

Being Revived and Bearing Fruit

Fellowship from Minoru Chen on March 28, 2021

Prayer

Lord we pray for the revival and the vitalization of every saint, for each one. We pray for every brother and sister in all the local churches of Yours, that they would all be released and vitalized and that they would come into their God-ordained function to fulfill what You have commissioned to each one of them. Lord we look to You for such a revival, not of a miraculous kind, but of a normal kind. We pray for a revival of life, for something lasting and genuine. We pray for the churches in America, not only for those in the ten GTCA churches but for all the churches. We pray that there would be a revival across this land, a renewal, a fresh beginning in every way. We pray for a new church life everywhere, a fruit-bearing church life everywhere. We'd like to put what You have instructed us into practice. Make us those who do the work and not just hear it. Lord in these days strengthen and embolden us. Put the faith needed into all of us that we would go forward and do this great work for this time and season. We pray for this and we look to the heavens for Your blessing on what we do as the work of Your Hands.

A Strong Burden

Brothers, I continue to have a strong burden. This is a heavy burden which grows heavier by the day, if that's possible, for a new move of the Lord in the USA. A fresh move. I just have this feeling, this conviction, within me that if it's not now, then the question is when? There is really no reason under the sun to delay the Lord's present move. The tendency of man is often to be presumptuous and go before the Spirit. We also often err in the opposite direction when we

fail to move when the Spirit has already started. Due to our lack of timely cooperation with God, the divine move is delayed. We don't think that to be serious; we think to go ahead of the Lord is serious, and indeed it is. That is the sin of presumptuousness - to do something without God's word and without God's instruction. But I will tell you that for those who serve, those who work in the Lord's work, to fail to move with the Lord is just as sinful and just as serious. One day we will all have to reckon our living and our work before the judgment seat of Christ. The Lord will require that we give Him a personal accounting. This is according to what He has given to us as a gift, as a measure, as a calling, or as a commission.

The apostle Paul was extremely cognizant of that. As a steward, he exercised himself regardless of the environment or outward opposition. Regardless of the contrarian environment and challenges and the adversities, he desired to be faithful. He wanted to fulfill his particular ministry that the Lord called him to and to work this out before he died. Brothers, I don't know whether we have such a sense. I'm talking about a sense of obligation and the sense of responsibility. By the Lord's mercy and grace, I'm not saying I'm that excellent or that special at all, but this is how I endeavor to serve the Lord. The less years I have ahead of me, the more I am aware of this need and the more I would give and pour myself out to do that, in whatever years that remains. What we are facing right now in 2021 is another unprecedented season. God works seasonally. There are times when He's silent and apparently not doing anything. There are times when He moves very rapidly, and very obviously. But it's up to the man, His called ones, to decipher that, to sympathize with that, and to be one with Him. He needs some to cooperate, to execute, to work out, and to practice what God or the Spirit wants to do.

A New Season

In every age there is a work and even in a particular age, there are seasons of the Lord's fresh move and new beginning. Even for us, personally and individually, we need new seasons, don't we? We need

new beginnings, new revivals or renewals. That's our Christian life. The outer man is being consumed day by day, but the inner man is being renewed. This renewal is a daily process, and we should experience being daily renewed as a proper, growing, and normal believer. Collectively or corporately the Lord's work is similar in that there should be new rounds, new phases, new stages, or new seasons of the Spirit's work. It has now been close to 25 years since the departure of Brother Witness Lee. In these years since that time the Lord has done a lot, which we have all witnessed. But I see all these things as a preparation, as a necessary laying of a base for His new move today. I look to the Lord for such a new move globally in His recovery, but I'm here in the U.S. with you all and laboring together in this country. So I will limit myself just to talk about the U.S.

I'm not going to repeat what I've shared several times with you about this country or our history. You may see the footprints of the Spirit as you look backwards. By them you can begin to know or realize where the Lord wants to us go and what He wants us to do. We talk about things at such a high level because it is very easy for us to be occupied with our small world. We carry out our duties, and of course we must be specific and faithful to work things out in our localities. But our view must be a wide-angle view. We must see where the world is today, we must see what God is doing today, and we must see what the primary need is. I'm talking about this in the context of the Lord's recovery. To adopt such a common view will help us not only to know what to do in our place, but also help us know how we should work together as one man in the churches to do the same one thing together in a blended way. This move cannot just happen in one locality here or one locality there. This move must happen in all the churches across this country.

