

Fruitbearing as the Highest Plane of the Gospel

Fellowship from Minoru Chen on April 11, 2021

Prayer

Lord, under Your cleansing blood, we open our whole being to You once again. Lord, may there be nothing at all between You and us, no barrier or separation, that there would be free traffic between earth and heaven, between heaven and earth, between You and all of us. Lord, not only are we waiting for Your word and Your speaking, but today we pray that You will open Your heart to us. Lord, we would like to feel Your heartbeat. We would like to touch Your desire, Your heart's desire. Lord, we pray that today You will touch us in this way. Lord, move us on, inspire us on. Lord, even compel us on, in these days, just to care for people that You care for: all the sinners, all the lost ones, all the saints that are on Your heart. Lord, fill our heart with Your heart. Lord, give us even a new heart, a heart of flesh, a heart full of feeling, a heart filled with earnestness, a heart filled with Your compassion for all the ones that You love and care for. Lord, do be with us today personally. Lord, even grant us all another life change. Lord, You know we are not here just to stir up some kind of campaign, some kind of new work. We are here to be touched and to be changed in our person. Lord, we pray for a genuine revival, a genuine transformation. Lord, we look to You. Have mercy on us all. Amen.

Bringing in the Final Revival

Brothers, we have been on this matter of what perhaps is currently the greatest need in the Lord's recovery in this country. That is to gain increase, to gain the proper and remaining increase, to gain the materials, to gain new members in the church life where we are for

the growth and eventually for the building up of the Lord's Body, the Lord's testimony, in His recovery. I want to make this very clear. Without a doubt, this is our burden. I can say this with a measure of assurance, because this was Brother Lee's strong burden before he left us to be with the Lord.

In the ITERO this coming weekend we will have eight messages on the vital factors for the recovery of the church life. There will be different things that we will cover. I will cover the first message plus another message. Message one has a very long outline concerning the vital factors of a new revival, of perhaps the final and even the greatest revival, the revival that Brother Lee spoke about. For that, we need to arrive at the high peak of the divine revelation. For that, we have to live out together the God-man life. For that, we have to practice the universal shepherding of cherishing and nourishing according to God. These three great things were left to us to work out, as a kind of hope or burden within our brother.

Having the Proper Concept of a Revival

1. A Condition of Reality

In order to bring in this final revival, we need to have a new and proper concept of what is a revival, at least the revival that we are talking about here. We are not talking about some strange, miraculous, and overwhelming event. When you think of revival, you think of Pentecost, you think of some great revivals of old in Europe or in this country. I am not saying that those were not revivals. But I am saying that this is not that kind of revival that is a mere event that came and went. We are certainly not talking about some revival of a Pentecostal nature with miracles or works of wonders and healing, even raising the dead.

No, this revival that we are talking about is a reality. When I use this word *reality*, I take it from the context of Ephesians four, where we have that phrase "as the reality is in Jesus" (v. 21b). That reality. The footnote expounds or explains that this *reality* refers to a condition, a

condition associated with Jesus when He was on this earth, carrying out His living and carrying out His earthly ministry. With this Man, with this person Christ, there was an accompanying atmosphere or condition that was always present. That condition is the *reality*. In other words, the revival that we are looking forward to is not just happenstance or just something that happens. But it is a condition, a *reality*, that exists, that is lived out, that is manifested. It is God manifested in the flesh (1 Tim. 3:16b). There is a manifestation of a certain condition among God's people or a remnant of God's people. When such a reality is present, there is the revival.

2. The Outworking and Practice of Revelation from God

There is another definition of revival which Brother Lee described in the '90s. When I first heard it, I was just astounded and just captivated. He said that a genuine revival is when God's people successfully work out, live out, and practice, what they have seen or what has been revealed to them. In other words, it is the outworking, or the practice of the revelation given to men by God and from God. If there is no application, then even if there is a genuine spiritual revelation, there is still not a revival.

