

A PATTERN OF GOD-MAN LIVING FOR RAISING UP THE NEXT GENERATION FOR THE LORD'S RECOVERY

Message Three

The Need, Efficacy, and Practice of Prayer and Praying to Enjoy the Lord and to Express His Burden

Scripture Reading: Heb. 10:22; 1 Tim. 2:1-4; Eph. 6:18; Col. 4:2-6; Heb. 4:14-16;
Matt. 4:4; Jer. 15:16; John 6:56-57, 63; Ps. 27:4; 2 Chron. 20:7; Isa. 41:8; James 2:23

I. Prayer is the unique need in the life of every believer and in the corporate life of the Body of Christ; it must be practiced diligently at all times and in all places—Luke 18:1-8; 1 Tim. 2:1-4, 8; Eph. 6:18; 1 Thes. 5:17; Phil. 4:6-7; 1 Pet. 4:7-9.

- A. Every believer must learn to watch and pray in a sober-minded and persevering way that he may be kept from evil, that he may have joy in faith, that he may be free from anxiety, that he may grow in life, and that he may defeat Satan's subtle strategies—Matt. 26:41; 1 Thes. 5:16-17; Phil. 4:6-7; Col. 4:2-6; 1 Pet. 4:7-9.
- B. The church must pray corporately in order that God will be honored; men will be saved, the saints will be strengthened, the Body of Christ will be built up, and the enemy of God will be defeated—Matt. 6:9-10; 1 Tim. 2:1-4; Eph. 6:18; Luke 18:1-8.

II. The normal prayer life of the believers should always be with the goal of entering into the Holy of Holies: "Let us come forward to the Holy of Holies with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water"—Heb. 10:22.

- A. In our prayer experience, both individually and corporately we should "take the tabernacle tour" to pass from the outer court into the Holy Place and all the way into the Holy of Holies to have intimate and affectionate fellowship with our God and to enter into the prayer ministry of our Lord—Eph. 2:15; 2 Cor. 13:14; 1 John 1:3; Heb. 7:25; Rom. 8:24.
- B. We all must give ourselves to aspire to have a definite time of personal prayer on a daily basis, learning to pray into our mingled spirit, pray out from our spirit, and trust in the Spirit in our spirit to pray as we ought to pray—Col. 4:2-3; Eph. 6:18; 1 Cor. 6:17; Rom. 8:26-27.

III. The Christian life is simply a life of enjoying the Lord all the time by contacting Him and receiving Him through the word and prayer.

- A. Both the holy Bible and the Holy Spirit are the means for us to enjoy the Lord—Christ is the Word, and He is the Spirit.
 - 1. We need to enjoy Christ by taking in the word as food—Matt. 4:4; Jer. 15:16.
 - 2. The word is spiritual food, food for the spirit, so we have to eat it with our spirit and take it into our spirit—there is no other way to do this but by praying.
 - a. We need to take some time day by day to take the word finely, not exercising our mind to understand but by exercising our innermost, our spirit to receive.
 - b. To receive the word in this way, we need to take twenty to thirty minutes, at least once a day, although three times is better, to deal with the word not merely to know it but to eat it, digest it, and transfer it into the Spirit.
 - 3. There are some practical ways we may use every day to feed on the Lord, drink of Him, and feast on Him—cf. John 6:56-57, 63.
 - a. The way to eat the word is first not to read too much.
 - b. We should not try too hard to understand what we are reading—there are other times when we need to exercise our mind to understand the word but our time for eating the word is not for the exercising of our mind.
 - 1) There is no need to force anything, to try to get something from every verse.
 - 2) The Bible is very rich; if we continue to read, we will get something eventually.
 - c. Once we understand something—it touches our spirit and our understanding—we should ponder over it a little.
 - d. Then right away we should pray over what we understand—in this kind of prayer we have a fresh contact not only with the word but also with the Lord Himself through the word.
 - 1) When we read and pray with the word, we should not read too quickly, and neither should we compose formal prayers—we should read and talk to the Lord in a spontaneous way.