I still feel that the first thing for us to do is to draw near to the Lord, to spend more time with the Lord, to touch His heart, and to pray very much about these things. I just finished recording my first message for the coming ITERO, which has a very long outline and covers the matter

of the new revival, about how we should cooperate with the Lord to usher in such a new revival. There was so much material in the outline that it was impossible to cover all the details. So all I could do was discharge the burden within me. I gave the brothers just three words.

1. Pray

Brother Lee charged us to do this when he first uttered this burden for a final revival. He charged all the leading ones, the co-workers and elders, to pray for this all the time. Well, what about me? I cannot say I prayed every day since he shared this in 1994 or 1995. I can tell you that I prayed regularly and consistently at least for America, if not for the whole world. I'm still praying because I believe in this.

2. Practice

It's all about practice. The high peak of the divine revelation has been given to us for us to enter into in order to bring forth a new revival. But it is a matter of practice. There is a burden also concerning the God-man living or the life of a God-man, which really is the life of Jesus, the first God-man duplicated and reproduced in each one of us. That corporate living of the God-man is also a matter of practice. You can read the messages and appreciate the things, but it won't work until you start to practice living in this way. There are so many messages given. The concern is not the lack of the Word; the concern is the doing of the Word, the working out in your life and in mine today to live this way as a God-man. Otherwise, it's just a phrase or terminology. Maybe it's the most modern phrase and the most contemporary up-to-date phrase in the recovery that we throw around, but there's no reality. Then what? There will be no revival brought in from such a corporate living. The third thing Brother Lee released was what he called the universal shepherding according to God. That there would be such a universal, including every saint, shepherding. This is surely also for practice. We can talk about shepherding all the time, but do we shepherd? Is there a change of heart? Is there the kind of love within us to contact people, to cherish and nourish people? To really care for them and bring them into the

church life in really like a flock where all the sheep are cared for and all the lambs are fed, is also a practice.

3. Persevere

This practice is not just for a few times. We must keep doing it, to endure. We must persist against disappointments, seemingly low results, against various kinds of environmental push backs, and even our own disappointments and discouragements. We need to persevere, to labor and not stop or give up. That was the gist of my burden in that message. Now is the time to do, the time to implement, and the time to work out all the things that we have received. Otherwise, we will be stuck with just more knowledge which won't help us.

Personal Revival through Confession

Today I want to continue with one matter, and that is in this new, fresh move of the Lord. What are we looking at? These are things that I have been speaking about, but because the burden and conviction are still so much there, I must strengthen this burden. It's very clear to me that the saints, the brothers and sisters, and we ourselves, must all experience a personal revival. Routine work will not cut it anymore. A routine church life won't do it. How do you get out of a routine? It is only by being revived and enlivened. So these days I am stressing that each one has to be revived. There's no point expecting some revival to happen if it doesn't happen with me. That's a vain hope. It is good to go to the Lord and say, "Lord, revive me. Do something about me. Lord, I hate my routine. I hate my oldness. I hate my deadness. I hate my lukewarmness. I disagree with it. Enliven me, Lord! Resurrect me, Lord! Vivify me, Lord, in a desperate way!"

Last week I covered something on confession. I told you that over here on the west coast I'm mainly working with the Church in Long Beach along the same line. I'm speaking to the saints every week, and when I come to this point, I just cannot move on. Now I'm trying to help the saints know how to experience such a personal revival. Last night I

spent the whole time on the matter of confession. Brothers, I tell you, confession is the key to revival. This is in the word. This is in the ministry.

In Ezekiel 36 Jehovah promises that He will cleanse us, He will give us a new heart and a new spirit, and He will put His Spirit in us (vv. 25-27). All those, as part of His promise, are the steps of revival. My burden is that all the saints will practice these things, will go to the Lord and spend time with the Lord desperately to ask for such a personal renewal. Don't you think that, when we do that, something will happen? The Lord will do something. We are not praying for a raise. We are not praying for things like that. We are praying for Him to revive us. We are praying for Him to bring us out of a long second day into the third day. Habakkuk's prayer is "revive Your work in the midst of the years" (Habakkuk 3:2b). That was a collective, corporate thing related to Israel. But each and every saint needs to pray personally, "Revive me, o God, in the midst of these days, these years. Revive me. Until I am revived, there will be no revival in the church." Recall that Brother Lee said the vital group starts with one person. One person. That's it. If it starts with you and me, if it starts with this group of brothers in this room, things will change, things will start to happen.

