

KNOWING AND CARING FOR THE CHURCH

(Saturday—Second Morning Session)

Message Eight

Serving with a Burden, Coordinating in One Accord, and Carrying Out the God-ordained Way

Scripture Reading: Isa. 1:1; Jer. 33:2-3; Acts 1:14; 2:46; 5:42; 6:4; 1 Cor. 14:3-5, 31

I. We must serve with a burden from the Lord:

- A. An open spirit to God is the condition for receiving burdens from God; we must learn to receive burdens and release burdens through prayer in our intimate fellowship with the Lord—Luke 1:53; Psa. 27:4; Isa. 59:16; Col. 4:2:
 1. Prayer and work are inseparable; without prayer there is no work—Jer. 33:2-3; Isa. 62:6-7; Acts 6:4.
 2. If God gives us a prayer burden, He wants it to be uttered; burdens are released only through utterance—Mark 7:29; Heb. 5:7.
 3. If we cannot pray aloud in our homes, let us find a place where we can utter our burden as the Lord did; we should pray audibly even if it means praying in a low voice; God wants our burdens to be articulated—Mark 1:35; Luke 6:12; Psa. 4:1; 5:1-3; 77:1; 102:1; 116:1; 142:1; S. S. 2:14.
- B. The revelations that the prophets received were the burdens that they received; without burden, there is no ministry of the word, no prophesying, for the building up of the church—Isa. 1:1; 2:1; 13:1; 15:1; Zech. 12:1; Mal. 1:1; Acts 6:4; 1 Cor. 14:4b:
 1. Our burden is to release God's revelation to man, and God's revelation is released through the words of revelation that God gives to us—2:11-16.
 2. When we minister the word of God, our concern must be whether we have God's speaking, not the topic of our speaking; in order to have God's speaking, the one who ministers the word must have a burden—Mal. 2:7.
 3. Those who minister the word must bear people's condition before God, sense their condition, and know what God wants to speak—Exo. 28:29-30.
- C. The greatest problem in the administration of the church and in the ministry of the word is not having a burden from the Lord:
 1. Without a burden, all our activity will be dead and ineffective; with a burden, we will be living and flourishing.
 2. Having a burden deals with us the most; if there is a burden, the self decreases and is dealt with, because there are things that our burden will not allow us to do, and there are areas that will require our being dealt with before we can release our burden.
 3. If we serve according to obligation instead of serving with a burden, such service will cause us to lose the Lord's presence—cf. Mal. 3:14; Deut. 4:25.
 4. Whenever our service becomes a matter of fulfilling an obligation, our service has already degraded.
- D. "I have a word specifically for the co-workers. We have to know why God has put us in the world. He has put us in the world so that our presence would

create a hunger and thirst for righteousness in sinners, believers, and the world. In our work, we have to create a hunger within others. There must be an enigmatic freshness, power, nourishment, and supply within us that will drive others to seek after God by our presence. Others should have a desire to seek after God as a result of meeting us and speaking to us. If we always see others and communicate with them without creating a desire within them for God, it means that we have failed. If our reading of the Bible, prayer, service, and gospel preaching do not produce such a powerful hunger within man, our work has failed” (*The Collected Works of Watchman Nee*, vol. 42, p. 238).

II. We must serve with one another by coordinating in one accord—Acts 1:14; 2:46; 4:24; 5:12; 15:25:

- A. The greatest indication that we see the Body is that we cannot be independent; Paul’s reference to Sosthenes in 1 Corinthians 1:1 shows that he had a consciousness of the Body and a spirit of coordination.
- B. Because we do not have the consciousness that we need others and that others need us for our coordination in the Body, few among us have the spirit of a learner and the spirit of needing help—Matt. 5:3:
 - 1. Coordination means that we cannot do anything without one another.
 - 2. To feel that we do not need one another and that we do not need to fellowship is the greatest form of pride; it is the most offensive thing to the Lord and to the Body.
 - 3. If we lack coordination with others, we will always criticize what they do.
- C. God’s blessing is based on our one accord, being in harmony in spirit with one another, having real coordination, and having genuine oneness—Acts 1:14:
 - 1. When we minister the word, fellowship, and pray, we should not criticize others; in particular, when we pray with others, we should avoid praying in a contradictory manner.
 - 2. We must absolutely avoid criticizing others in the ministry of the word; criticizing others shows that we are narrow, and this will lead to division.
 - 3. We always need to have an attitude of respect, cooperation, and coordination with others; we should serve others according to our portion and honor the portion of others, because both portions have been entrusted to us by the Lord; everyone should have the humility to not regard his portion more highly than another person’s portion—Phil. 2:3-4.
 - 4. The brothers need to learn the lesson of being broken, accommodating others, and respecting others’ function; only in this way can we preserve the consciousness of the Body and produce the building among us.
 - 5. We should all be of one soul to pray for, supply, and support whoever is speaking a message; if those who serve the Lord are continually disagreeing instead of being in one accord, the enemy, the saints, and even the children will know it.
 - 6. We should not give the saints the impression that our speaking is higher than that of others; instead, the saints should have the impression that our speaking is in harmony with the speaking of others.