If you use this definition to check the history of the church in the last 2,000 years, you will see that definition to be true. Take Martin Luther, for example. We would usually not say that his work was a revival. In fact, we call it a reformation. But in this sense, it was a revival in that there was a man, Martin Luther, who took the lead to open up or rediscover this great truth of justification by faith, which had been buried by the Catholic Church. Not only did he preach and recover that great initial truth in God's economy, but it was worked out, it was practiced, it was experienced. Justification is no longer buying your penance. Justification is simply by your belief in Christ and in His redemptive work. By believing in the person and work of Christ, through faith, you are justified before God. So that was not merely a revelation or just a doctrinal teaching that was recovered, but masses of people experienced it. By faith they believed, by faith they were

justified, and by faith they were saved. Until today, we are still beneficiaries of that revival, of that truth, but not just as a doctrinal truth, as knowledge, but as applied truth, meaning, something that is operative in our experience.

The various stages of the Lord's recovery work in the last 500 to 600 years follow the same principle. Every time there was a recovery work of the Lord with a specific group of people, not only were truths recovered, but the application and the experience of those truths were also recovered. That was what happened, revival after revival.

Our Calling and Commission Today

Now we are talking about the final revival. The principle remains the same, except that now we are given perhaps the highest of all revelations. It is called the high peak, the highest of all revelations. So my brothers, the need today is extraordinary. The burden upon us who have been blessedly given this revelation is immense. In a way, we cannot do it. We cannot by our own strength work this out. Of all people, we need the Lord's mercy and grace to work out what has been shown to us. You see, the calling of the Lord's recovery is so high. The commission to the Lord's recovery is so great. We should not for a moment, not for a day, underestimate where we are – in this place called the Lord's recovery, in the church life in the Lord's recovery.

Brothers, if you and I have this kind of a view, our lives would change. The way we live our lives, the way we prioritize our lives, the way we “church,” and the way the way we exist would have a fundamental change if we have this kind of a view. Brothers, I hope that you would all be very much taken by what I just very briefly shared, and not take the Lord's recovery in such a simplistic, superficial, and careless manner. It won't do, brothers. We are not another denomination. We are not even the most spiritual group. No, this is the Lord's recovery. And He is doing something in this age, perhaps to end this age. Are we worthy of this calling and this commission? I do not know. But here we are. Whether or not we are worthy, whether or not we are the

right group of people, here we are. There are many people who have superior intellect and more people who have greater gifts and capacity than any of us in this room. But they are not here. They have not seen what we have seen. With this blessing or with this sovereign foreknowledge of the Lord to choose us at this hour to meet His need, there comes, my brothers, a corresponding responsibility and obligation. And this is my great burden.

The Central Burden of Fruit-Bearing

Even when we talk about bearing fruit, this is still my central burden for all of us and for all the saints and for all the churches. Next week when I speak to the saints, I will finish today's burden. I will firstly use John 15. This is on fruit-bearing. Verse 16 says, "You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and I set you" (v. 16a). This is very much the concept of grafting: I set you, I grafted you, wild olive trees, into the real olive tree that is Christ, that is Israel. "...I set you that you should go forth and bear fruit and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name, He may give you" (v. 16b). I feel in these days we need to unpack this verse afresh.

"I Chose You"

I did not really study this verse today in a detailed way but let me just mention this. Here, firstly, you have the thought of choosing. Brothers, you have to realize we did not choose the Lord. We did not choose Him. We were just fallen. We were just apart from Christ. We were just prodigals, just like everyone else. But somehow the Lord, in eternity past, based on His sovereign foreknowledge, knew us. Not only so, but He marked us out, according to Ephesians. That marking out was His choosing, even before we were born, before we physically existed.

"I chose you." There is nothing more to say. This is sovereign. This is something that God did. You and I have no opinion in this matter. He just chose us. "I chose you." Even to reflect on this will change our lives. I was chosen. I did not choose the Lord. We all can look back at

our lives. None of us chose the Lord. We thought we did but we really did not. He chose us. And then we, in response, chose Him. But He first chose us. There was a choosing. There was a marking out. There was a purposeful choice that God made in gaining us, in saving us.

