

CRUCIAL POINTS ON THE LIFE AND PERSON OF A LEADING ONE

Afternoon Message Two

The Living of the Elders and Co-workers in Loving the Saints and the Sinners and in Serving Them as Slaves

Scripture Reading: John 21:15-17; 1Pet. 5:2-3; Acts 20:28; Matt. 24:45-47

- I. The first commandment of God to man is “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.” The second great commandment is “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” The living of the elders and leading ones should be a pattern of love toward God and man—Mark 12:30-31; 1Pet. 5:2-3:**
- A. Our love for the Lord leads us to shepherd His flock with an all-inclusive tender care, displaying our genuine love and concern for them—John 21:15-17:
1. Our love for the saints should be something in our person (not our performance), as a result of the Lord’s love in us. When a brother has some lack, we spontaneously feel the same lack. This proves our love is real—2 Cor. 11:28-29; 1 Cor. 9:22.
 2. Our concern for the saints causes them to come to “bother” us for fellowship in countless problems and decisions. If no one ever comes to bother us we should not be elders or leading brothers any longer. Receiving this bothering of the saints is a blessed work. We have no idea how much blessing is in it.
 3. The right way is for us to learn the lesson before the Lord and to accept a burden to be a shepherd among His children, one who cares for the souls of men. It is because you love them and are concerned for them that you have such a burden upon you. Today the greatest lack in every local church is this kind of elder—Acts 20:28.
 4. We are also charged to “Feed My lambs”. To feed others, we need to enjoy the riches of the Lord’s divine life. This requires that we love Him. Loving the Lord, enjoying His life and feeding others are organically linked—John 21:15, and note 4.
- B. In the messages printed in “A Word of Love to the Co-workers, Elders, Lovers and Seekers of the Lord” brother Lee expressed his ultimate plea for the recovery of a spirit that loves the world—the worst people and for the restoration of a heart that would weep with joy at the return of the dormant saints:
1. Christ came as a physician for those who were ill, not for the righteous but for the sinners. That is why He was there among the sinners and tax collectors, eating and feasting with them, reclining at the table and enjoying with them—Matt. 9:12-13:
 2. If we lose this spirit, whether we are elders, co-workers, or serving ones we are finished. This is the main reason why we are so barren, bearing no fruit for so many years—John 15:5-6.

3. “ As I have said before, the spirit of not shepherding and seeking others and being without love and forgiveness is spreading in the recovery everywhere. I believe that not having the Father’s loving heart and not having the Savior’s shepherding and seeking spirit is the reason for our barrenness.” (*A Word of Love to the Co-workers, Elders, Lovers and Seekers of the Lord*, p 40.)
4. As we realize our lack of love we should repent and do the first works to restore our best love for Christ and His Body—Rev. 2:5.

II. Our love for the Lord leads us to serve God and mankind as a slave:

- A. As leading ones, we must not assume any status but serve as slaves—Matt. 20:26-27:
 1. “According to my many years of observation, the biggest problem with the co-workers and the elders is that many of them overly regard their status as a co-worker or an elder. Actually, as co-workers and elders, we have no status. (*How to Be a Coworker and an Elder and How to Fulfill Their Obligations*, p.10)
 2. The word slave here refers not to a hired servant, but to a purchased slave. According to Roman law, slaves had no human rights. As co-workers and elders we are such slaves. (*How to Be a Coworker and an Elder...p 11*)
 3. According the pattern of the apostle Paul we should consider ourselves as slaves of all people and to serve all people for Jesus’ sake—2 Cor. 4:5.
 4. “We brothers who are co-workers and elders have been wrong and we all have to repent. I say this with a painful heart because we always assume the position of being above others and do not allow others to say we are wrong. If anyone says that we are wrong, we carry a grudge in our heart. This is not the proper attitude of a slave. (*How to Be a Co-worker and an Elder...p.12*)
- B. We should serve Christ, the church and humanity as love slaves:
 1. We are motivated by Christ’s love for the world, the church and all the saints. Because of such a great and sacrificing love, we are constrained to serve Him as slaves—2 Cor. 5:14-15; Eph. 5:2.
 2. To be a proper elder we must live a life of loving slavery to our Lord and to His Body and to all whom He desires to save. We should give up any ambition or hope for recognition, to serve as a slave. This will make us useful and happy for our whole life and will lead us to our joyous kingdom reward—Matt. 24:45-47.
 3. We should always remember the simple inscription on brother Lee’s tomb that summarized his life—Witness Lee a bond slave of Jesus Christ.