappointed and have said, "This is too much for us. We are far away from it, and we are unable to fulfill it." This is not a common word given by the Lord Jesus; it is the constitution of the heavenly kingdom. Because we are His kingdom people, we can certainly fulfill these requirements. We have the kingdom life within us, and we can fulfill these laws not in ourselves but by the Father's life and nature. Therefore, we must thank Him for sending so many contrary things into our environment in order to touch our being and to expose what we are so that we may be fully subdued, turn to Him, stay near to Him, trust in Him, and live by Him. Then we will be the genuine kingdom people with the kingdom life for a proper kingdom living. This is God's kingdom on earth today, and this is the proper church life. (*Life-study of Matthew*, pp. 231-234)

CRUCIAL ASPECTS OF MATTHEW 5 THROUGH 7

(Saturday—First Morning Session)

Message Seven

Entering through the Narrow Gate and Walking on the Constricted Way That Leads to Life, the Ever-blessed Condition of the Kingdom

JL Hymns: 822

Scripture Reading: Rev. 2:7; John 6:57, 63

- Rev 2:7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.
- John 6:57 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.
- John 6:63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.

I. In the decree of the kingdom's constitution, Christ displayed the two possible ways of people's life and work before God—"Enter in through the narrow gate, for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter through it. Because narrow is the gate and constricted is the way that leads to life, and few are those who find it"—Matt. 7:13-14:

- A. "The way that leads to life" is the way that leads to a living reward in life; it is the Way (Acts 9:2; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:22)—the way of the truth (2 Pet. 2:2), the straight way (v. 15), the way of righteousness (v. 21), the way of peace (Luke 1:79; Rom. 3:17), the way of salvation (Acts 16:17), the way of God (Matt. 22:16; Acts 18:26), and the way of the Lord (John 1:23; Acts 18:25).

- Acts 9:2 And asked for letters from him to Damascus for the synagogues, so that if he found any who were of the Way, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.
- Acts 19:9 But when some were hardened and would not be persuaded, speaking evil of the Way before the multitude, he withdrew from them and separated the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus.
- Acts 19:23 And about that time no small disturbance took place concerning the Way.
- Acts 22:4 And I persecuted this Way unto death, binding and delivering to prisons both men and women,
- Acts 24:22 But Felix, knowing more accurately the things concerning the Way, deferred them, saying, When Lysias the commander comes down, I will determine your affairs.
- 2 Pet 2:2 And many will follow their licentiousness, because of whom the way of the truth will be reviled.
- 2 Pet 2:15 Forsaking the straight way, they have gone astray, following the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness
- 2 Pet 2:21 For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than, knowing it, to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them.
- Luke 1:79 To shine upon those sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.
- Rom 3:17 And the way of peace they have not known.
- Acts 16:17 This woman followed after Paul and us and cried out, saying, These men are slaves of the Most High God, who announce to you a way of salvation.
- Matt 22:16 And they sent to Him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Teacher, we know that You are true and that You teach the way of God in truth and do not fear anyone, for You do not regard the person of men.

- Acts 18:26 And this man began to speak boldly in the synagogue. And when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him to themselves and expounded the way of God to him more accurately.
- John 1:23 He said, I am a voice of one crying in the wilderness, "Make straight the way of the Lord!" as Isaiah the prophet said.
- Acts 18:25 This man was instructed in the way of the Lord, and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John.
- B. The broad way leading to destruction is according to the worldly systems, satisfying the natural tastes; to get the crowd; to maintain a career of man; and to achieve man's enterprise—Matt. 13:31-33; Rev. 2:13, 20; 17:4-5.
- Matt 13:31 Another parable He set before them, saying, The kingdom of the heavens is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field,
- Matt 13:32 And which is smaller than all the seeds; but when it has grown, it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of heaven come and roost in its branches.
- Matt 13:33 Another parable He spoke to them: The kingdom of the heavens is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal until the whole was leavened.
- Rev 2:13 I know where you dwell, where Satan's throne is; and you hold fast My name and have not denied My faith, even in the days of Antipas, My witness, My faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.
- Rev 2:20 But I have something against you, that you tolerate the woman Jezebel, she who calls herself a prophetess and teaches and leads My slaves astray to commit fornication and to eat idol sacrifices.
- Rev 17:4 And the woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and gilded with gold and precious stone and pearls, having in her hand a golden cup full of abominations and the unclean things of her fornication.
- Rev 17:5 And on her forehead there was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF THE HARLOTS AND THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.
- C. The constricted way leading to life is according to the divine regulations, fulfilling the spiritual requests; to bring in God's elect; to bear the testimony of Jesus Christ; and to carry out God's economy for the building up of the Body of Christ—Rom. 1:9; Heb. 11:5-6; Rev. 1:1-2, 9-10.
- Rom 1:9 For God is my witness, whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of His Son, how unceasingly I make mention of you always in my prayers,
- Heb 11:5 By faith Enoch was translated so that he should not see death; and he was not found, because God had translated him. For before his translation he obtained the testimony that he had been well pleasing to God.
- Heb 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to be well pleasing to Him, for he who comes forward to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.
- Rev 1:1 The revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave to Him to show to His slaves the things that must quickly take place; and He made it known by signs, sending it by His angel to His slave John,
- Rev 1:2 Who testified the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ, even all that he saw.
- Rev 1:9 I John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and endurance in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.
- Rev 1:10 I was in spirit on the Lord's Day and heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet,
- D. The God-ordained way is to have a living and working that are always narrow and constricted, according to the pattern of the Lord's indescribable life and ministry—John 5:19, 30; 4:34; 17:4; 14:10, 24; 7:16, 18.
- John 5:19 Then Jesus answered and said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, The Son can do nothing from Himself except what He sees the Father doing, for whatever that One does, these things the Son also does in like manner.
- John 5:30 I can do nothing from Myself; as I hear, I judge, and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will but the will of Him who sent Me.

- John 4:34 Jesus said to them, My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to finish His work.
- John 17:4 I have glorified You on earth, finishing the work which You have given Me to do.
- John 14:10 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.
- John 14:24 He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me.
- John 7:16 Jesus therefore answered them and said, My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me.
- John 7:18 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.
- E. We in the Lord's recovery must walk in our spirit; walking in spirit restricts us, causing us to live a normal Christian life and making us vital, healthy believers who take the way of life for God's building—Rom. 8:4; Gal. 5:16, 22-23; 1 Thes. 5:16-18.
- Rom 8:4 That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the spirit.
- Gal 5:16 But I say, Walk by the Spirit and you shall by no means fulfill the lust of the flesh.
- Gal 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,
- Gal 5:23 Meekness, self-control; against such things there is no law.
- 1 Thes 5:16 Always rejoice,
- 1 Thes 5:17 Unceasingly pray,
- 1 Thes 5:18 In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.
- F. We must learn to restrict ourselves in our labor according to the measure of the rule that the God of measure, the ruling God, has apportioned to us—2 Cor. 10:13-15.
- 2 Cor 10:13 But we will not boast beyond our measure but according to the measure of the rule which the God of measure has apportioned to us, to reach even as far as you.
- 2 Cor 10:14 For we are not extending ourselves beyond our bounds, as if we did not reach you, for we were the first to come even as far as unto you in the gospel of Christ.
- 2 Cor 10:15 We are not boasting beyond our measure in others' labors, but have the hope, as your faith is increasing, to be magnified in you according to our rule unto abundance,
- G. The more we are constricted, the more we are regulated; and the more we are regulated, the more we are healthy; to be vital means to be healthy; Paul desired to admonish every man and to teach every man in all wisdom that he might present every man full-grown in Christ; Paul did not depend on miracles, but his work was much more in the "every man" way—Col. 1:28-29; Acts 20:19-20, 31.
- Col 1:28 Whom we announce, admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom that we may present every man full-grown in Christ;
- Col 1:29 For which also I labor, struggling according to His operation which operates in me in power.
- Acts 20:19 Serving the Lord as a slave with all humility and tears and trials which came upon me by the plots of the Jews;
- Acts 20:20 How I did not withhold any of those things that are profitable by not declaring them to you and by not teaching you publicly and from house to house,
- Acts 20:31 Therefore watch, remembering that for three years, night and day, I did not cease admonishing each one with tears.

II. We must stay on the way of life, the line of life, in the maintenance of life by enjoying Christ as the tree of life in the flow of life for God's building in life by our growth in life—John 10:10b; Rev. 22:1-2; Eph. 4:16; 2:21-22:

- John 10:10b ... I have come that they may have life and may have it abundantly.
- Rev 22:1 And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its street.
- Rev 22:2 And on this side and on that side of the river was the tree of life, producing twelve fruits, yielding its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

- Eph 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.
- Eph 2:21 In whom all the building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord;
- Eph 2:22 In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit.
- A. We stay on the way of life by living and serving according to the principle of life, not according to the principle of right and wrong.
- B. We stay on the way of life by loving the Lord to the uttermost, drawing others to run after Him—Mark 12:30; S. S. 1:4a.
- Mark 12:30 And you shall love the Lord your God from your whole heart and from your whole soul and from your whole mind and from your whole strength."
- S. S. 1:4a Draw me; ...
- C. We stay on the way of life by eating Jesus through pray-reading and musing on the word and by ministering the word as the Spirit into others by the exercise of our spirit—John 6:57, 63; Eph. 6:17-18; Psa. 119:15 and footnote; Jer. 15:16; Matt. 4:4; 24:45; 1 Cor. 2:4-5, 13.
- John 6:57 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.
- John 6:63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.
- Eph 6:17 And receive the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which Spirit is the word of God,
- Eph 6:18 By means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit and watching unto this in all perseverance and petition concerning all the saints,
- Psa 119:15 I will ¹muse upon Your precepts / And regard Your ways.
- Note 1 Rich in meaning, the Hebrew word for muse (often translated meditate in the KJV) implies to worship, to converse with oneself, and to speak aloud. To muse on the word is to taste and enjoy it through careful considering. Prayer, speaking to oneself, and praising the Lord may also be included in musing on the word. To muse on the word of God is to enjoy His word as His breath (2 Tim. 3:16) and thus to be infused with God, to breathe God in, and to receive spiritual nourishment.
- Jer 15:16 Your words were found and I ate them, / And Your word became to me / The gladness and joy of my heart, / For I am called by Your name, / O Jehovah, God of hosts.
- Matt 4:4 But He answered and said, It is written, "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out through the mouth of God."
- Matt 24:45 Who then is the faithful and prudent slave, whom the master has set over his household to give them food at the proper time?
- 1 Cor 2:4 And my speech and my proclamation were not in persuasive words of wisdom but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,
- 1 Cor 2:5 In order that your faith would not stand in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.
- 1 Cor 2:13 Which things also we speak, not in words taught by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual things with spiritual words.
- D. We stay on the way of life by enjoying the Triune God as the law of the Spirit of life with its divine capacity—Rom. 8:2; Jer. 32:39.
- Rom 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life has freed me in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and of death.
- Jer 32:39 And I will give them one heart and one way, to fear Me all the days, for their own good and for the good of their children after them.
- E. We stay on the way of life by abiding in Christ as the tree of life in the flow of life under His headship and according to His divine nature—Rev. 22:1-2.
- Rev 22:1 And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its street.
- Rev 22:2 And on this side and on that side of the river was the tree of life, producing twelve fruits, yielding its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

- F. We stay on the way of life by being careful about the people whom we contact and being separated unto God from every kind of spiritual death—wild death, mild death, and subtle death—Lev. 5:2; 11:1-40; Num. 6:6-7.