“I Set You”

Then He said that He not only chose us, but according to the burden in this chapter, “I set you.” I mentioned this thought of grafting here. “I set you.” You belonged to some wild olive tree. This is from the book of Romans. You had nothing to do with Israel. You had nothing to do with the promises to Israel. You were just far off away from Christ. You had nothing to do with God's promises and God's inheritance. But because of the misstep of the Jewish people, who were the natural branches, but they fell off, we the Gentiles could somehow be grafted in. We actually did not have that birthright. But in God's sovereignty, because of His eternal plan, because of His pre-knowledge, and because of His choice, His purpose, there was this happening with the Jewish nation, with Israel, so that the Gentiles, including many of us, could be grafted into this tree, this proper tree. We were wild branches, but now we have been *set*, grafted in, meaning, we are now joined with Christ organically, we have now become part of Christ, and we now have a share of Christ and all of the promises of God. We now have a share in reality, even more than the Jews in a spiritual way, in the covenant and all these things. We're in Christ now and we are a part of the vine tree now.

Now there are three *thats* – *that* means there is a result of this choosing and this setting. The last part of John 15:16 says, that you should go forth and bear fruit. Just think about this. We have been set, we have been grafted, and we have become part of this true vine of which the Father Himself is the husbandman. What's the purpose? What's the point here? Why did this happen? I think we all know it's not so we will go to heaven. It's not only so that we can enjoy the vine and the riches, which we do by abiding in Him. It is so that we would go forth and bear fruit. See the strong burden, intention, and plan

here? We are chosen, we are set, and we are saved so that we will go forth and bear fruit. It couldn't be clearer. By now all of us should be convinced in the context of John 15 that this fruit does not refer to the fruit in Galatians 5, which talks about the fruit of the Spirit, which is the expression and the living out of all the aromatic virtues of Christ in us by our walking by the Spirit, living according to the Spirit, and not doing the works of the flesh. By doing that, we will live out these virtues of Christ, which are all God's divine attributes.

The fruit here in John 15 does not refer to that, and in times past I should have made this more than clear, just by reading even these few chapters in John. We are here talking about Christ's multiplication, and through this multiplication by life, Christ is enlarged. The expression of Christ is increased. He was the one grain that fell into the ground to die. Through His death the shell of His humanity was broken, and the divine life within Him was released and imparted into us. We were born in resurrection as the many grains, the many sons of God, and together all these grains form a loaf. That loaf would be the Body of Christ, the church, for Christ's greater universal and full expression of Himself. We need to bear that kind of fruit, but I'm concerned that we pay more attention to the kind of fruit that Galatians 5 talks about, but not enough to this kind of fruit that John 15 talks about. We need a balance.

Growth in Life and Numbers

To put it another way, what the recovery needs is not only the growth in life, in spirituality, but the growth in numbers. We should not be ashamed or fearful to say that. If we only grow qualitatively and not quantitatively, something is missing. Increase in number means much in God's economy, because these are the many sons that the Lord will bring into glory. The more sons the better for the glorious sonship. These are the stones, the material for God's building. God is building a building called the church, Christ's Body, and the bigger this building is the better. This Body must match the Head. If the Head is so great, then so should the Body be. Our need today and our shortage today

is bearing fruit of this kind. We have been set, my brothers. We have been purposely set that we should go forth to bear fruit. We are already informed of what our Christian life is about and what our church life is for. It is to bear fruit. It's almost like we have no other purpose. Just like a branch in the vine tree, which has no other purpose of existence than to bear fruit. It's not good for making furniture or for making studs to build a house. It's not good for anything and it's ugly looking. These vine branches are only good for one thing, and that's to bear lots and lots of fruit. This is normal. This is not special or unusual. Unfortunately, we have lost that normality to a great degree and it's reflected in our small numbers and our low rate of increase.