Brothers, we need seasons of confession, times of confession. See David's prayer in Psalm 51, that very serious and genuine confession. There is a receiving as a result of our real confession, of forgiveness. You know, forgiveness actually means release. There is a cleansing, the washing of the blood of the Lord. David prayed in Psalm 51, "Create in me a clean heart... and... a steadfast spirit" (v. 10). That means there was an inward change. Through this confession, through this experience of forgiveness and cleansing, a new heart was created in him that loves the Lord, that pursues Christ, and that is single towards Him. He also received a new spirit: a spirit that is strong, released, exercised, and living to touch and contact the Lord. All these will result in His Spirit filling us. That's revival. When the Spirit fills you,

you are revived person. When we are not filled with the Spirit, we are not revived. We have the Spirit but may not be filled with Him. We are not saturated. We are not overflowing. Not to mention the outpoured Spirit is not our experience.

Revival of the Saints

Brothers, this is the burden that is within me. I do not want to just talk about revival. I want to see revival in me, in you, and in every saint. Will every saint in our church be equally revived? Probably not. But if fifty percent of the saints in your locality would be revived in this way, that would be a great thing. If one-third of the saints in your church are truly, genuinely revived in this way, that is not a small thing. These ones will, in turn, revive others, influence others, affect others. Because now they are living, they are hot. There are other things I will talk about, but for now, this is the need.

You know, brothers, we should not have an idea of a Pentecostal style revival where we see some kind of pouring out of the Spirit and we would all be excited. We would have a lot of activities and see amazing miracles happen. Well, if miracles happen, praise the Lord. If there are more activities, wonderful. But, brothers, revival is a life matter. It is not an event. Today, many Christians in Christianity, even in this country, are praying for revival. To them, it is an event, more or less. But do you know what we are praying for? Not an event. We are praying for a reality. We are praying for persons. We are praying for a sustained atmosphere in the church life, that the churches will be in a revived state or condition. Just like when we have been in a dormant condition, dormancy is not an event. It is an atmosphere. It is a culture. It is an accepted condition. When you are in that long enough, that becomes normal. Some may even ask, "Why do we need to be revived? We are doing quite okay. We are going on okay. The church life is fine." Because you have been in this so-called "garlic room" for so long, you do not smell the "garlic." We do not even know what a revived person looks like or maybe it has been so long ago.

In Psalm 51, David said, “Restore to me the gladness of Your salvation” (v. 12a). We have even forgotten what it was like when we first got saved, how happy we were, how released, how living we were. We have forgotten that. Now we know so much. Now we know all the ropes in the church life. Now we know what to do. But we are not revived. Where is the fruit? Where is the expression of that abundant life? Where is that living in victory, in ascension? Where is that soaring condition? Where is that power, that dynamo, in our church? I am not here trying to badmouth. I am not here to be critical. But, brothers, this is the call of the Lord in these days. And I hope we brothers will respond to that call. There is a new season ahead of us. There is a need in front of us. And the Spirit is already moving. And the word has been spoken. There needs to be brothers and saints that will cooperate. If one-third of the saints in the recovery in this country will be revived like this, something will happen. Something will explode. Something will happen, trust me.

I am burdened about this, brothers. We cannot engineer this or manufacture this or make believe there is a revival. If there is one, there is one. If there is none, there is none. But it starts here. It starts with one person. It starts in my heart. It starts in my spirit. Where the Lord is, where the Spirit is, this is where it starts. One person. In these days, each one of us has to go to the Lord. Nothing is more important than that, brothers. I know I talk about planning. I talk about the services of the church, the meetings, the meeting hall. These are practical and necessary, but they cannot be compared with this, brothers. When the church, the saints, are living, all kinds of things will happen. You do not need to worry about service or meetings or meeting halls. We need a revival. I think that one of the best songs is the song *Fill Me Now*. “Fill me now! Fill me now! Fill me with Thy Spirit now! Strip me wholly, empty throughly.” That emptying is confession. Well, along with this personal revival, we have small groups. We call them groups. If even a third in that group is revived, that group will rise up. Of course, the more the better.