Lev 5:2 Or if anyone touches any unclean thing, whether the carcass of an unclean animal or the carcass of unclean cattle or the carcass of unclean swarming things, and it escapes his notice, and he is unclean, then he will be guilty.

Lev 11:1 Then Jehovah spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying to them,

Lev 11:2 Speak to the children of Israel, saying, These are the animals which you may eat among all the beasts that are on the earth.

Lev 11:3 Whatever has a divided hoof, that is, has its hoof split in two, and chews the cud among the beasts, that you may eat.

Lev 11:4 However these you shall not eat: of those that only chew the cud or of those that only have a divided hoof: the camel, for though it chews the cud, it does not have a divided hoof; it is unclean to you.

Lev 11:5 And the hyrax, for though it chews the cud, it does not have a divided hoof; it is unclean to you.

Lev 11:6 And the hare, for though it chews the cud, it does not have a divided hoof; it is unclean to you.

Lev 11:7 And the pig, for though it has a divided hoof, that is, it has its hoof split in two, it does not chew the cud; it is unclean to you.

Lev 11:8 You shall not eat of their flesh, nor shall you touch their carcasses; they are unclean to you.

Lev 11:9 These you may eat of all that are in the water: anything in the water that has fins and scales, in the seas or in the rivers; these you may eat.

Lev 11:10 But anything that does not have fins and scales in the seas and in the rivers, of anything that swarms in the waters and of any living animal which is in the waters, they are an abomination to you,

Lev 11:11 And they shall be an abomination to you; you shall not eat of their flesh, and their carcasses you shall regard as an abomination.

Lev 11:12 Anything in the water that does not have fins or scales is an abomination to you.

Lev 11:13 And these you shall regard as an abomination among the birds; they shall not be eaten; they are an abomination: the great vulture and the bearded vulture and the black vulture

Lev 11:14 And the kite and the falcon of every kind,

Lev 11:15 Every raven of every kind,

Lev 11:16 And the ostrich and the nighthawk and the sea gull and the hawk of every kind,

Lev 11:17 And the little owl and the cormorant and the great owl

Lev 11:18 And the white owl and the pelican and the carrion vulture

Lev 11:19 And the stork; the heron of every kind and the hoopoe and the bat;

Lev 11:20 All flying insects that go on all fours are an abomination to you.

Lev 11:21 Yet these you may eat of all flying insects that go on all fours, which have legs above their feet with which to leap on the earth;

Lev 11:22 These of them you may eat: the swarming locust of every kind and the swallowing locust of every kind and the cricket of every kind and the grasshopper of every kind.

Lev 11:23 But all the other flying insects which have four feet are an abomination to you.

Lev 11:24 And by these you shall become unclean; whoever touches their carcass shall be unclean until the evening,

Lev 11:25 And whoever carries any part of their carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until the evening.

Lev 11:26 For every beast which has a divided hoof but does not have its hoof split in two or chew the cud is unclean to you; everyone who touches them shall be unclean.

Lev 11:27 And whatever goes on its paws, among all beasts that go on all fours, are unclean to you; whoever touches their carcass shall be unclean until the evening.

Lev 11:28 And the one who carries their carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until the evening; they are unclean to you.

Lev 11:29 And these are unclean to you among the swarming things that swarm on the earth: the weasel and the mouse and the great lizard of every kind,

Lev 11:30 And the gecko and the land crocodile and the lizard and the sand lizard and the

- chameleon.
- Lev 11:31 These are unclean to you among all the swarming things; whoever touches them when they are dead shall be unclean until the evening.
- Lev 11:32 And anything on which one of them may fall when they are dead shall be unclean, whether it is any article of wood or clothing or skin or sackcloth; any article which is used for any work must be put into water, and it shall be unclean until the evening; then it shall be clean.
- Lev 11:33 And any earthen vessel into which any of them falls, whatever is in it shall be unclean, and the vessel you shall break.
- Lev 11:34 Any food that could be eaten shall be unclean if water from such a vessel comes upon it, and any liquid that may be drunk shall be unclean if it was in any such vessel.
- Lev 11:35 And everything on which part of their carcass falls shall be unclean—an oven or a stove shall be broken in pieces; they are unclean and shall continue to be unclean to you.
- Lev 11:36 Nevertheless a spring or a cistern collecting water shall be clean, but whatever touches their carcass shall be unclean.
- Lev 11:37 And if any part of their carcass falls on any seed for sowing, which is to be sown, it is clean.
- Lev 11:38 But if water is put on the seed, and any part of their carcass fall on it, it is unclean to you.
- Lev 11:39 And if any beast which you have for food dies, the one who touches its carcass shall be unclean until the evening.
- Lev 11:40 And he who eats some of its carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until the evening; the one who carries its carcass shall also wash his clothes and be unclean until the evening.
- Num 6:6 All the days that he separates himself to Jehovah he shall not come near a dead person.
- Num 6:7 He shall not make himself unclean for his father or for his mother, for his brother or for his sister, when they die, because his separation to God is upon his head.
- G. We stay on the way of life by living in resurrection, in the reality of the church as the Body of Christ, signified by the golden lampstand, a tree of resurrection life—Eph. 1:22-23; Exo. 25:31-40; Rev. 1:11-12.
- Eph 1:22 And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church,
- Eph 1:23 Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.
- Exo 25:31 And you shall make a lampstand of pure gold. The lampstand with its base and its shaft shall be made of beaten work; its cups, its calyxes, and its blossom buds shall be of one piece with it.
- Exo 25:32 And there shall be six branches going out of its sides; three branches of the lampstand out of one of its sides, and three branches of the lampstand out of its other side;
- Exo 25:33 Three cups made like almond blossoms in one branch, a calyx and a blossom bud; and three cups made like almond blossoms in the other branch, a calyx and a blossom bud—so for the six branches going out of the lampstand.
- Exo 25:34 And there shall be on the lampstand four cups made like almond blossoms, its calyxes and its blossom buds;
- Exo 25:35 And a calyx under two branches of one piece with it, and a calyx under two branches of one piece with it, and a calyx under two branches of one piece with it, for the six branches going out of the lampstand.
- Exo 25:36 Their calyxes and their branches shall be of one piece with it; all of it one beaten work of pure gold.
- Exo 25:37 And you shall make its lamps, seven; and set up its lamps to give light to the area in front of it.
- Exo 25:38 And its tongs and its firepans shall be of pure gold.
- Exo 25:39 It shall be made of a talent of pure gold, with all these utensils.
- Exo 25:40 And see that you make them according to their pattern, which was shown to you in the mountain.
- Rev 1:11 Saying, What you see write in a scroll and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus

and to Smyrna and to Pergamos and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.

Rev 1:12 And I turned to see the voice that spoke with me; and when I turned, I saw seven golden lampstands,

III. The God-ordained pathway for the church is the way of Philadelphia; this God-ordained pathway is the constricted way that leads to life:

- A. The characteristic of the overcomers in Philadelphia is their brotherly love (3:7-8); love prevails among them so that they shepherd people according to God (1 Pet. 5:2) by cherishing them with the cheering presence of God and nourishing them with the healthy teaching of the economy of God (Eph. 4:11; 5:29; Acts 20:28).

Rev 3:7 And to the messenger of the church in Philadelphia write: These things says the Holy One, the true One, the One who has the key of David, the One who opens and no one will shut, and shuts and no one opens:

Rev 3:8 I know your works; behold, I have put before you an opened door which no one can shut, because you have a little power and have kept My word and have not denied My name.

1 Pet 5:2 Shepherd the flock of God among you, overseeing not under compulsion but willingly, according to God; not by seeking gain through base means but eagerly;

Eph 4:11 And He Himself gave some as apostles and some as prophets and some as evangelists and some as shepherds and teachers,

Eph 5:29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, even as Christ also the church,

Acts 20:28 Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among whom the Holy Spirit has placed you as overseers to shepherd the church of God, which He obtained through His own blood.

- B. The Lord's recovery with Philadelphia is a recovery in quality, a recovery of the original substance of the church, the inner substance of God, which is love (1 John 4:8); to stand on the genuine ground of oneness, the ground of the church, is to choose to love all the brothers (Rev. 3:7a; cf. 2:4, 7).

1 John 4:8 He who does not love has not known God, because God is love.

Rev 3:7a And to the messenger of the church in Philadelphia write: ...

Rev 2:4 But I have one thing against you, that you have left your first love.

Rev 2:7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.

- C. The Lord's using the key of David to open the door for the spread of His recovery is objective to us, but Christ is also using the key of David to subjectively open the door in our inner being for us to be transformed and built into the house of God as a pillar with the name of God, the name of the New Jerusalem, and the new name of the Lord—v. 17; 3:12; cf. 21:22:

Rev 2:17 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give of the hidden manna, and to him I will give a white stone, and upon the stone a new name written, which no one knows except he who receives it.

Rev 3:12 He who overcomes, him I will make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall by no means go out anymore, and I will write upon him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which descends out of heaven from My God, and My new name.

Rev 21:22 And I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.

1. *The name of My God* indicates that the pillar is God; *the name of the city of My God* indicates that the pillar is the New Jerusalem; and *My new name* indicates that the pillar is Christ in a new significance; the overcomer as a pillar becomes God in life and in nature but not in the Godhead, he becomes a constituent of the New Jerusalem, and he becomes Christ in a new experiential sense—3:12.

Rev 3:12 He who overcomes, him I will make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he

shall by no means go out anymore, and I will write upon him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which descends out of heaven from My God, and My new name.

2. The New Jerusalem is the new Christ; as God's enlargement and expansion, we are Christ in a new sense as the New Jerusalem; the new Christ is not the same as He was in the four Gospels; the bride, who is the increase of the Bridegroom, is the New Jerusalem, including all of God's regenerated ones—John 3:29-30; Rev. 21:9-10.

John 3:29 He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices with joy because of the bridegroom's voice. This joy of mine therefore is made full.

John 3:30 He must increase, but I must decrease.

Rev 21:9 And one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and spoke with me, saying, Come here; I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.

Rev 21:10 And he carried me away in spirit onto a great and high mountain and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God,

3. For us to be built into God, become a constituent of the New Jerusalem, and become a part of the new Christ is humanly impossible, but the law of the Spirit of life within us contains an element that deals with impossibility—Rom. 8:2; Luke 18:27; cf. Gen. 28:12-19; John 1:51.

Rom 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life has freed me in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and of death.

Luke 18:27 But He said, The things that are impossible with men are possible with God.

Gen 28:12 And he dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.

Gen 28:13 And there was Jehovah, standing above it; and He said, I am Jehovah, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. The land on which you lie, I will give to you and to your seed.