7. When a brother speaks, some may be critical and say in their heart, “I know this already”; this kind of spirit is destructive to God’s work.
8. Because the faithful saints are observing us, we must be careful not to do anything or say anything that stirs up their concern for us and for the Lord’s recovery—1 Cor. 1:10; 2 Cor. 12:18; 1 Tim. 4:12; Titus 2:7-8.
9. Pride invites destruction, but humility brings in blessing—Prov. 16:18; 1 Pet. 5:5.
10. A reason for the lack of building among the serving ones is that they are short of love for one another:
 - a. The Lord’s word to us and his prayer for us were to love one another—John 13:34-35; 15:12, 17.
 - b. There should be an extraordinary love among the serving ones; such love for one another comes from our oneness with the Lord.
 - c. The elders and co-workers should shepherd one another and love one another to be a model of the Body life—21:15-17; 1 Pet. 1:22.
- D. We need to be blended together by praying in one accord with the exercise and release of our spirit—Matt. 18:19; Acts 1:14; *Hymns*, #846:
 1. We should pray as a corporate body, not individualistically.
 2. On the one hand, we should pray in such a way that the next one who prays can continue our prayer; on the other hand, we also should listen to others’ prayers, enter into their prayers, and follow their prayers.
 3. We should pray short prayers of petition and supplication to the Lord instead of long prayers that are full of explaining to the Lord and full of giving the Lord descriptions and instructions.
 4. A long prayer always kills the prayer meeting; it indicates that you care only for yourself and for your feeling, not for others and not for the atmosphere and flow of the Spirit in the meeting.

III. We must carry out the God-ordained way:

- A. We must see the purpose of our contact with people:
 1. It is that people may be regenerated for the increase of the kingdom of God—Matt. 28:19.
 2. It is the feeding and raising up of the new members of the Body of Christ—John 21:15; 1 Thes. 2:7.
 3. It is the perfecting of the saints—Eph. 4:12.
 4. It is to help the saints learn how to speak for the Lord, to prophesy, for the building up of the organic Body of Christ—1 Cor. 14:3-5, 31.
- B. We must minister Christ to meet the need of every kind of person, ministering Christ as life to them outside the realm of the knowledge of good and evil—Eph. 3:8; Col. 1:28; Gen. 2:8-9; 2 Cor. 3:6; 1 John 5:16a:
 1. Our contact with people must not be through rebuke or condemnation or with any kind of negative spirit, attitude, and tone.
 2. In contacting people, we must avoid superiority complex, argument, offense, or any form of humiliation.

3. We must be full of love, concern, and sympathy in a meek and humble spirit, with the full realization that what people need is the Lord and what can solve their problem is to meet with the Lord.
 4. Our contact with people is not to convince, catch, or arrest them, but to recover them, to bring them back to the Lord—Gal. 6:1.
- C. We must shepherd people by contacting them repeatedly; we must visit the saints and invite them to our homes for meals:
1. The life pulse of the practice of the God-ordained way is the homes.
 2. The mouthpiece of the gospel is man, and the outlet of the gospel is the home—Acts 2:46; 5:42.
 3. We need not only to preach the gospel but also to open our homes and provide an outlet for the gospel of the Lord—10:1-5, 21-24; Luke 5:27-29.
 4. In this way, the Lord's blessing will come not only to us but also to our sons and daughters for generation after generation—Exo. 20:6.