Our Need of Fruit-Bearing

The other thing I want to talk about brothers, is our main need in the churches today. I mentioned already that it is not just better arranged meetings, better schedules, better websites, a streamlined management. I am for these things. Right now, what the recovery in this country needs the most is fruit-bearing, the bearing of fruit. I would not even use the words “to gain increase,” not because it is wrong to, but that could give a certain kind of concept. Those were Brother Lee’s words, by the way. Brother Lee said that the vital group starts with one saint who is desperate to gain an increase for the Lord’s recovery. That is exactly what he said. So it is that, but I do not want to use those words. I want to use the words “to bear fruit”.

The greatest poor condition among us is barrenness. It seems we have lost the ability to bear fruit, not to mention much fruit, even remaining fruit. What does it say in Matthew? Thirtyfold, sixtyfold, and hundredfold (13:8). We could be a church that is in one place for a long time, with not only zero growth, but even negative growth. There is something called negative growth, where you are losing people. In the churches in Taiwan, in the last year or two, the brothers have been very faithful and very much endeavoring in this matter and they said that up and down Taiwan, collectively, in the last year or the year before, the increase rate was 3%. They were very shameful about that. We can do better than 3%. I heard that the church in Toronto ran very accurate statistics last year. They increased at maybe 4%. What about us, brothers?

Brother Lee’s Burden for Fruit-Bearing

When you put these two matters of every saint being revived and fruit-bearing to gain the increase, that is John 15. There is a book that just arrived through my direct mail subscription with the Living Stream Ministry called, *The Way to Bear Fruit*. I am sure this is in the Collected Works, but this is the first time I read it. It was a message given in 1966 when the saints just moved into Elden Hall in Los Angeles (LA). That predated me, because I touched the church life at the end of 1967 in

LA and moved to LA in February of 1969. This was 1966. I was reading this, and I said, “Lord Jesus, this is exactly what we need now.” This was 55 years ago, and it is so living, so fresh, so on-point.

I recall that almost every decade, Brother Lee, who took the lead under God's sovereignty, not only with the ministry, but with the Lord's work, touched this matter of fruit-bearing. In 1975, he also gave a speaking that is in the book that I may have recommended to you *The Normal Way of Fruit-bearing and Shepherding for the Building Up of the Church*. In the same year, he gave messages to the young people, which today is called *Young People's Training*. In that book is one chapter with the title “Fruit-bearing: the Preaching of the Gospel on the Highest Plane.” All these I heard live in front of Brother Lee in the '70s. This speaking in the mid-70s revolutionized my life and my service.

Then in the '80s, when he went back to Taiwan, he talked about bearing fruit. Of course, he talked a lot about the God-ordained way, what I call the organic structure, the begetting, nourishing, teaching, and building. He spoke much concerning the bearing of fruit. Then, of course, in the '90s, he spoke about the vital group.

Each Branch Bearing Fruit

I am bringing these up, brothers, because I am quite convinced that, today, the work that we need to do is to build up our churches and to renew these GTCA churches. First, our burden is to see the revival of the brothers and sisters. Then we would like to see each one of them become a fruit-bearing branch. This does not mean we do not need gospel meetings. Each branch bearing fruit was always Brother Lee's central burden when it comes to gaining the normal increase of the church.

In this book from 1966, about 80 saints migrated from the Far East to Brazil in South America. They contacted some local group that came through a certain American brother from Illinois who had visited Brazil

ten times from 1915 to the early 1960s. Brother Lee actually tried to contact him, but this American brother died in 1965. At that time, there was a prevailing move in this group of people. They were simple folks. They were just people that were alive. In their meetings, they sang, they prayed one by one, they testified. They had long meetings without a time limit. They read the word. Although they did not have much truth, they were living. At the end of those ten years, they were spread all throughout Brazil in many assemblies. In São Paulo alone, they had 30,000 at that time. Simple folks.