- 2) We should simply contact the Lord by talking with Him in a very spontaneous way, yet in the spirit, to absorb Him by reading and praying, that is by talking to the Lord based on what we have read and understood.
- B. In the type of the tabernacle, dealing with the lamps and burning the incense go together—Exo. 30:7-8.
 1. Burning the incense is a type of our prayer, with Christ as the incense offered to God.
 2. Lighting the lamps is a type of our dealing with the Word—our reading of the Bible.
 3. In principle, whenever we light the lamps, we also have to burn the incense—that is, whenever we deal with the word in a proper way to receive light, we have to pray and offer incense to God.
 4. It is only by this kind of prayer that the word we read and understand can be transferred into the Spirit and become life to us.
- C. We must come to the word without any natural or religious understanding—exercising our spirit and denying our self to receive the word in simplicity to contact the Lord.

IV. The real prayer is not out of us, so that the Lord will do something for us—the real prayer is the Spirit, who is Christ Himself, working and moving within us, that we would open to Him to breathe Him out and breathe Him in (see *Hymns*, #255).

- A. We must offer Him the free way to go out and to come in to express something of Himself through our prayer.
 1. In order to learn how to enjoy Christ by praying, we must drop the old way of prayer, not composing our prayer and not praying for business affairs or personal concerns—we should learn instead to pray to praise Him, to adore Him, to thank Him, to behold His beauty, and to inhale Him—cf. Ps. 27:4.
 2. Proper prayer is not for our practical needs; proper prayer is for the expression of Christ.
 3. We pray to express Christ, that is, to give the indwelling Christ the opportunity to be the incense to ascend to God and be expressed in our prayer.
 4. We should just seek the Lord Himself, His kingdom and His righteousness—Matt. 6:33.
- B. Then we can go on to learn to inquire of the Lord—Do not pray according to what you think you have to pray, but ask the Lord what He wants you to pray in your prayer.
 1. We should develop an intimate fellowship with the Lord so that there is a mutual enjoyment and burden.
 2. A good illustration of this is seen in Genesis 18 which shows that there was an intimate friendship between Abraham and the Lord.
 - a. Abraham received the Lord as a friend, a guest, and he served the Lord (vv. 1-8); the Lord and Abraham had a mutual enjoyment.
 - b. The Bible tells us that Abraham was the friend of God (2 Chron. 20:7; Isa. 41:8; James 2:23).
 - c. Through their intimate fellowship, the Lord revealed to Abraham His intention to destroy Sodom; this led Abraham to intercede for Lot.
 - 1) This record shows that the burden for intercession comes from our contact with the Lord.
 - 2) Then the Lord reveals His heart to us, we know His intention, and His intention becomes our burden, which returns to the Lord as our intercession.
 - 3) The Lord's desired intention in His heart was to save Lot from Sodom, but the Lord needed someone to pray for Lot.
 - 4) Genesis 19:29 indicates that when the Lord destroyed Sodom, He saved Lot to answer Abraham's prayer.
 3. Strictly speaking, the proper prayer is the Lord speaking through the one who prays; we must learn to pray to behold His beauty and to inhale Him in order to express Him and echo His heart's desire.
 - a. If anything frustrates us from praying in this way, we must realize that there is something wrong between us and the Lord and deal with it by confessing.
 - 1) If we are open to the Lord, the Holy Spirit will give us the sense that we are wrong in certain things, and we should follow that sense to confess our wrongdoings and apply the Lord's blood.
 - 2) We can take the standing of the cleansing of His blood, claiming it by faith; then right away we should forget about the frustrating sense, look to the Lord, and absorb something of Him.
 - b. After we have inhaled the Lord and absorbed something of Him into us, the Lord must burden us with some desire of His heart.