Bearing Remaining Fruit

John 15:16 continues to say that your fruit should remain. It's very meaningful. It's not just to bear fruit or just to save souls, so to speak. No. The fruit we bear, that we bring forth in a way of life, not in a way of campaign but in a normal way, should remain. This word "remain," I think, is the same word as "abide" in Greek. In other words, we need to bear fruit that will abide in the Lord just like we're abiding in the Lord. We're not saving people to send them to heaven, or merely to increase our number in that way. We are saving people, bearing fruit, so that they would become abiding branches for the multiplication of this vine, and also in the form of further fruit bearing. More fruit will bear more fruit, so the fruit we bear should be remaining fruit. Now, not all fruit will remain, but still, we should aim to gain, to bear, remaining fruit. It's one thing just to get someone saved, which is a great matter, but to help this new believer grow, to feed and nourish this one, to eventually perfect this one, to help this one remain and abide, takes a lot more effort. It's a long-term effort. Brothers, if we have no patience or if we have no long-suffering or if we have no endurance, then we will not bear remaining fruit. You can get someone saved and praise the Lord for that, but to bear remaining fruit will test our patience to the uttermost. Isn't that how we raise up our own children? You don't just give birth and leave him or her. No.

The work of raising a child begins. It's called parenting.

Fruitbearing as the Highest Plane of the Gospel

Do we have that view? The gospel is not just a mere work or a campaign. In Brother Lee's word, fruit bearing is the preaching of the gospel on the highest plane. The highest plane of gospel preaching is fruit bearing. The way of life: nine months in the womb, then how many years to adolescence and then to adulthood? If we have the experience, then we know that there is a lot of labor involved. But brothers, what else are we doing here? What are we doing here in the church life? It's not just to go to meetings, which of course, we need to go to the meetings. It's not just to care for our own spiritual condition, which we should care for. It's not just to be more spiritual, which we need. But the word says "that" you should go forth and bear fruit and *that* your fruit should remain. Now the purpose of my life is already spelled out in this verse. That's what I'm doing every day and every week. I will not promote to have less meetings. I will never say that. But brothers, we meet so much. It's a good thing, but how much time do we spend in bearing fruit? What's the priority here? I always tell elders, "Your job is not to make a weekly schedule or to make announcements on Lord's day or to sign checks, or to decide what will be the next *Holy Word for Morning Revival* for the church. Brothers, this is not our job. We do these things, but they are hardly our main tasks. Our main task is to care for people. We need to contact the sinners, to save the lost, to cherish the young, to nourish the new ones, and to bring them forth as remaining or abiding fruit in the church life. We need a huge change in the way we church and in the way we look at things. Brother Lee didn't get through that much in those last years. I hope that the Lord will give us a new kind of church life among us that is people-centered and fruit-centered. I didn't say work-centered, but I did say fruit bearing-centered.

Asking for Remaining Fruit

John 15:16 concludes, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. Isn't this wonderful? There's not only the charge to

bear remaining fruit, but there's a wonderful promise that is associated with bearing fruit. That's asking. That's prayer. Asking the Father for whatever. Obviously, this is not asking for some physical blessing for yourself. This is asking on behalf of fruit bearing, asking for fruit He may give you. In the end, where does the fruit come from? It comes from the Father Himself because He is the cultivator. He is the husbandman. He is working on this vine and He is pruning you and me as branches. He is cleansing us with His Word. He is doing all kinds of things in each one of our lives so that He can give us fruit, but brothers we need to ask. I feel we need in these days to have a lot of asking, but less asking about yourself. How about we ask for fruit personally? How about every saint in our church decrease the asking for other things, but all seriously and earnestly ask for fruit? And not only just asking for someone to be saved but asking Him continually in how to feed this young one and how to shepherd and nourish this new one. It's a lot of asking until this fruit is borne in a complete and full way as remaining fruit.

Responsibility of Every Branch to Bear Fruit

Now I want to go to another verse, and this does not use the word "fruit bearing" but it is the same thing, and that is in the case of Paul the apostle. We all know chapter 9 of First Corinthians is a chapter where Paul talks about his apostleship and particularly about his faithfulness in gospel preaching.