Brother Lee cited them as a case. They just loved one another and had a testimony there. He talked about them in a very positive way, as if we should learn from them. I agree with him. You know, Brother Lee was always watching, always seeking to learn. He actually said at that time that we could do better if each branch, each saint, would rise up according to John 15 to bear fruit, personal fruit. He spent a lot of time talking about the fruit in John 15 not being the virtues or the fruit of the Spirit but being about gaining people. He spent a lot of time on John 15. We need to gain people.

It was at that time in the '60s that he began to have a thought that if this happens among us, how our numbers would grow in the US. He said if one out of two saints would be so vital and so fruit-bearing, the growth would be almost astronomical. He talked about how serious it is for a branch not to bear fruit. Being withered, being cut off, and being cast into the fire because there is no fruit are the seriousness of not fulfilling our obligation.

Each Saint Being Burdened to Bear Fruit

I have not finished reading this book. I am still reading it, but it very much confirmed the feeling that I have inside for this time. After fifty some years, the recovery is a lot richer in truth and in knowledge, for sure. The recovery today is a lot more mature in life compared to those days, for sure. But there is another measurement that we have

not lived up to. That is the measure of growth and multiplication.

This book cites one thing that we should know. In chapter 15 of John, it says that you will bear much fruit. The branch that abides in Him will bear much fruit (v. 5). Just three chapters prior, in chapter 12 of John the Lord spoke of Himself as the grain of wheat. “Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit” (v. 24). Clearly, that fruit there is not just spiritual virtues. Clearly, Christ was talking about His multiplication through death and resurrection. Today we have become that fruit, blended into a loaf. Three chapters later, he talked about the fruit-bearing of the vine, about much fruit. He was clearly talking about the same thing. Not only that He bore much fruit, but we today must continue to bear fruit as His members, to follow that one grain.

Even this kind of burden, this sense of obligation, is not strong enough among us. We just enjoy the Lord. We come to the meetings. We stay with the church. We give to the church financially. We serve. But we do not have this sense of “I am a branch. I must bear fruit. Otherwise, I cannot face the Lord one day.” One day we will all have to face the Lord in this matter. We need to cry out to the Lord for fruit and to exercise ourselves with a living that is conducive to fruit-bearing. “The first thing I have to take care of in my life is to bear fruit.” Yes, we need to go to meetings. Yes, we need to do this and that in the church life. But it is easy to just do those things but not bear fruit. We have saints who have not borne fruit for a long time. Some may not have ever brought someone to the Lord. And we think we are still okay when we are actually already withered for a long time. That is why we are not revived.

Fruit-Bearing and Revival Going Hand in Hand

Brothers, revival will bring fruit-bearing. When we bear fruit, we are proven to be in a condition of revival. We are not revived because we do not bear fruit. We cannot bear fruit if we are not revived. These two things are hand in hand. My brothers, today, this is the primary

need in the church life in America. In this matter, we need a breakthrough. Several years ago in Southern California, I charged the leading brothers that we need at least a 15% increase annually. It never happened. I do not even know if we got 3%. We have at least fifty churches in Southern California, maybe more. From the time Brother Lee died until now, I do not know what the rate of increase has been.

Brothers, this is not about us becoming big, with hundreds or thousands of saints. Brothers, this is about the Lord's testimony. This is about His multiplied testimony. This is about each saint being a healthy branch. This is about us bearing remaining fruit as a matter of life and normality. Whenever revival is mentioned in the Old Testament, the description is always like springtime: the rain, the river in the desert, the blooming of flowers, the fruit of this kind and that kind in abundance. When you think of revival, that picture comes to mind – this fruitfulness.

It is easy to just stir up something and have a campaign and do something. GTCA is not a campaign. No, it is not. It is a work. It is not one of these campaigns. It is more powerful than campaigns. It is a work of life. This is the harder work, the work to revive the believers, the work of equipping the believers, the work of helping all the believers to bear fruit in a regular, normal way. Some of our saints do not even know how to lead people to Christ, how to nourish a newborn baby in the Lord.

