

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

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

- 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.
 - 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:

- 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:
 - 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.
 - 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.
 - 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.
- 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):
 - 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.
 - 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:
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.
 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.

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.