In 1 Cor 9:16-17 he said, "For if I preach the gospel, I have no boast, for necessity is laid upon me; for woe to me if I do not preach the gospel. If I do this of my own will, I have a reward; but if not of my own will, I am entrusted with a stewardship."

"Woe" means cursed. I'm cursed if I don't preach the gospel. The reward in verse 17 here is consistent with John 15. There is a reward and punishment aspect to this one day, and I would even say today. It says those branches that do not bear fruit will be cast away and will be burned. This is serious. Then there is the implication that even

today that we actually would be cut off from the enjoyment of Christ if we do not bear fruit as branches. One day when we are summoned before the Lord for our life and work in the present age, we will give an account whether we have fruit or not. If I do this on my own will, then I'll have a reward, but if not of my own will, then I am entrusted with the stewardship. So, Paul is saying that whether he likes to or whether he doesn't like to, he had no choice in the matter. As an apostle of God, he had no choice. If he liked it, he would have a reward; if he was compelled to do this, then he was still happy to do it because he'd been entrusted with a stewardship.

Pay close attention to this word in verse 16, *necessity*. "For necessity is laid upon me." I'm very burdened about this, that fruit bearing, this highest form of preaching the gospel, is an obligation, a responsibility, and I would use the word *duty*. You check with the branch and He will tell you why I'm here. My obligation day to day is to bear fruit. That's my responsibility and my calling. That's why I'm here. In other words, the necessity is laid on me because of the need for fruit, and in Paul's case, the need to save people of all kinds, those who were under the law, those who were not under the law, and all kinds of people under the sun. In Romans chapter 1, he said "I'm a debtor" to both Jews and Greeks. He's the one in debt. He owes these people the gospel. There's a necessity laid on him whether he wanted to announce the gospel or whether he did not want to. Then he said he would be all things to all men that eventually he would gain some. I feel that in talking about the Lord, a new move of the Lord, and a revival and a renewal in our church life, it must begin here in an intrinsic way. I'm not talking about changing the way we meet. In changing this or that we must start here with changing our sense, our feeling based on a new or fresh understanding of this matter of gaining the increase. Brothers, it's an obligation. It's a duty. It's a responsibility of every branch to bear some fruit.

This is not too much to say it this way; it's just the truth. This is the Lord's word. If we don't have the kind of conviction or feeling to this

degree, then we would live our life in a lower way. We would just do whatever we want to do and live the church life the way we want to live. We would have no sense that we have an obligation, a duty. I hope, brothers, we will not first lay this on the saints. I hope we would first put this on ourselves. Then we will lead the dear saints into this healthy understanding.

A Healthy Sense of Obligation to Bear Remaining Fruit

I know it's not a good feeling to feel like you're a debtor. Well, Paul lived that way. He just had that obligation to bear fruit. I hope every saint will have this feeling. I hope that each church will have this healthy sense of obligation. If we're not made to bear fruit, that's one thing. But no, we have been grafted as a branch so we can bear fruit. We are not here talking about raising up a bunch of evangelists; powerful, gifted ones like Billy Graham. No, we're not talking about that. We do need evangelists in the church. But we're not talking about all of us becoming evangelists; we are talking about a healthy branch that bear fruits regularly. Neither are we talking about each one of us bringing in hundreds and thousands of people. We're talking about each one bringing in a solid remaining fruit every two to three years. That's what Brother Lee said. But I tell you, even to bear such a fruit over that amount of time, requires a sense of duty, a sense of great burden, to care for and nurture that fruit. Then we will have a meaningful, purposeful life. A church that is not a fruit-bearing church has lost its purpose and direction.

A Ministering Life

In the Life-Study of Second Corinthians (Msg. 44), Brother Lee said he has seen a fruit tree that is quite flourishing, with branches, with abundance of leaves, and beautiful. Yet with no fruit. He was making the point that we could be “spiritual,” we could be spiritually pretty or beautiful. At the same time, we could be barren and fruitless.