Gen 28:14 And your seed will be as the dust of the earth, and you will spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and in you and in your seed will all the families of the earth be blessed.

Gen 28:15 And, behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go and will cause you to return to this land, for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.

Gen 28:16 And Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, Surely Jehovah is in this place, and I did not know it.

Gen 28:17 And he was afraid and said, How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.

Gen 28:18 And Jacob rose up early in the morning and took the stone that he had put under his head, and he set it up as a pillar and poured oil on top of it.

Gen 28:19 And he called the name of that place Bethel, but the name of the city was Luz previously.

John 1:51 And He said to him, Truly, truly, I say to you, You shall see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.

- D. The overcomers in Philadelphia pay more attention to life than to work, caring more about quality than quantity (cf. 1 Cor. 3:12); they have "a little power" with the realization that what pleases the Lord is not their doing much for Him but their doing their best for Him with what they have (Rev. 3:8; Mark 14:8).

1 Cor 3:12 But if anyone builds upon the foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, grass, stubble,

Rev 3:8 I know your works; behold, I have put before you an opened door which no one can shut, because you have a little power and have kept My word and have not denied My name.

Mark 14:8 She has done what she could; she has anointed My body beforehand for the burial.

- E. The overcomers in Philadelphia keep the Lord's word in His unique New Testament

ministry (Rev. 3:8), which brings them into the genuine appreciation, love, and enjoyment of the precious person of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself as their life and everything (2 Cor. 11:2-3).

Rev 3:8 I know your works; behold, I have put before you an opened door which no one can shut, because you have a little power and have kept My word and have not denied My name.

2 Cor 11:2 For I am jealous over you with a jealousy of God; for I betrothed you to one husband to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.

2 Cor 11:3 But I fear lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your thoughts would be corrupted from the simplicity and the purity toward Christ.

- F. Because those in Philadelphia keep the Lord's word, they are "rich toward God" (Rev. 3:8; Luke 12:21) by pray-reading and musing upon His word to treasure up His word in their heart (Eph. 6:17-18; Psa. 119:11, 15); we can lift up our hands unto the word of God, indicating that we receive it warmly and gladly and that we say Amen to it (v. 48; Neh. 8:5-6).

Rev 3:8 I know your works; behold, I have put before you an opened door which no one can shut, because you have a little power and have kept My word and have not denied My name.

Luke 12:21 So is he who stores up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.

Eph 6:17 And receive the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which Spirit is the word of God,

Eph 6:18 By means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit and watching unto this in all perseverance and petition concerning all the saints,

Psa 119:11 In my heart I have treasured up Your word / That I might not sin against You.

Psa 119:15 I will muse upon Your precepts / And regard Your ways.

Psa 119:48 And I will lift up my hand to Your commandments, which I love; / And I will muse upon Your statutes.

Neh 8:5 And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people (for he was above all the people); and when he opened it, all the people stood up.

Neh 8:6 And Ezra blessed Jehovah the great God; and all the people answered, Amen, Amen, lifting up their hands. And they bowed their heads and worshipped Jehovah with their faces to the ground.

- G. The overcomers in Philadelphia do not deny the Lord's name; they have abandoned all names other than that of the Lord Jesus Christ, and they call upon the name of the Lord, who is rich to all who call upon Him (Rom. 10:9-10, 12-13); they openly confess that "Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:11), and they do not preach themselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and themselves as the believers' slaves for Jesus' sake (2 Cor. 4:5).

Rom 10:9 That if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved;

Rom 10:10 For with the heart there is believing unto righteousness, and with the mouth there is confession unto salvation.

Rom 10:12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord is Lord of all and rich to all who call upon Him;

Rom 10:13 For "whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Phil 2:11 And every tongue should openly confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

2 Cor 4:5 For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake.

- H. Brother Lee's final word to the elders in Anaheim: "The elders need to love one another, their wives need to love one another, and they need to love one another's children."

IV. Once Philadelphia fails, she becomes Laodicea:

- A. Laodicea is a distorted Philadelphia; when brotherly love is gone, the opinion of the majority is the accepted opinion; as long as the majority is in favor, it is all right.

- B. In the eyes of the Lord, the characteristics of Laodicea are lukewarmness and spiritual pride—Rev. 3:15-18:
- Rev 3:15 I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot.
- Rev 3:16 So, because you are lukewarm and neither hot nor cold, I am about to spew you out of My mouth.
- Rev 3:17 Because you say, I am wealthy and have become rich and have need of nothing, and do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked,
- Rev 3:18 I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined by fire that you may be rich, and white garments that you may be clothed and that the shame of your nakedness may not be manifested, and eyesalve to anoint your eyes that you may see.
1. Spiritual pride comes from history; some were once rich, and they think that they are still rich; they still remember their history, but they have lost their former life.
 2. The Lord was once merciful to them, and they remember their history, but now they have lost that reality.
 3. They remember that they were once wealthy and had become rich and had need of nothing, but now they are poor and blind.
- C. If we want to continue in the way of Philadelphia and avoid becoming Laodicea, we have to remember to humble ourselves before God—Matt. 5:3; Isa. 57:15; Gal. 6:3.
- Matt 5:3 Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens.
- Isa 57:15 For thus says the high and exalted One, / Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: / I will dwell in the high and holy place, / And with the contrite and lowly of spirit, / To revive the spirit of the lowly / And to revive the heart of the contrite.
- Gal 6:3 For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.
- D. Laodicea means to know everything but, in reality, to be fervent about nothing; in name it has everything, but it cannot sacrifice its life for anything; it remembers its former glory but forgets its present condition before God; formerly, it was Philadelphia, but today it is Laodicea—Rev. 3:15-18:
- Rev 3:15 I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot.
- Rev 3:16 So, because you are lukewarm and neither hot nor cold, I am about to spew you out of My mouth.
- Rev 3:17 Because you say, I am wealthy and have become rich and have need of nothing, and do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked,
- Rev 3:18 I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined by fire that you may be rich, and white garments that you may be clothed and that the shame of your nakedness may not be manifested, and eyesalve to anoint your eyes that you may see.
1. The degraded recovered church has the knowledge of the doctrines concerning Christ but not much living faith to partake of the divine element of Christ.
 2. White garments signify conduct that can be approved by the Lord; such conduct is the Lord Himself lived out of the church, and it is required by the degraded recovered church for the covering of her nakedness.
 3. The eyesalve needed to anoint their eyes must be the anointing Spirit (1 John 2:27), who is the Lord Himself as the life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45b); the degraded recovered church needs this kind of eyesalve for the healing of her blindness (cf. Job 42:5-6).
- 1 John 2:27 And as for you, the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone teach you; but as His anointing teaches you concerning all things and is true and is not a lie, and even as it has taught you, abide in Him.
- 1 Cor 15:45b ... the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit.
- Job 42:5 I had heard of You by the hearing of the ear, / But now my eye has seen You;
- Job 42:6 Therefore I abhor myself, and I repent / In dust and ashes.
- E. Dead, vain knowledge and doctrinal forms have made the degraded recovered church lukewarm; she needs to repent of her lukewarmness and be zealous, boiling, burning, that thereby she may regain the enjoyment of the reality of Christ.

- F. “He who overcomes, to him I will give to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat with My Father on His throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches”—Rev. 3:21-22:
1. Here to overcome is to overcome the lukewarmness and pride of the degraded recovered church, to pay the price to buy the needed items, and to open the door so that the Lord can come in; Christ as the unique Overcomer includes all the overcomers.
 2. To sit with the Lord on His throne will be a prize to the overcomer so that he may participate in the Lord’s authority and be a co-king with Him in ruling over the whole earth in the coming millennial kingdom.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

THE REVELATION OF THE PATHWAY OF THE CHURCH

The Sixth Church—Philadelphia

Next comes the sixth church; it has the name Philadelphia. *Phil* means “love” and *adelphia* means “brotherly.” *Philadelphia* means “brotherly love.”

Returning to Brotherly Love

Among the seven churches, this is the only one which does not receive any rebuke from the Lord. The Roman Catholic Church was rebuked, and so were the Protestant churches. Only Philadelphia is not rebuked. One only finds praise in Philadelphia.

What are the characteristics of Philadelphia? Revelation 3:8 says, “I know your works; behold, I have put before you an opened door which no one can shut, because you have a little power and have kept My word and have not denied My name.” This is the characteristic of Philadelphia. The characteristic of Thyatira is the teaching of a woman. The characteristic of Sardis is a union between the church and the world and a constant need for separation; it is a continuous struggle between life and death. But the characteristic of Philadelphia is brotherly love. Here is a return to brotherly love. There is no worldliness here because all are brothers. There is no need to struggle to separate oneself from death. It is a return to the original state of brotherhood. Here we find brotherly love.

Just as Sardis comes out of Thyatira, Philadelphia comes out of Sardis. The Protestants came out of the Roman Catholic Church, and Philadelphia came out of the Protestants. This was clearly a new move of the Holy Spirit. This new move attracted people from the dead Sardis and put them on the ground of brotherly love. In other words, they stood on the Body ground. They did not recognize any other relationship except the relationship of brothers. They did not recognize any other fellowship except the fellowship of love. This is Philadelphia.

Keeping the Lord’s Word

Philadelphia had two characteristics: They kept the Lord’s word, and they did not deny the Lord’s name. Here was a group of people who were led by God to keep His word. God opened up the Word to them, and others were able to understand His Word through them. They had no creed, doctrine, or tradition, only the Word of God. At the time of Philadelphia, we find a group of people returning fully to the Word of the Lord, who did not recognize any other authority, doctrine, or creed.

A man can understand and even preach a doctrine, but this does not mean that he understands the Bible. He can memorize creeds and proclaim his faith in them, but this does not mean that he understands the Bible. The Lord would have given us creeds long ago if the church needed them. Today men analyze the Bible and condense its teachings into creeds. Creeds are limited, but the Bible is unlimited. Creeds are simple, while the Bible is complicated. A foolish man can understand creeds if he studies them. But a foolish man cannot understand the Bible. Only a certain type of people can understand the Bible. Only under certain conditions can a man understand God’s Word. Creeds open a

wide door and anyone can go in. But the door to God's Word is not that wide, and only those with life can enter it. The door of the creeds is so wide that a smart mind is all one needs to enter it. But God's Word is not that simple. Unless a man has life and is single before the Lord, he will not see or understand His Word.

Many people think that God's Word is too narrow. They want to broaden it so that they can bring more people into it. But those in Philadelphia rejected all creeds and doctrines. They turned back to the Word of the Lord. The Lord said, "You...have kept My word." In church history, there was never an age when men understood God's Word more than those in Philadelphia. In Philadelphia God's Word was given its rightful place. In other ages men accepted creeds and traditions. But Philadelphia accepted nothing other than God's Word. It returned to His Word and walked in it. In church history there was never a time when the ministry of the Word was as rich as that which we find in Philadelphia.

