

THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD AND GOD'S DISPENSING FOR GOD'S ECONOMY

(Saturday—Second Morning Session)

Message Five

Cooperating with the Lord to Carry Out His Economy by Being His Faithful Stewards Who Minister the Word with a Burden from the Lord and Who Coordinate with One Another in One Accord

Scripture Reading: Isa. 1:1; 2:1; 13:1; 15:1; Zech. 12:1; Mal. 1:1; Acts 1:14; 2:46; 6:4; 1 Cor. 14:4b

I. God's eternal economy, which is God's plan, is His household economy, His household administration; God's dispensing, God's distributing, is the process and means whereby He accomplishes His economy; for this reason God's dispensing is for God's economy—1 Tim. 1:3-4 and footnote 3 on verse 4:

- A. Christ is the center, circumference, element, sphere, means, goal, and aim of God's economy; in fact, all the contents of God's eternal economy are simply Christ—Matt. 17:5; Luke 24:44.
- B. Unless we know God's economy, we will not understand the Bible; the central subject of the Bible is the economy of God, and the entire Bible is concerned with the economy of God— Luke 24:45; Job 10:13; cf. Eph. 3:9.
- C. God's economy is to dispense Himself into our being that our being may be constituted with His being; this can be accomplished only by God dispensing Himself into us as the divine life—vv. 16-17a; John 10:10; 14:6a; 1 Cor. 15:45b; Rom. 8:2, 6, 10-11.

II. In order to carry out His economy, God must have faithful stewards, dispensers, who dispense the divine life supply to God's children—Luke 12:42; Titus 1:7:

- A. The Greek word for *steward* is of the same root as the word for *economy* in 1 Timothy 1:4 and Ephesians 1:10.
- B. We must all be good and faithful stewards of God's economy, those who enjoy Christ and minister Christ to dispense Christ as the varied grace of God to supply the saints as the household of God—1 Cor. 4:1-2; Eph. 3:2; 1 Pet. 4:10; Eph. 2:19.
- C. Day by day a marvelous transmission should be taking place; God is supplying the Spirit of grace bountifully, and we should be receiving and dispensing the Spirit of grace continually—John 1:16; Heb. 10:29b; Gal. 3:2-5; Eph. 3:2; 4:29.
- D. The Christian living is the living of grace, the experience of grace, so that we may carry out our stewardship of grace, the dispensing of grace—3:1-2; 2 Cor. 12:7-9.
- E. We need to be channels of the bountiful supply of the Spirit of grace, those who minister, who dispense, the word of God's grace to the saints for their growth in life and for their enjoyment of Christ—Acts 6:4; 20:32; 2 Cor. 3:6; Phil. 1:19-25; Heb. 10:29b; 1 John 5:16.

III. We must minister the word 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.

IV. We must coordinate with one another in one accord—Acts 1:14; 2:46:

- 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.
- V. To serve in coordination with one another in the church is to overcome the degradation of the church by the sevenfold intensified Spirit of God through eating Christ as the tree of life, the hidden manna, and the feast for the finalization of God’s eternal economy—Rev. 4:5; 5:6; 2:7, 17; 3:20-21; Zech. 4:11-14:**
- A. To serve in coordination with one another in the church is to enjoy Christ as righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit; “for he who serves Christ in this is well pleasing to God and approved by men”—Rom. 14:17-18.
 - B. To serve in coordination with one another in the church is to shepherd people according to God—1 Pet. 5:1-6.
 - C. To serve in coordination with one another in the church is to be a cheerful giver—2 Cor. 9:7; Acts 20:35.
 - D. To serve in coordination with one another in the church is to build the church by living a prophesying life to overflow with the flowing Triune God for the constituting of the church as the fullness of God—John 4:14b; 7:38-39; 1 Cor. 14:4b, 26; Eph. 3:19.