The ministering life we see in 2 Corinthians is a fruitful life. We may be spiritual, holy, and victorious and yet not be fruitful. There are

problems with that kind of spirituality, holiness, and victory. It is questionable whether those qualities are true and genuine. Is it not unusual that one could be spiritual without being fruitful? According to the Bible, being spiritual is for the purpose of being fruitful. In the Gospel of John, the Lord does not tell us to be spiritual, holy, and victorious. Rather, in John 15 He charges us to bear fruit, even to bear much fruit, abiding fruit. This is to live a ministering life.

Around my home there are a number of fruit trees; peach, lemon, and orange. For quite a long period of time, certain trees did not bear any fruit. Because of the lack of fruit, we were considering whether we should remove them. Although these trees did not bear fruit, they continued to grow quite well. In fact, they were green and flourishing, full of leaves. Nevertheless, the more they grew in that way, the more bothered I was concerning them. Sometimes when I looked at those trees I said, "What are you trees doing here? You are full of green leaves, and your branches are spreading forth, but you are not bearing any fruit." We may take this as an illustration of believers who may be spiritual, holy, and victorious, but are fruitless. They do not bear fruit because they do not have a ministering life. It is very important to see that we all must have a ministering life.

Our Spirituality for People

Brothers, do you know what our spirituality is for? It's not for show; it's for people. Do you know why God grows in us and deal with us and causes us to learn certain spiritual lessons? It is not so that we can be an exhibit for show; it's so that we can bear much fruit. We may have a life of enjoyment of receiving, but if there is not a life of ministering to others the gospel, ministering Christ to others, to new believers, to young believers, to nourish and cherish them, to make them remaining fruit, it is not normal. Brother Lee's speaking of this was very impressive to me and is very true. What do you think? Is the Lord's recovery this beautiful, fruitless tree? We have all the truths, we have all the revelation, we have all the best, but little to no fruit. Something is wrong. When we speak of every branch, we mean that

every saint should note this and begin to live a fruit-bearing life until we see the Lord. Every day, every week, we should live such a life. It is not a gospel campaign, or where we have a few meetings and then the burden goes away. No. Day-by-day, we're going to live this life until we see the Lord. Every church as a miniature vine tree in your city should be bearing fruit, as a church collectively. So every church should grow. Don't be afraid to grow, brothers. Many GTCA churches today total around 50 people, not all but many, which is a very good number to start. Next year, two years later, three years later, five years later, those GTCA churches should not be the same size. If they are, something is very wrong. The church needs to grow with more numbers, more new ones, more recovered dormant ones.

Going Forth in John 15:16

For a church of 50 to become a church of 100 should not be that hard. This is a not campaign, but year-after-year because the saints live this way, constantly, daily caring for people, the church will grow. I forgot to mention another important word in John 15:16, "...I set you that you should *go forth* and bear fruit...". To "go forth" is very important and Brother Lee paid attention to this phrase. "Go forth" in Greek means to physically depart, you have to move your body. What does this mean? This means to bear fruit. You need to leave where you are, your comfort zone. You need to leave "yourself," you need to leave your comfortable environment just taking care of yourself. You need to go forth to where the people are, like the Lord Himself did. Go to where the sinners are. Go visit the dormant saints; go contact the seekers.

People will not come to us. Well, they may, sovereignly. But we still need to go to continue to nourish them, visit them, have appointments with them, care for them, talk to them. Those of us who have experience in bearing remaining fruit know what it takes. There's no magic in child- raising. I don't care how many parenting books you read, in the end it is just that constant work of feeding and perfecting the child that proves effective. Brothers, when we talk about the God-

ordained way, this is it. It's a matter of this mindset and this kind of long-term labor. This will revive the church. This is not some magic; not some miracle.