Not Denying the Lord's Name

The Lord said, "You...have not denied My name" (v. 8). This is another characteristic of Philadelphia. In the long history of the church throughout the ages, the name of the Lord Jesus has always been last in importance. Men pay attention to names of saints, such as Peter and other apostles. They pay attention to names they like or to names of doctrines and nations. Many say proudly, "I am a Lutheran," or "I am a Wesleyan." Oh, the names of men! Many claim proudly, "I am a Coptic" (of a place), or "I am an Anglican" (meaning British). These are names of countries. These names have divided God's children into divisions! It is as if the name of Christ were not enough to separate us from the world.

If someone asks you, "Who are you?" and you answer, "I am a Christian," he will not be satisfied. He will ask again, "What kind of Christian are you?" I remember once when I was in another country, a man asked me, "What are you really?" I said, "I am a Christian." He said, "This is meaningless!"

The Lord's Name Being Enough

To the Lord, His name is enough for His children. But we have to wait until Philadelphia before we see men who are satisfied with the Lord's name alone. There is no need to have so many divisive names. His name alone is enough! The Lord takes note that they "have not denied My name." This is what He cares for.

There was never a time in church history when men loathed other names as much as they did in Philadelphia. When one returns to Philadelphia, all other names are denied! Philadelphia has abolished all other names and has exalted only the name of Christ. Please bear in mind that the Lord cares for this one thing. This one thing is the basis for His praise. This is something pleasing to Him. Do not belittle this and do not be careless about it. The Lord takes the time to point out that they have confessed His name and have not denied His name. He pays attention to this and praises it!

The Question of Overcoming

Some brothers have asked, "What have the overcomers in Philadelphia overcome?" Do you see the problem posed by this question? The overcomers in Ephesus overcame forsaking their first love. The overcomers in Smyrna overcame the outward threat of death. The overcomers in Pergamos overcame the bondage and temptations of the world. The overcomers in Thyatira overcame the teaching of the woman. The overcomers in Sardis overcame spiritual death—the condition of being living in name and dead in reality. The overcomers of Laodicea overcame lukewarmness and vainglory. But what do the overcomers in Philadelphia overcome? The entire epistle to them shows only the Lord's pleasure in what they have done. Of the seven epistles, this is the only one which has the Lord's full approval. What is there to overcome if the Lord is fully pleased? It is a church fully approved and rated as the best; it is altogether according to the Lord's heart's desire. But the Lord has a promise for the overcomers in the church in Philadelphia. What do they have to overcome? There is

nothing to overcome because there is no problem with this church.

Holding Fast What You Have

But the Lord has a warning here. Verse 11 says, “I come quickly; hold fast what you have that no one take your crown.” This is the only warning in the entire epistle. Those in Philadelphia are reminded to hold fast what they have. In other words, they have what is right, and they should not lose it. They should not be weary of doing the same things for a long time and should not ask for a change. They should not contemplate doing something new after all the years of doing the same things. They have to hold fast what they have and not let it go! This is the only warning for Philadelphia. The Lord has only one charge for Philadelphia—to hold fast what they have. What they have done is right and is blessed by the Lord; therefore, they should continue in it.

If Philadelphia does not hold fast what it has, God will raise up others to take away its crown. The crown has already been given to Philadelphia. But others will come and take its crown if it does not hold it fast. This is the only warning to Philadelphia. Philadelphia overcomes by not losing what it has. This is different from the other six churches. We must pay attention to the Lord’s Word. There is only one church which meets the Lord’s standard—Philadelphia. Her characteristic is keeping the Lord’s word and not denying His name. We must not overlook these two matters.

The Seventh Church—Laodicea

Five of the seven churches were rebuked. One did not receive a rebuke, and one received only praise. The one which received only praise was Philadelphia. Catholicism, Protestantism, and Philadelphia will all remain until the Lord Jesus comes again. The last church, the seventh one, Laodicea, also will continue until the Lord Jesus comes again. Since Sardis came out of Thyatira and Philadelphia came out of Sardis, Laodicea naturally has to come out of Philadelphia. One begets the other.

Laodicea Being the Result of Philadelphia’s Degradation

This is where the issue lies today. Once Philadelphia fails, it becomes Laodicea. Do not think that Protestantism is Laodicea. It is altogether wrong to think this way. Protestantism is Sardis, not Laodicea. Protestantism can only be Sardis today; it cannot be Laodicea. No Bible reader should be so foolish as to think that Protestantism is Laodicea. No, Protestantism is Sardis. After Philadelphia has fallen, it becomes Laodicea. Sardis came out of Thyatira, and it was one step beyond Thyatira. Philadelphia came out of Sardis, and it was one step beyond Sardis. Laodicea, however, comes out of Philadelphia, but it is one step behind Philadelphia. These four churches will remain until the Lord Jesus comes again.

Laodicea is a distorted Philadelphia. When brotherly love is gone, Philadelphia immediately turns into the opinions of many. This is the meaning of the word *Laodicea*. Laodicea was a city whose name came from a Roman prince, Entiochus. He had a wife whose name was Laodios. He took his wife’s name, dropped the *os* and added *kea* or *cea* to become *Laodikea* or *Laodicea*. *Lao* in Greek means “many people,” and *dikea* or *dicea* means “opinion.”

As soon as Philadelphia becomes degraded, the “brothers” become the “many people,” and its “brotherly love” becomes “the opinions of the many.” Love has degenerated into opinion. Brotherly love is something living, but the opinion of many people is something dead. When brotherly love is lost, the Body relationship is lost. The fellowship of life is cut off as well, leaving only the opinion of men. The opinion of the Lord is lost, and the only things left are the vote of the majority, ballots, and the show of hands. Once Philadelphia falls, it becomes Laodicea.

Lukewarmness and Spiritual Pride

Revelation 3:15 says, “I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot.” This is the characteristic of Laodicea. Verse 17 says, “Because you say, I am wealthy and have become rich and have need of nothing, and do not know that you are wretched and miserable and

poor and blind and naked.” These are the characteristics of Laodicea. In the eyes of the Lord, the characteristics of Laodicea are lukewarmness and spiritual pride. It is bad enough for it to say, “I am wealthy,” but it continues, saying, “and have become rich.” The two statements are evil enough, yet it goes on to say that it has “need of nothing.” In the eyes of the Lord it is “wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked.” Where does spiritual pride come from? It comes from history. Some were once rich, and they think that they are still rich. The Lord was once merciful to them, and they remember their history. But now they have lost that reality.

The Life That Was Present Being Lost Today

There is hardly any person in Protestantism today who boasts of his own spiritual riches. I have met many Protestant leaders overseas as well as Protestant pastors in China. They all say, “We are poor! We are poor!” It is hard to find a proud person in Sardis. There is only one group of proud people—those who were Philadelphia and who had once kept God’s word and not denied His name. Yet the life which they once had is lost. They still remember their history, but they have lost their former life! They remember that they were once wealthy and had become rich and had need of nothing. But they are now poor and blind! There is only one group of people who can boast of their riches—fallen Philadelphia, the Philadelphia which has lost its power and life.

Learning to Humble Ourselves before God

Brothers and sisters, if you want to continue in the way of Philadelphia, remember to humble yourselves before God. Sometimes I hear some brothers say, “God’s blessing is with us.” God’s blessing is with us, but we must be careful when we say this. As soon as we are not careful, we have the flavor of Laodicea: “We are wealthy and have become rich and have need of nothing.” Let me say that the day we take this position, we have become Laodicea.

Please bear in mind that we have nothing that we have not received. Those around us may be full of death, but we do not need to be conscious of the fact that we are full of life. Those around us may be poor, but we do not need to be conscious of the fact that we are rich. Those who live before the Lord will not be conscious of their own riches. May the Lord be merciful to us that we may learn to live before Him. May we be rich and yet not know that we are rich. It was better for Moses not to know that his face was shining, even though it did shine! Once a person knows himself, he becomes Laodicea, and the result is lukewarmness. Laodicea means to know everything, but in reality to be fervent about nothing. In name it has everything, but it cannot sacrifice its life for anything. It remembers its former glory but forgets its present condition before God. Formerly, it was Philadelphia; today it is Laodicea.

CHOOSING FOR OURSELVES THE PATHWAY OF THE CHURCH

Today I present these four churches to us all. The last three came out of Roman Catholicism, and all four will remain until the Lord Jesus comes again. Today every child of God has to choose the pathway he should take with regard to the church. Do you want to be a Roman Catholic? Do you want to be a Protestant? Do you want to follow the oneness of Roman Catholicism? Do you want to follow the many denominations of Protestantism? Or do you want to take the way of Philadelphia? Or were you once Philadelphia but are now living in the shadow of history and boasting of your former glory, thus becoming Laodicean? When a person becomes proud, forsakes the way of life, and neglects reality, while reminiscing on his history and his own riches, the only thing left will be the opinions of many. Among such ones there can only be discussion and consensus. It appears to be a democratic society but bears no resemblance to the Body relationship. If you do not know the binding, authority, and life of the Body, you do not know brotherly love.

These four churches will remain with us. We must be faithful to continue in Philadelphia. Do not be curious about Roman Catholicism. Those who are curious will always suffer loss. Do not touch the denominations in Protestantism. This is not God’s way. The Bible shows us clearly that the Protestant movement as a whole had God’s blessing, but that there are also many things which the Lord

condemns and rebukes. We do not need to delve into these things or ask about them.

We must learn to stand on the ground of Philadelphia. Always keep the Lord's word and never deny His name. Hold fast the brotherly stand and never be proud! Do not be proud in the face of Catholicism, Protestantism, or the denominations. Once you are proud, you become Laodicea and are no longer Philadelphia! As soon as you show your pride before them, you are no longer Philadelphia but Laodicea. Which way do you want to take? May God bless His children and may the brothers take the upright path with regard to the church.

The God-ordained pathway for the church is the way of Philadelphia. I may not have tens of thousands of cases to prove that the best of God's children speak the same thing and take this same way. But I have hundreds of cases to prove what I am saying. Once the general issue of Protestantism is settled, we need not nit-pick the minor issues. Similarly, once the overall issue of Roman Catholicism is settled, we do not have to be so concerned about its minor issues. The Roman Catholic Church has twenty-one different organizations in China. There is no need to involve ourselves with the Catholic Church, and there is no need to learn about the organizations of its different daughters. Once the overall issue of Roman Catholicism is settled, these twenty-one organizations are no longer a problem. Likewise, once the general issue of Protestantism is settled, we do not need to deal with all of its fifteen hundred denominations one by one.