Another word that I gave to the saints in Long Beach a couple of weeks ago is our fourfold status. Number one, a branch. Number two, a shepherd. Number three, a parent – Paul said to the Corinthians that they had ten thousand teachers, but in Christ, he begot them as a father (1 Cor. 4:15), and to the Thessalonians he talked about being an exhorting father (1 Thess. 2:11) and a nursing mother (v. 7), a parent. Number four, a priest of the gospel. All these are associated with growth, with increase, yet in an organic way, in the way of life.

I hope that a word like this will stir us up, brothers. Brothers, we need a breakthrough in this country where we are now. All the riches are with us. The country's environment is open. There are seekers. There are the chosen, yet unsaved. There are many so-called believers that are nominal and not yet regenerated. And here we are, we are starting to renew churches in this city and that city. I hope we will not sort of repeat history and do the routine thing to just build up the churches in an outward kind of way.

The most important thing, brothers, I say again, is that each one, every saint become a revived person, living in a regular revived state, and the church in a revived atmosphere, starting with each one. And then when we have companions, we have revived companions. When we have groups, they will be revived groups. When we have districts, they will be revived districts. It is not just some system. We need to pay attention to bearing fruit. In these coming weeks, in being with the saints, I would like to be more personal with them and help them to bear fruit, which they can. This is our need, brothers. Do not say that this is impossible. That is a heart of unbelief. That is an easy excuse. If we have the heart, we will find a way. Plus, the Lord is already speaking and moving. We just need to adopt a new mentality and get rid of the old concept of how to raise up a church, how to do this and that. Center and focus on building this matter slowly. Of course, it has to start with us, and then with the saints.

Fruit-Bearing and the Enjoyment of Christ Going Hand in Hand

The enjoyment of Christ and fruit-bearing are twins. We may have put these as opposites to each other: I am the kind who enjoys the Lord, you are the kind who preaches the gospel. We may have thought that they are diametrically opposed. This could not be more wrong. I will prove this with two cases. Number one, John 15 itself. These branches who are abiding in the vine are actually enjoying the vine's life supply, the sap, the riches. But what is that for? Why does the vine supply its branches with more nutrients? Why? Just so that they can get fat, so that they can enjoy the life-flow? No, it is so they can bear fruit. The

enjoyment of Christ is for fruit-bearing. And if we cease to bear fruit, why would the Lord supply you? Is it just to make you happy, just to make you joyful? I am not saying those things are wrong, but the ultimate desire of the vine is to supply this branch to make it bear fruit. Go to any fruit-bearing trees. When a branch or a part of the tree is not bearing fruit, nothing grows there. Because it does not bear fruit, it withers up. But those that bear fruit, He prunes, so that more life can flow through that wound, so that it can bear more fruit (v. 2).

The other case is in the epistle to the Philippians. You know that the Epistle to the Philippians is on the enjoyment of Christ. But do you know the epistle the Philippians is also a book on the gospel? The book started that way: “For your fellowship unto the furtherance of the gospel” (1:5a), “in the defense and confirmation of the gospel you are all fellow partakers with me of grace” (v. 7b). At the end of the first chapter, Paul said, “that you stand firm in one spirit, with one soul striving together along with the faith of the gospel” (v. 27d). Brother Lee made it clear in the footnotes how the Christ-enjoying life is a gospel-preaching life.

These are not two different, opposing things. The more we enjoy the Lord, the more we will have to bear fruit. If we do not bear fruit, that enjoyment is a little bit questionable. The more we bear fruit, actually the more enjoyment there is. Let’s say in your church, overnight you beget twenty new ones. The whole church will be praising the Lord. There will be love for each other, there will be happiness, all because there is fruit. Or when you go to a household and all you have are just grandparents with no descendants. That is not a happy household. I do not care how rich that household is. There is no joy there. There is no future. There is no glory. But when it is full of kids, jumping up and down, painting the walls, and messing things up – whoa, hallelujah! This is happiness. This household has future.

Brother Lee talked about this by the way. They go hand in hand. It saddens me to hear some saints say “I enjoy the Lord” but I look at

their lives and there is no fruit. There is not even the burden for fruit. They just come to the meetings and enjoy. I am not criticizing, brothers, but that is a wrong kind of concept. You may say that I am placing a requirement on you. Well, I did not do that. The Lord did it. And He did it pretty seriously. Cutting off, drying up, casting into the fire, those are pretty strong words to every branch. Let us learn to be revived and fruitful!