Conclusion

Today I end my speaking in this way. What can we do? Well, last week, I talked to the saints, about confession and consecration in a thorough way. This is not just a general confession, but according to the light shining and the Lord's touching we confess our sins and offenses. The result of this confession is always consecration because now we have become separated and holy. As a holy sacrifice, we then can be offered to the Lord, and we should offer ourselves to the Lord by adding wood to the fire on the altar of burnt offerings to continually offer ourselves to Him. This is the way to be vitalized. We have to live this way.

Consecrate to Live a Fruit-bearing Life

But today, I would like to say this as a concluding word. We actually need one particular confession, that is, the confession of the lack of fruit. We don't think that's sinful; we don't think that's worldly. However, if you touch the Lord's heart, you will see this is a very serious matter for a believer not to be bearing fruit, to be empty handed, to be barren. In the Old Testament, barrenness is a curse. So when you have no fruit in a way, you are under some kind of a curse in a way. So, then what about consecration? Well, I also would like to suggest, that we have a specific consecration in these days, to consecrate ourselves to the Lord to bear fruit; to confess our shortage in this matter, and to consecrate ourselves to live a fruit-bearing life.

A Nazarite Vow

I feel that based on such confession and consecration, there also should be a certain kind of resolution, determination, or decision on every saint's part. Brother Lee actually used this word vow. Did you read today's portion on Beseeking.org regarding the priests of the gospel? It talks about the vow, like a wedding vow. A vow is more than

a promise. A promise is not a vow. A vow is a promise with an oath, or with swearing. It is an oath accompanying a promise. When you get married, you make a vow to your husband or wife because that holy matrimony, that lifelong relationship requires and deserves such a level of commitment. You don't say, "Maybe I will love you in sickness or in health." Would you marry someone who would say that? It's a solemn vow; it's a lifelong commitment. Marriage is a commitment. So there is a vow. It's a promise with an oath. So, when we follow the Lord, we should also make such a vow to Him, a Nazarite vow to the Lord. In this matter, brothers, according to Brother Lee, we should make a vow. This is an obligation, a responsibility that is tied to His economy and His purpose, and this calls for a vow. "Lord, henceforth my life until I see You, I will be a fruit-bearing branch."

Now, there are more particulars that I would like to say in the coming days to the saints. After you make such a vow, you have to do something in your life, in your schedule, in your priorities, to carry out that vow so that so that it's not just a word, an empty promise. Believe me, brothers, this pleases the Lord. And this will have results personally in each one and corporately as churches. I hope, brothers, we will start with ourselves in this way. Pray for ourselves and pray for the church and the saints.

You can see that I'm taking my time here to cover such things. Having served the Lord over some years, I don't trust in stirring things up, stirring up some gospel fire and we all run out there and do this and do that. Usually, that doesn't last so long.

Did I show you the three books that you can get to help you? They are *The Way to Bear Fruit* by Witness Lee (messages given in 1966); *Preaching the Gospel in the Way of Life* by Witness Lee (messages given in 1965); and *The Normal Way of Fruit-bearing and Shepherding for the Building Up of the Church* by Witness Lee. This book changed my life with these messages given in 1975. After this informal training that Brother Lee gave, my life was just impacted in the way that I'm

sharing now to realize that I was an “Abram,” an exalted father, a pretty tree. But I needed a name change, a transformation to make me an “Abraham,” which means not an exalted father, but a father of multitudes, a begetting father. It’s not about my beauty anymore. Spirituality is about my ability to bear fruit and have spiritual descendants. Also, I realized I needed to change my name from a “Sarai” to “Sarah.” I needed a change from being a “Sarai,” my princess where it’s all about me to a “Sarah,” which means just “princess.” This very touching fellowship is all in the *Life-study of Genesis*. At the same time, Brother Lee was speaking the Life-studies in Genesis when he was close to the same time speaking the messages in the third book, *The Normal Way of Fruit-bearing and Shepherding for the Building Up of the Church*. Between the sharing of these messages, the Lord had mercy to begin a deeper work to change me from being self-centered and self-beautifying, to have a life that is hungry to bear children and fruit.