The Lord's way is unique. It is the way of Philadelphia. Walk on this way, but be careful not to be proud. Once we take the way of Philadelphia, the greatest temptation is to become proud and say, "We are better than you are. Our truths are clearer than yours, and we understand them better than you do! We have only the Lord's name and we are different!" Once we become proud, we fall into Laodicea. Those who follow the Lord have no pride. The Lord will spew the proud ones out of His mouth. May the Lord be merciful to us! This is a warning to all of us: We must not be proud in our speaking! A person must live before the Lord continually before he can refrain from proud words. Only those who live before God continually will not consider themselves rich. Only they will not be proud! (*The Collected Works of Watchman Nee*, vol. 50, pp. 779-787)

CRUCIAL ASPECTS OF MATTHEW 5 THROUGH 7

(Saturday—Second Morning Session)

Message Eight

Seeking First the Kingdom of God and His Righteousness

HL Hymns: 947

Scripture Reading: Matt. 5:20;

Psa. 89:14; Phil. 3:9; 2 Cor. 3:8-9; 5:21; 2 Tim. 4:8a

- Matt 5:20 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.
- Psa 89:14 Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; / Lovingkindness and truth go before Your face.
- Phil 3:9 And be found in Him, not having my own righteousness which is out of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is out of God and based on faith,
- 2 Cor 3:8 How shall the ministry of the Spirit not be more in glory?
- 2 Cor 3:9 For if there is glory with the ministry of condemnation, much more the ministry of righteousness abounds with glory.
- 2 Cor 5:21 Him who did not know sin He made sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.
- 2 Tim 4:8a Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, with which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will recompense me in that day, ...

I. The Father's kingdom is the reality of the kingdom of the heavens today, the reality of the church life today, and will be the manifestation of the kingdom of the heavens in the coming age—Matt. 5:3; 13:43:

Matt 5:3 Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens.

Matt 13:43 Then the righteous will shine forth like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

A. "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on the earth...But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven"—6:19a, 20a:

1. The basic attitude of every believer should be to not love money—Heb. 13:5; 1 Tim. 6:10; 2 Tim. 3:2.

Heb 13:5 Let your way of life be without the love of money, being satisfied with the things which are at hand; for He Himself has said, "I shall by no means give you up, neither by any means shall I abandon you";

1 Tim 6:10 For the love of money is a root of all evils, because of which some, aspiring after money, have been led away from the faith and pierced themselves through with many pains.

2 Tim 3:2 For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boasters, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

2. If we store up for ourselves treasures on the earth, we will always be serving mammon and not God—Matt. 6:19a, 24.

Matt 6:19a Do not store up for yourselves treasures on the earth, ...

Matt 6:24 No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

3. The governing principle is that to store up treasures on the earth is against God's economy and expresses a kind of unbelief in His mercy and care—vv. 32b-33.

Matt 6:32b ... For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.

Matt 6:33 But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

B. "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also"—v. 21:

1. Our heart always follows its treasure.
2. No matter what we may say, our heart will always be where our treasure is.

- C. “No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon”—v. 24:
1. Our heart must be single in order to serve God; we cannot serve God and mammon (riches) at the same time—Luke 16:13.
 Luke 16:13 No household servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.
 2. The unrighteousness of mammon is related to its nature (vv. 9, 11); as something invented by Satan, the nature of mammon before God is completely incompatible with every aspect of God, so in God’s eyes its nature is unrighteous.
 Luke 16:9 And I say to you, Make friends for yourselves by means of the mammon of unrighteousness, so that when it fails, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles.
 Luke 16:11 If therefore you have not become faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will entrust to you what is true?
 3. The controversy of the universe is whether man will worship God or mammon—Matt. 4:9-10; 6:24.
 Matt 4:9 And he said to Him, All these will I give You if You will fall down and worship me.
 Matt 4:10 Then Jesus said to him, Go away, Satan! For it is written, "You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve."
 Matt 6:24 No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.
 4. Deliverance from mammon is the first and foremost condition for one to serve God—vv. 21, 24; Luke 16:13; Heb. 13:5.
 Matt 6:21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.
 Matt 6:24 No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.
 Luke 16:13 No household servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.
 Heb 13:5 Let your way of life be without the love of money, being satisfied with the things which are at hand; for He Himself has said, "I shall by no means give you up, neither by any means shall I abandon you";
- D. “Do not be anxious for your life...For all these things the Gentiles are anxiously seeking...Do not be anxious for tomorrow”—Matt. 6:25a, 32a, 34a:
1. Our human life is a life of anxiety and is constituted with anxiety—v. 32a.
 Matt 6:32a For all these things the Gentiles are anxiously seeking. ...
 2. There is no anxiety in the divine life and the divine nature; God’s life is a life of enjoyment, rest, comfort, and satisfaction—Phil. 4:6-7; 1 Pet. 5:7.
 Phil 4:6 In nothing be anxious, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;
 Phil 4:7 And the peace of God, which surpasses every man's understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.
 1 Pet 5:7 Casting all your anxiety on Him because it matters to Him concerning you.
 3. As we are fulfilling our human duty to work to sustain our living, we should not do anything for the sake of our anxiety, because we have a divine life that knows no anxiety—Luke 12:25.
 Luke 12:25 And which of you by being anxious can add a cubit to his stature?
 4. The kingdom people should never live in tomorrow but always in today—Matt. 6:34.
 Matt 6:34 Therefore do not be anxious for tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself; sufficient for the day is its own evil.
 5. Concerning our living, we have the heavenly Father Himself to take care of us; as He

takes care of our material needs, He dispenses His element into us, and we experience the divine dispensing through the Father's care for our physical necessities—vv. 32-33; John 16:27a; Eph. 1:3.

Matt 6:32 For all these things the Gentiles are anxiously seeking. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.

Matt 6:33 But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

John 16:27a For the Father Himself loves you, ...

Eph 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ,

II. The Father's righteousness is the righteousness expressed by the keeping of the new law of the kingdom (Matt. 5:20); this righteousness is Christ, who is lived out by the kingdom people:

Matt 5:20 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.

A. According to the New Testament, righteousness has four main aspects:

1. Righteousness is being right with persons, things, and matters according to God's righteous and strict requirements—Matt. 5:20.

Matt 5:20 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.

2. Righteousness is the outward expression of the Christ who lives in us as the life-giving Spirit—2 Cor. 3:9, 18; 1 Cor. 15:45b:

2 Cor 3:9 For if there is glory with the ministry of condemnation, much more the ministry of righteousness abounds with glory.

2 Cor 3:18 But we all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit.

1 Cor 15:45b ... the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit.

a. The Spirit is the essence of God living, moving, and acting within us, and righteousness is the essence of God manifested outwardly as God's image to express Him—Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10.

Eph 4:24 And put on the new man, which was created according to God in righteousness and holiness of the reality.

Col 3:10 And have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto full knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,

b. The divine essence that has been inscribed into us will have a particular expression, and this expression is righteousness—2 Cor. 3:3, 9; Matt. 5:20.

2 Cor 3:3 Since you are being manifested that you are a letter of Christ ministered by us, inscribed not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tablets of stone but in tablets of hearts of flesh.

2 Cor 3:9 For if there is glory with the ministry of condemnation, much more the ministry of righteousness abounds with glory.

Matt 5:20 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.

3. Righteousness is a matter of God's kingdom—6:33:

Matt 6:33 But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

a. God's throne is established with righteousness as the foundation—Psa. 89:14; 97:2.

Psa 89:14 Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; / Lovingkindness and truth go before Your face.

Psa 97:2 Clouds and deep darkness surround Him; / Righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne.

- b. Righteousness issues from God for His administration and thus is related to God's rule and government—Isa. 32:1.
Isa 32:1 Indeed a King will reign according to righteousness, / And the rulers will rule according to justice.
 - c. Righteousness first issues in the image of God and then establishes the kingdom of God—Rom. 8:4, 29; 14:17.
Rom 8:4 That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the spirit.
Rom 8:29 Because those whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brothers;
Rom 14:17 For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.
 - 4. Righteousness is a matter of being right with God in our being—1 Cor. 15:34; 2 Cor. 5:21:
1 Cor 15:34 Awake from the drunken stupor righteously and do not sin, for some of you are ignorant of God. I speak to your shame.
2 Cor 5:21 Him who did not know sin He made sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.
 - a. To be right with God in our being is to have an inner being that is transparent and crystal clear—an inner being in the mind and will of God—Rev. 21:11, 18b, 21b; 22:1.
Rev 21:11 Having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, as clear as crystal.
Rev 21:18b ... and the city was pure gold, like clear glass.
Rev 21:21b ... And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.
Rev 22:1 And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its street.
 - b. To be righteous in this way is to become the righteousness of God in Christ—2 Cor. 5:21.
2 Cor 5:21 Him who did not know sin He made sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.
- B. There are two aspects of Christ being righteousness to the believers:
1. Christ is the believers' righteousness for them to be justified before God objectively at the time of their repenting unto God and believing into Christ—Rom. 3:24-26; Acts 13:39; Gal. 3:24b, 27.
Rom 3:24 Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;
Rom 3:25 Whom God set forth as a propitiation place through faith in His blood, for the demonstrating of His righteousness, in that in His forbearance God passed over the sins that had previously occurred,
Rom 3:26 With a view to the demonstrating of His righteousness in the present time, so that He might be righteous and the One who justifies him who is of the faith of Jesus.
Acts 13:39 And from all the things from which you were not able to be justified by the law of Moses, in this One everyone who believes is justified.
Gal 3:24b ... that we might be justified out of faith.
Gal 3:27 For as many as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.
 2. Christ is the believers' righteousness lived out of them as the manifestation of God, who is the righteousness in Christ given to the believers for them to be justified by God subjectively—Rom. 4:25; 1 Pet. 2:24a; James 2:24; Matt. 5:20; Rev. 19:8.
Rom 4:25 Who was delivered for our offenses and was raised for our justification.
1 Pet 2:24a Who Himself bore up our sins in His body on the tree, in order that we, having died to sins, might live to righteousness; ...
James 2:24 You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith only.

- Matt 5:20 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.
- Rev 19:8 And it was given to her that she should be clothed in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteousnesses of the saints.
3. These two aspects are typified by the best robe and the fattened calf in Luke 15:22-23:

Luke 15:22 But the father said to his slaves, Bring out quickly the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet.

Luke 15:23 And bring the fattened calf; slaughter it, and let us eat and be merry,

 - a. The best robe typifies Christ as God's righteousness given to the believers to cover them outwardly as their objective righteousness before God.
 - b. The fattened calf typifies Christ as God's righteousness given to the believers as their life supply for them to live out God in Christ as their subjective righteousness.
- C. "There is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, with which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will recompense me in that day"—2 Tim. 4:8a:
1. The crown, a symbol of glory, is given as a prize, in addition to the Lord's salvation, to the triumphant runner of the race—1 Cor. 9:25.

1 Cor 9:25 And everyone who contends exercises self-control in all things; they then, that they may receive a corruptible crown, but we, an incorruptible.
 2. In contrast to salvation, which is of grace and by faith (Eph. 2:5, 8-9), this prize is not of grace nor by faith, but is of righteousness through works (Matt. 16:27; Rev. 22:12; 2 Cor. 5:10).

Eph 2:5 Even when we were dead in offenses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)

Eph 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this not of yourselves; it is the gift of God;

Eph 2:9 Not of works that no one should boast.

Matt 16:27 For the Son of Man is to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will repay each man according to his doings.

Rev 22:12 Behold, I come quickly, and My reward is with Me to render to each one as his work is.

2 Cor 5:10 For we must all be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done through the body according to what he has practiced, whether good or bad.
 3. The believers will be recompensed with such a reward, not according to the Lord's grace but according to His righteousness; hence, it is the crown of righteousness—2 Tim. 4:8a.

2 Tim 4:8a Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, with which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will recompense me in that day, ...

Excerpts from the Ministry:

CONCERNING THE MATERIAL RICHES OF THE KINGDOM PEOPLE

Storing Up Treasures Not on Earth but in Heaven

In Matthew 6:19 and 20 the King decreed that the kingdom people should not store up for themselves treasures on earth but treasures in heaven. To store up treasures in heaven is to give material things to the poor (19:21) and to care for the needy saints (Acts 2:45; 4:34-35; 11:29; Rom. 15:26) and the Lord's servants (Phil. 4:16-17).

The Heart Being Where the Treasure Is

Matthew 6:21 says, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." The kingdom people must send their treasure to heaven so that their heart can also be in heaven. Before they go there, their treasure and their heart must go there first.

The Eye Being Single, and the Whole Body Being Full of Light

Verse 22 says, “The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is single, your whole body will be full of light.” Our eyes can focus on only one thing at a time. If we endeavor to see two things at once, our vision will be blurred. If we focus our eyes on one thing, our vision will be single, and our whole body will be full of light. If we store up our treasure both in heaven and on earth, our spiritual vision will be blurred. For our vision to be single, we must store up our treasure in one place.

The Eye Being Evil, and the Whole Body Being Dark

Verse 23 says, “If your eye is evil, your whole body will be dark. If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!” To look at two objects at the same time, not focusing on one object alone, is to make our eye evil (cf. 20:15; Deut. 15:9; Prov. 28:22). In such a case, our whole body will be dark. If our heart is fixed on treasure stored up on earth, the light that is in us will become darkness, and great will be the darkness.

Being Unable to Serve Two Masters

Matthew 6:24 says, “No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.” In Greek, *hold to one and despise the other* means to be devoted to one and be against the other. The word *mammon* is an Aramaic word signifying wealth, riches. Mammon stands in opposition to God, indicating that wealth, or riches, is the opponent of God, robbing God’s people of their service to Him.

Not Being Anxious for Our Living

The Life Being More than Food and the Body More than Clothing

Verse 25 says, “Because of this, I say to you, Do not be anxious for your life, what you should eat or what you should drink; nor for your body, what you should put on. Is not the life more than food, and the body than clothing?” In this verse the Lord told us not to be anxious for our life. The Greek word translated “life” here is *soul*, referring to the soul-life, where the desire, the appetite, for food and clothing resides (Isa. 29:8). Our life is more than food, and our body is more than clothing. Both our life and our body were brought into existence by God, not by our anxiety. Since God created us with a life and a body, surely He will care for their needs. The kingdom people do not need to be anxious about these things.

Not Being Anxious about Eating, Drinking, and Clothing

Matthew 6:31 says, “Therefore do not be anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, With what shall we be clothed?” Here we come to the crucial matter in verses 19 through 34. Apparently, in this section of the constitution, the Lord was speaking about the material riches of the kingdom people. Actually, He was dealing with the matter of anxiety. The Lord is wise. After touching our temper, lust, natural being, self, and flesh, He goes on to touch our anxiety. In these verses the word *anxious* is used six times (vv. 25, 27, 28, 31, 34). It may also seem that the Lord is touching our heart, for where our treasure is, there our heart is also. However, our heart is related not only to riches but to many other things.

The constitution of the kingdom of the heavens is composed with the Father’s life and nature. Although these chapters do not actually use the words *life* and *nature*, from the context we can see that apart from the Father’s divine life and nature, these chapters are in vain. No one would be able to fulfill the requirements of the kingdom of the heavens without having the Father’s life and nature. Every constitution is based upon a certain kind of life. Suppose you intend to make a constitution for dogs. Undoubtedly, such a constitution would be based upon the dog life. It would be unreasonable for this constitution to decree that, every morning, dogs should observe morning watch by flying in the air. Because dogs cannot fly, they could not fulfill such a requirement. But if the constitution told the dogs to keep morning watch by barking, there would be no problem. In like manner, the constitution given by the Lord Jesus on the mountain was for the sons of God, and it was based upon the life and nature

of the Father. Two verses in chapter 5 indicate this fact. Verse 9 says, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God,” and verse 48 says, “You therefore shall be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

Many Christians do not understand this section of the Word because they have not seen that it is based upon the divine life and divine nature. Even many unbelievers have quoted verses from these chapters in their writings, thinking that these chapters are words spoken to all human beings. No, just as the dog life cannot fly, so the human life cannot fulfill the requirements of the constitution of the kingdom of the heavens. This is a constitution based upon the divine life and the divine nature.

There is no anxiety in the divine life and the divine nature. Anxiety is not of the divine life but of the human life, just as barking is of the dog life, not of the bird life. Our human life is a life of anxiety, whereas God’s life is a life of enjoyment, rest, comfort, and satisfaction. To God *anxiety* is a strange term. With Him there is no such thing as anxiety. Do you think that God has ever been anxious? Has He ever been afflicted with anxiety? Although God has many desires, He has no anxiety. Our human life, on the contrary, is virtually composed of anxiety; it is constituted with it. Take anxiety away from a human being and the result will be death. A dead man has no anxiety. A figure in a wax museum or a statue in front of a Catholic cathedral has no anxiety, but as long as you are a living person, you cannot escape from anxiety.

If we consider the style of the Lord’s speaking in the New Testament, we will see that it is absolutely different from the speaking of the apostles. The apostles, especially Paul, wrote many spiritual books. Although Paul spoke of many divine, spiritual, and heavenly things, his style is nonetheless human. It is the same with the writings of Peter and John. No matter how much the New Testament writers spoke of spiritual and divine things, their style remained human. But the style of the Lord’s speaking in the New Testament is unique. It is utterly impossible to describe it. If you read Matthew 5, 6, 7, 13, 24, and 25 and John 14 through 17, you will see that the style of the Lord’s speaking is extraordinary. It is not human or common; it is profound yet brief, simple, and to the point. This is the divine speaking with the divine style. When I was young, I read a statement written by a certain great French philosopher who said that if the four Gospels were falsehoods, then the person who wrote them was qualified to be Christ. I agree with this word.

In His speaking in chapter 6 of Matthew, the Lord apparently was dealing with the matter of riches. In reality, however, He was touching the matter of anxiety, the basic problem of our human living. As we have seen, in 6:1-18 He apparently dealt with the righteous deeds of the kingdom people, but actually, He was touching the self and the flesh. I came to know this not by reading books but from my experience in the church life. Through my experience I have learned that making a display of righteous deeds is certainly of the self and of the flesh. If we remain on the cross, we would never make such a display. In the same principle, 6:19-34 seemingly touches our wealth, our riches; actually, the Lord’s intention here was to touch anxiety, the source of the problem of our daily living. The whole world is involved with anxiety. Anxiety is the gear that makes the world move. It is the incentive for all human culture. If there were no anxiety regarding our living, no one would do anything. Rather, everyone would be idle. Thus, by touching our anxiety, the Lord touched the gear of human life.

When the young people hear this word, they may say, “Hallelujah! Because the Lord Jesus has touched anxiety, the gear of human life, we don’t need to study or work hard. If we are hungry, we can simply eat some leftovers.” This concept is wrong. In 6:26 the Lord Jesus said, “Look at the birds of heaven. They do not sow nor reap nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father nourishes them.” If the Lord Jesus were here, I would ask Him, “Lord, You liken us to birds. The birds neither sow nor reap; they just fly in the air and do nothing. Lord, does this mean that we should not do anything? The birds feed on human labor. Lord Jesus, do You mean that we should take advantage of others? Should we forget about working and simply be birds in the air, enjoying life and taking advantage of the labor of others?” I would also ask the Lord, “Lord, You also liken us to lilies. Lilies don’t do anything but are clothed in more glory than Solomon (vv. 28-30). Are You saying that we should not do anything,

that we should simply enjoy the air, the sunshine, the soil, and the water?” This is the concept held by many young people who quote these words of the Lord Jesus. They say, “Let’s be birds in the air and lilies in the valley.” There is a difficulty in understanding the Lord’s word here. Again I say, if the Lord were here, I would ask Him, “Do You mean that we should just be like birds soaring in the air, taking advantage of the labor of others? They sow and grow the crops, and we simply come to enjoy them. Is this legal? Is it fair? It seems that all birds are thieves. I have only a small yard, but the birds come and take advantage of what I am growing in my yard. Are You saying that we should do the same thing?” I ask these questions because I know the psychology of the young people. After spending so many years in school, they may be tired of studying. As they go from junior high to high school, from high school to college, and from undergraduate school to graduate school, the work becomes more difficult. Instead of studying so hard, many of the young people would rather be like birds flying in the air. If the young people are honest, they will admit that they have such a concept.

Let us now consider the Lord’s intention in verses 19 through 34. Does the Lord intend that the young people finish school or drop out and be like birds in the air? It is wrong to have anxiety, for anxiety does not belong to the divine life. There is no anxiety in the life of God. However, the Lord does not mean that we should not do our duty. When the Lord brought the children of Israel into the good land, they all had to work on the land. That was their duty. Whether or not the good land produced a rich harvest depended on a number of things: the weather, the sunshine, the proper amount of rain, and the right temperature. None of these things were under the control of the children of Israel. Their responsibility was just to labor on the land. They labored not only for themselves but also for the birds. If they did not do the work of farming, it would have been difficult for the birds to live. To do their duty was right and necessary, but to have anxiety was wrong. Likewise, we must do our duty today but do it without being anxious for our living. The reason you are so reluctant to give to others is your anxiety. Because of anxiety, you love the material things. If you had no anxiety, you would not care for the material things. Rather, you would let others have them. It is anxiety that causes us trouble.

In God’s economy we all must labor. We are not like the children of Israel, for we cannot literally work on the good land. Instead, the young people today must study and acquire a good education. Studying is equal to tilling the ground, and graduating from college is equal to reaping a harvest. Young people, studying is your duty, and you must do it. In ancient times the children of Israel had to labor by tilling the ground, sowing the seed, watering, and harvesting. This was their duty. But whether or not they received the harvest depended upon God. Their responsibility was to labor without having any anxiety. If they were anxious, that would have been an offense to God. There was no need for them to be anxious. They simply had to do whatever God asked them to do. For example, according to Deuteronomy, God required them to set aside one-tenth for Himself, another tenth for the Levites, and still another tenth for a different purpose. They were not permitted to keep all the produce for their enjoyment. They were not to have any anxiety. If they had no anxiety, they could be generous, willing to give to others and put their material things into the hand of the Lord.

We need to read Matthew 6:19-34 in such a light. Under God’s sovereignty the children of Israel had to labor on the land. Under God’s sovereignty the young people today must study and finish school. If we are to have the proper church life, all our young people must finish college. Failing to finish college is like sowing without having a harvest. The requirement for making a living today is much different from what it was hundreds of years ago. Today the young people must till the ground, sow the seed, and water the crop by studying diligently and graduating from high school and college. But they must not do this because of anxiety. We must differentiate anxiety from duty. Your duty is to finish your work of farming, that is, to graduate from high school and college. Otherwise, it will be difficult to live. To live on this earth for God, you must finish your education. But as you are studying and completing your education, you must be different from the worldly people. The worldly ones study for the sake of their anxiety; you should not study for anxiety but to fulfill your duty. If you do not see this point, this portion of the Word will simply be a legal matter to you.

Boaz, a forefather of David, is an example of one who did his duty without anxiety. Boaz was a rich farmer; he was very productive. However, this man was not productive for the sake of anxiety but for the sake of fulfilling his duty. When the time came, the Lord told him to give a certain amount away, and he did it. Certainly Boaz treasured the things in heaven. Through the overcoming of anxiety, he stored up treasures in heaven.

After a number of years many of our young people will have college degrees. I believe that under the Lord's sovereign blessing, many riches will come in. At that time you will need to remember that you have gone to school not for anxiety but to do your duty. Therefore, the riches that you bring in should not be used for your anxiety but for your duty. Your duty is to give, to store up treasures in heaven. Do not aspire to be a millionaire. Do not endeavor to have a savings account of a million dollars. Rather, learn to give and store up treasures in heaven. Transfer your treasures from the earth to the heavens. In this way you will not be a millionaire on earth but a millionaire in the heavens. Your duty is to earn your degree and then to make riches. But do not seek to become a millionaire. Instead, be a good giver according to the life and nature of your heavenly Father. This is the meaning of this portion of the Word.

My burden in this message is to dig out this basic point. We all have our duty to do. As we are fulfilling our duty, we should not do anything for the sake of our anxiety, because we have a divine life that knows no anxiety. And we have an almighty and all-inclusive heavenly Father who takes care of us in every way. Today's world is filled with anxiety, but the kingdom people should not be anxious about anything. We are not able to add one cubit to our stature by our anxiety (v. 27). Concerning morality, we have the life and nature of our Father within us to enable us to fulfill the highest moral requirements. Concerning our living, we have the heavenly Father Himself to take care of us. However, this does not mean that there is no need for us to do our duty. Although we must fulfill our duty, we should have no anxiety. Like the children of Israel who had enough to live on and who gave certain portions away for various purposes, we also should have a harvest and be willing to give a certain amount away for various purposes. Eventually, all we give will be laid up in the heavenly bank, and all our riches will be there.

This also is related to our daily growth in life. Both sloppiness and anxiety will delay your growth in life. No one who is idle, who does not fulfill his duty, will ever grow in life. Everyone who grows in life is diligent and industrious. Of course, this diligence and industriousness will yield a reward, and some material riches will come to you. All these riches must be used not for your anxiety but for your giving. Anxiety must go. Do not allow anxiety to occupy your daily living. Because the life of the Father within you knows no anxiety, you should not have any anxiety. Any surplus that you have should not be used for the sake of your anxiety. Use it to build up savings in the heavenly bank. I assure you that if you do this, you will grow in life. The only kind of person who grows in life is one who is diligent yet who does not use his surplus for his anxiety. You need to study diligently, make good grades, and acquire the highest degree. However, the riches that come to you should not be used for your anxiety. We labor and fulfill our duty, but we have no anxiety. This is the proper way to grow in the Father's life.

The Heavenly Father Knowing All These Needs

In verse 32 the Lord said, "For all these things the Gentiles are anxiously seeking. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things." The kingdom people have the divine life of their heavenly Father as their strength to keep the new law of the kingdom. They also have their heavenly Father as the One who cares for their material need so that they do not need to be anxious about it. Their heavenly Father is the source of their strength and supply. Hence, they need not be weak or wanting in anything.

Seeking First the Father's Kingdom and His Righteousness

Verse 33 says, "Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added

to you.” The Father’s kingdom is the reality of the kingdom of the heavens today, the reality of the church life today, and will be the manifestation of the kingdom of the heavens in the coming age. The Father’s righteousness is the righteousness expressed by the keeping of the new law of the kingdom, as mentioned in 5:20. This righteousness is Christ, who is lived out by the kingdom people. Since the kingdom people seek first the kingdom and the righteousness of their heavenly Father, not only will His kingdom and His righteousness be given to them, but also all that they need will be added to them.

Not Being Anxious for Tomorrow

Finally, Matthew 6:34 says, “Therefore do not be anxious for tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself; sufficient for the day is its own evil.” The kingdom people should never live in tomorrow but always in today. The word *evil* here denotes trouble and affliction. This indicates that the King of the kingdom has made it clear to the kingdom people that their days on earth for the kingdom will be days of trouble and affliction, not of ease and comfort. (*Life-study of Matthew*, pp. 255-264)

CRUCIAL ASPECTS OF MATTHEW 5 THROUGH 7

(Saturday—Evening Session)

Message Nine

Doing the Will of the Father So That We May Enter into His Kingdom on “That Day,” the Day of the Judgment Seat of Christ

RA Hymns: 947

Scripture Reading: Rev. 4:11; Matt. 7:21-23; Col. 1:9

Rev 4:11	You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power, for You have created all things, and because of Your will they were, and were created.
Matt 7:21	Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord, will enter into the kingdom of the heavens, but he who does the will of My Father who is in the heavens.
Matt 7:22	Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, was it not in Your name that we prophesied, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name did many works of power?
Matt 7:23	And then I will declare to them: I never knew you. Depart from Me, you workers of lawlessness.
Col 1:9	Therefore we also, since the day we heard of it, do not cease praying and asking on your behalf that you may be filled with the full knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,

I. “You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power, for You have created all things, and because of Your will they were, and were created”—Rev. 4:11:

- A. God is a God of purpose, having a will according to His own pleasure:
 - 1. He created all things for His will that He might accomplish and fulfill His purpose.
 - 2. The book of Revelation, which unveils God’s universal administration, shows us the purpose of God.
 - 3. In the twenty-four elders’ praise to God concerning His creation, His creation is related to His will.
- B. God’s will is God’s wish; it is what He wants to do—Eph. 1:9:
 - Eph 1:9 Making known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself,
 - 1. God’s good pleasure is of His will and is embodied in His will, so His will comes first—v. 5.
 - Eph 1:5 Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,
 - 2. God has made the mystery of His will known to us through His revelation in Christ, that is, through Christ’s incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension—v. 9; 3:9.
 - Eph 1:9 Making known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself,
 - Eph 3:9 And to enlighten all that they may see what the economy of the mystery is, which throughout the ages has been hidden in God, who created all things,
 - 3. God works all things according to the counsel of His will.
 - 4. God’s will is His intention, and His counsel is His consideration of the way to accomplish His will, or intention—1:11.
 - Eph 1:11 In whom also we were designated as an inheritance, having been predestinated according to the purpose of the One who works all things according to the counsel of His will,
- C. The will of God is concentrated in Christ and is for Christ; Christ is everything in the will of God—Col. 1:9:
 - Col 1:9 Therefore we also, since the day we heard of it, do not cease praying and asking on your behalf that you may be filled with the full knowledge of His will in all spiritual

wisdom and understanding,

1. In 1:9 God's will refers to Christ; the will of God is profound in relation to our knowing, experiencing, and living the all-inclusive, extensive Christ, who is God, man, and the reality of every positive thing in the universe—2:9, 16-17.
 - Col 1:9 Therefore we also, since the day we heard of it, do not cease praying and asking on your behalf that you may be filled with the full knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,
 - Col 2:9 For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily,
 - Col 2:16 Let no one therefore judge you in eating and in drinking or in respect of a feast or of a new moon or of the Sabbath,
 - Col 2:17 Which are a shadow of the things to come, but the body is of Christ.
2. Christ is the preeminent One, the One who has the first place in everything—1:18.
 - Col 1:18 And He is the Head of the Body, the church; He is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things;
3. The all-inclusive, extensive Christ is the centrality and universality, the center and circumference, of God's economy—vv. 15-17; Eph. 1:10:
 - Col 1:15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the Firstborn of all creation,
 - Col 1:16 Because in Him all things were created, in the heavens and on the earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or lordships or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through Him and unto Him.
 - Col 1:17 And He is before all things, and all things cohere in Him;
 - Eph 1:10 Unto the economy of the fullness of the times, to head up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth, in Him;
 - a. In God's economy Christ is everything; God wants Christ and Christ alone—the wonderful, preeminent, all-inclusive Christ, who is all and in all—Matt. 17:5; Col. 3:10-11.
 - Matt 17:5 While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is My Son, the Beloved, in whom I have found My delight. Hear Him!
 - Col 3:10 And have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto full knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,
 - Col 3:11 Where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all and in all.
 - b. God's intention in His economy is to work the wonderful, all-inclusive, extensive Christ into our being as our life and everything so that we may become the corporate expression of the Triune God—1:27; 3:4, 10-11.
 - Col 1:27 To whom God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory,
 - Col 3:4 When Christ our life is manifested, then you also will be manifested with Him in glory.
 - Col 3:10 And have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto full knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,
 - Col 3:11 Where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all and in all.
4. The will of God is that the all-inclusive, extensive Christ would be our portion—1:9, 12.
 - Col 1:9 Therefore we also, since the day we heard of it, do not cease praying and asking on your behalf that you may be filled with the full knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,
 - Col 1:12 Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you for a share of the allotted portion of the saints in the light;
5. God's will is that we know Christ, experience Christ, enjoy Christ, be saturated with Christ, and have Christ as our person and our life—3:4, 11.
 - Col 3:4 When Christ our life is manifested, then you also will be manifested with Him in glory.
 - Col 3:11 Where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision,

barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all and in all.

- D. God's will is to have the church as the Body of Christ—Eph. 1:9; Col. 1:18; 2:19; 3:15:
- Eph 1:9 Making known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself,
- Col 1:18 And He is the Head of the Body, the church; He is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things;
- Col 2:19 And not holding the Head, out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied and knit together by means of the joints and sinews, grows with the growth of God.
- Col 3:15 And let the peace of Christ arbitrate in your hearts, to which also you were called in one Body; and be thankful.
1. The will of God is to obtain a Body for Christ to be His fullness, His expression—Rom. 12:2, 5; Eph. 1:5, 9, 11, 22-23; 4:16:
- Rom 12:2 And do not be fashioned according to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and well pleasing and perfect.
- Rom 12:5 So we who are many are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.
- Eph 1:5 Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,
- Eph 1:9 Making known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself,
- Eph 1:11 In whom also we were designated as an inheritance, having been predestinated according to the purpose of the One who works all things according to the counsel of His will,
- Eph 1:22 And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church,
- Eph 1:23 Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.
- Eph 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.
- a. To live the Body life is to “prove what the will of God is”—Rom. 12:2, 4-5.
- Rom 12:2 And do not be fashioned according to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and well pleasing and perfect.
- Rom 12:4 For just as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function,
- Rom 12:5 So we who are many are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.
- b. If we are proper members of the Body, acting and functioning in the church life, we will be persons in the will of God—1 Cor. 1:1-2; Eph. 1:1; 5:17; Rom. 12:2, 4-5.
- 1 Cor 1:1 Paul, a called apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God, and Sosthenes the brother,
- 1 Cor 1:2 To the church of God which is in Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, the called saints, with all those who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, who are theirs and ours:
- Eph 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God, to the saints who are in Ephesus and are faithful in Christ Jesus:
- Eph 5:17 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.
- Rom 12:2 And do not be fashioned according to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and well pleasing and perfect.
- Rom 12:4 For just as in one body we have many members, and all the members do not have the same function,
- Rom 12:5 So we who are many are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

2. The church is the Body of Christ, which is an entity constituted with the Triune God and His chosen and redeemed ones—Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4-6.
 - Eph 1:22 And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church,
 - Eph 1:23 Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.
 - Eph 4:4 One Body and one Spirit, even as also you were called in one hope of your calling;
 - Eph 4:5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism;
 - Eph 4:6 One God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.
 3. Christ is the Head of the Body, and we are the members of His Body—Col. 1:18a; 2:19; Eph. 4:15-16:
 - Col 1:18a And He is the Head of the Body, the church; ...
 - Col 2:19 And not holding the Head, out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied and knit together by means of the joints and sinews, grows with the growth of God.
 - Eph 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,
 - Eph 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.
 - a. To live in the Body is to live corporately with the members under the Head—v. 15; Col. 2:19.
 - Eph 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,
 - Col 2:19 And not holding the Head, out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied and knit together by means of the joints and sinews, grows with the growth of God.
 - b. To live the Body life, we must be under the Head and take the Head as our life, the principal object, and the center of our whole being—1:18a; 2:19.
 - Col 1:18a And He is the Head of the Body, the church; ...
 - Col 2:19 And not holding the Head, out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied and knit together by means of the joints and sinews, grows with the growth of God.
 4. The Body grows with the growth of God; the growth of the Body depends on the growth of God, the addition of God, the increase of God, within us—v. 19; Eph. 4:16.
 - Col 2:19 And not holding the Head, out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied and knit together by means of the joints and sinews, grows with the growth of God.
 - Eph 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.
- E. Whoever does the will of the Father is a relative of the Lord Jesus—Matt. 12:50:
- Matt 12:50 For whoever does the will of My Father who is in the heavens, he is My brother and sister and mother.
1. Christ, the heavenly King, always submitted to the Father's will, taking God's will as His portion and not resisting anything—11:28-30; 26:39.
 - Matt 11:28 Come to Me all who toil and are burdened, and I will give you rest.
 - Matt 11:29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.
 - Matt 11:30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.
 - Matt 26:39 And going forward a little, He fell on His face and prayed, saying, My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will.
 2. Whoever does the will of the Father is a brother who helps the Lord Jesus, a sister who sympathizes with Him, and a mother who tenderly loves Him.

- F. The kingdom is absolutely a matter of God's will and completely fulfills God's will; in fact, the kingdom is God's will—6:10:
 Matt 6:10 Your kingdom come; Your will be done, as in heaven, so also on earth.
1. The ultimate issue of the constitution of the kingdom of the heavens is the will of the heavenly Father—7:21.
 Matt 7:21 Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord, will enter into the kingdom of the heavens, but he who does the will of My Father who is in the heavens.
 2. As kingdom people, we are on the earth to do God's will—12:50.
 Matt 12:50 For whoever does the will of My Father who is in the heavens, he is My brother and sister and mother.
- G. The kingdom people need to pray for the Father's will to be done on earth as in heaven; this is to bring the kingdom of the heavens to the earth—6:10.
 Matt 6:10 Your kingdom come; Your will be done, as in heaven, so also on earth.

II. “Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord, will enter into the kingdom of the heavens, but he who does the will of My Father who is in the heavens”—7:21:

- A. To call on the Lord suffices for us to be saved, but to enter into the kingdom of the heavens, we also need to do the will of the heavenly Father—Rom. 10:13; 12:2; Matt. 12:50; Eph. 5:17; Col. 1:9.
 Rom 10:13 For "whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."
 Rom 12:2 And do not be fashioned according to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and well pleasing and perfect.
 Matt 12:50 For whoever does the will of My Father who is in the heavens, he is My brother and sister and mother.
 Eph 5:17 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.
 Col 1:9 Therefore we also, since the day we heard of it, do not cease praying and asking on your behalf that you may be filled with the full knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,
- B. Since entering into the kingdom of the heavens requires doing the will of the heavenly Father, it is clearly different from entering into the kingdom of God through regeneration—John 3:3, 5.
 John 3:3 Jesus answered and said to him, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God.
 John 3:5 Jesus answered, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.
- C. The entrance into the kingdom of the heavens is gained through the living of the divine life—1:12-13; 3:5-6; Matt. 7:21; 12:50.
 John 1:12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the authority to become children of God, to those who believe into His name,
 John 1:13 Who were begotten not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.
 John 3:5 Jesus answered, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.
 John 3:6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.
 Matt 7:21 Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord, will enter into the kingdom of the heavens, but he who does the will of My Father who is in the heavens.
 Matt 12:50 For whoever does the will of My Father who is in the heavens, he is My brother and sister and mother.
- D. The Lord Jesus rebuked those who prophesied, cast out demons, and did many works of power in His name, because as “workers of lawlessness,” they did these things out of themselves, not out of obedience to God's will—7:22-23:
 Matt 7:22 Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, was it not in Your name that we prophesied, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name did many works of power?

- Matt 7:23 And then I will declare to them: I never knew you. Depart from Me, you workers of lawlessness.
1. There are two principles in the universe—the principle of God’s authority and the principle of Satan’s rebellion—Acts 1:7; Isa. 14:13-14.
 Acts 1:7 But He said to them, It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has set by His own authority.
 Isa 14:13 But you, you said in your heart: / I will ascend to heaven; / Above the stars of God / I will exalt my throne. / And I will sit upon the mount of assembly / In the uttermost parts of the north.
 Isa 14:14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; / I will make myself like the Most High.
 2. We cannot serve God on the one hand and take the way of rebellion on the other hand.
 3. We must turn away from the principle of lawlessness and reject the way of rebellion—Matt. 28:18; Jude 11.
 Matt 28:18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.
 Jude 11 Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain and have rushed out in the error of Balaam for reward and have perished in the rebellion of Korah.
 4. Serving God is directly linked to His authority.
 5. If we do not settle the matter of authority, we will have problems in all the areas of our service.
- E. May the Lord preserve our service in the principle of submission to God’s authority and the Father’s will—Acts 1:7; Matt. 7:21; 12:50.
 Acts 1:7 But He said to them, It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has set by His own authority.
 Matt 7:21 Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord, will enter into the kingdom of the heavens, but he who does the will of My Father who is in the heavens.
 Matt 12:50 For whoever does the will of My Father who is in the heavens, he is My brother and sister and mother.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

CONCERNING THE GROUND OF THE KINGDOM PEOPLE’S LIVING AND WORK

The Condition of Entering into the Kingdom of the Heavens

*Many Prophesying, Casting Out Demons,
and Doing Many Works of Power in the Lord’s Name
but Not according to the Heavenly Father’s Will*

Matthew 7:22 says, “Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, was it not in Your name that we prophesied, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name did many works of power?” The words *that day* refer to the day of the judgment seat of Christ (1 Cor. 3:13; 4:5; 2 Cor. 5:10). On the day of judgment, when all the believers will stand before the judgment seat of Christ, many will say to the Lord that they prophesied, cast out demons, and did works of power in His name, but they will be rejected by the Lord.

*The Lord Not Approving Them
but Considering Them as Workers of Lawlessness*

Matthew 7:23 says, “Then I will declare to them: I never knew you. Depart from Me, you workers of lawlessness.” Here the word *knew* means “approved.” The same Greek word in Romans 7:15 is translated “acknowledge.” In this verse Paul says, “What I work out, I do not acknowledge.” The Lord never approved those who, in His name, prophesied, cast out demons, and did many works of power, but did those things not according to the will of the heavenly Father (Matt. 7:21). The Lord did not deny that they did those things, but He considered those things lawlessness because they were

not done in line with the will of the heavenly Father. They were not done in the line of the divine will. The Lord seemed to be saying, "You prophesied in My name, you cast out demons in My name, and you did many works of power in My name, but I never allowed you to do them. I never approved you, because you did all those things in a lawless way. You did them in yourself, in your own desire, and according to your own intention, not according to the will of My Father." Thus, those who do such things, even in the Lord's name, will not enter into the kingdom of the heavens but will depart from the Lord, that is, be excluded from the manifestation of the kingdom in the coming age.

We see from the Lord's word here that certain works may be done in the Lord's name and yet not be done according to the will of God. Are you doing this kind of work, or are you doing God's will? We have talked a great deal about going to the campuses, but are we going there to do a certain work or to do the will of our heavenly Father? Young brothers and sisters, how would you answer this question? Are you going to the campuses to do the will of the heavenly Father? We must have the assurance in whatever we do that we are doing the will of the heavenly Father. Otherwise, the Lord Jesus will say to us, "Workers of lawlessness." Even prophesying in the Lord's name, but not according to the will of the Father, is a type of lawlessness. Moreover, casting out demons in the Lord's name and doing works of power in the name of the Lord, but not according to the will of God, are also considered in the eyes of the heavenly King as lawlessness.

The runners in any race must run in the proper lanes. Although you may run faster than others, your running will not be recognized if you run outside the lines of your lane. Rather, that type of running will be considered lawlessness. You must run the race between the lines; that is, you must run in a constricted way. Today the work of many Christian workers is not restricted by the heavenly lines. In their own eyes they have done a great deal in the Lord's name and for the Lord. In the eyes of the Lord, however, their work is a kind of transgression, a violation of the heavenly lines. Hence, their work is lawlessness. The Lord's word in 7:21-23 is a strong word of warning to us all that we should not care only for prophesying, for casting out demons, or for works of power. We must take care of the heavenly lines. If you transgress the lines as a runner in the heavenly race, you will be disqualified. There are constricting lines in the Lord's recovery, and we must be constricted in our running. If we run between the lines, not outside of them, we will be approved by the Lord.

Again I say that the consummation of the constitution of the kingdom of the heavens is to usher us in through the narrow gate and onto the constricted way. Now we are running on this constricted way. We should not care for prophesying, for casting out demons, or for works of power. Instead, we should care only for doing the will of our heavenly Father. You may wonder how we can know the Father's will. We can know it by the Father's life and nature within us. The Father's nature will always tell us yes or no. If you are running according to the divine nature and within the constricted lines, the divine nature will indicate, "Yes, you are right; go on." But if you are not running according to the divine nature or if you step outside the lines, the divine nature will say, "Don't go this way." There is no need for anyone to tell you what to do, for the regulating, constricting, divine nature is within you. This nature tells you where you are. Because a runner in a race can see the lines, he needs no one to tell him whether or not he is inside the boundaries. Likewise, we have the constricting lines within us, the lines of the divine life and the divine nature, and we can tell where we are. According to the divine nature within us, we cannot use rock music in our meetings. Although you may try various worldly methods, the divine nature would disagree with them all and indicate that you are transgressing the lines. All those who are the kingdom people, all those who have been regenerated by the Father, have His life and nature within them. The Father's life and nature indicate whether or not we are on the constricted way. Let us all run the race according to the Father's nature. (*Life-study of Matthew*, pp. 285-288)