

## **Six Necessities for Fruit-Bearing**

Fellowship from Minoru Chen on April 18, 2021

### **Prayer**

*Lord, we pray for the recovery of the normal yet prevailing fruit bearing life in all the local churches. Lord, we're desperate about this matter. Lord, we touch the throne even concerning this burden. Lord, we pray for all the saints, we pray for every brother and sister, and we pray for the leading brothers. Lord, we pray for every single local church, that all would be gospel-preaching and fruit bearing churches. Lord, may Your need be satisfied in Your desire for normal duplication and for Your increase. Lord, remember this prayer and answer this prayer. Lord, we trust in You and call on Your name. This afternoon say something again to us, even a practical word and a practicable word. Lord, share something that would bring about a change, a renewal in all of our church life. Bless this time of fellowship. Speak to us and speak Yourself into us. Amen.*

### **Introduction**

Well, it's good to see you all on this wonderful Lord's Day, brothers and sisters. Thank you for hanging in there with us. Even though the total number in live attendance may be slowly dropping, this word is recorded so you can really help the other saints who cannot join the live session to listen to this fellowship. I consider these Lord's Day afternoon talks to be very special and very timely as far as our church life is concerned and as far as what the Lord wants to do in the USA. Now, we've been on this subject of bearing fruit. This is absolutely a great matter. It is not a side matter or a supplementary thing in the Word of God. It is central because this has everything to do with God's purpose and everything to do with His economy, which, as we know,

is to build up the Body of Christ. But how do we build up the Body of Christ? First, we need sinners, people to be saved, to be regenerated, to become members of Christ and even a member of His Body. For that, they need to hear the word of the gospel, they need to come to know the truth versus all kinds of falsehoods and vanities, and they need to be saved. Then they need to grow in life, which really means they need to be fed and nourished and cherished just like a baby. In the case of gardening or planting, they need a lot of care. My daughter has a garden in the back of our house, and before long, the back part of our backyard became her garden. It's not just flowers, but all kinds of vegetables, tomatoes, strawberries, all kinds of herbs, and all kinds of things in little pots and little bags. Her daily attention to that garden continues to bring forth a harvest, a growth of fruits and vegetables for our consumption and enjoyment. Not only little babies need so much care, even a little plant needs a lot of care, a lot of heart, and a lot of time and energy just to bear some fruit.

### **Spreading Vine Tree**

Don't forget the Father is the husbandman and He is the cultivator of this single, universal vine tree, this organism of Himself mingled with the purchased or redeemed ones. This vine tree is simply His Son. The Father is growing His Son on the earth in human soil, the soil of our earthly being, by dispensing Himself, His person, His element, and His life into man. Human beings are the soil for Him to grow in an individual way, in each one of us, and in a corporate way, the church, His people. This vine tree is there eventually to be His glory, His glorious expression, the expression of the Father, who was in the Son as the Spirit flowing into us. This vine is a tremendous increase of the Son. Christ is universally great, immeasurably great, and unlimitedly vast. All the universal dimensions are this Christ. His breadth, depth and height are immeasurable, and He is the One who fills the whole universe, and He certainly fills all of us, His elect, and He is in all. This vast Christ needs to grow. In Himself as the divine One, he does not need to grow because He's already great. He is God Himself. But as God incarnate, as divinity mingled with humanity, as such a mingled

God-man, He needs to grow. He needs to be expressed not just as God, but as a God-man. He wants to find expression, not just in Himself in His divine glory, but He wants His divine glory to fill human beings. These human beings collectively and in a built-up way would become His vast increase and growth, enlargement, duplication, and expression. We all know this will consummate in the New Jerusalem.

We know this is God's purpose, but my point is that if no human beings were saved, then no one would be regenerated and today this earth would be filled just with sinners. There would be no vine tree, there would be no increase of Christ in you, and there would be no growth. In this picture of the vine tree, there would be no spread. The vine tree just spreads and spreads. When there is propagation of this vine tree, it grows and wraps around the whole earth. Therefore, the growth and increase of this tree in the form of fruit is essential to God's purpose and central to the Lord's economy. We should never consider gospel preaching or fruit bearing to be a side thing or a supplementary thing. No, absolutely not. It is central to God's economy. Yes, we need to grow and be built up as the Lord's believers and His members. We do need to bear the fruit of the Spirit according to Galatians 5. These virtues, which are just the divine attributes, are expressed and now lived out in and through us. We should bear such spiritual fruit, no doubt, and therefore every day we should not live in our flesh or do the works of the flesh. Rather, as the apostle exhorted us, we should walk by the Spirit, live by the Spirit, and by doing so we will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. We will then live out Christ and express His aromatic virtues in our daily living and in our human relationships with one another, as husbands and wives, as parents and children, and as brothers and sisters.

### **Bearing Fruit of People**

There is another fruit that we must bear, and that fruit is people. Sometimes we think the first kind of fruit is essential, but the second kind of fruit is perhaps somewhat optional. I want to correct that wrong concept. Both kinds of fruit are not optional but are essential,

and I daresay nowadays, with the Lord's burden upon us, this second kind of fruit needs our development. We need to speak more about this. We need to pay attention to this kind of fruit-bearing. Each one of us need to be fruit-bearing branches in the vine. Here we are laboring on this matter, but I feel I am repeating some of these things so that we all have a view. Why are we stressing this? It is because among us there is a lack, and I would say quite a lack over many years. It does not mean we didn't preach the gospel and it does not mean no saint bore fruit. That's not true. But I'm saying compared to what should be, dear saints, we are quite behind. The situation among us in this respect is far from satisfactory. Let us not despair or be overly self-critical, but let us be convicted by this, and let us be renewed in our vision concerning this matter. I have six areas to help us all practice this, and of course with the limited time we cannot develop all of these things adequately. I believe in the coming days and months and years these things will be before us and soon these things would be built up, cultivated, and developed in us, particularly in our personal life and in our church life.

### **Spirit, Atmosphere, Habit and Culture**

I will use four words to describe what I would like to see, but I don't believe it's me, I believe it is the Lord who wants to see this in our church life: spirit, atmosphere, habit, and culture. I use these four words to describe the kind of church life that the Lord must build up in these days. I would not expect every single saint to be so burdened and so active about this. That probably won't happen. But I do pray to the Lord, and I have been praying for a long time regarding this, that there would be a substantial percentage, about one out of every two saints, 50% of the saints would really mean business. There would be a change. Even if there is one out of three saints or one out of every four saints who are truly given to this in a serious way, then something will happen. Let us see how all this will work out.

#### **1. *The Spirit of the Gospel***

When I say "spirit," I mean the spirit of the gospel. The gospel is a fire;

it is not just a mere work. The gospel is a spirit. We need a personal life and a church life that is imbued with the spirit of the gospel. We might have the spirit of service and the spirit of good and different things in our lives and in our church life, but this element, the spirit of the gospel, may be lacking or even absent. There are churches that never preach the gospel and there are brothers and sisters who never preach the gospel or have concern for sinners and their ultimate fate. You know what I mean? No burden. They are concerned for their own growth and they're very concerned whether they will be an overcomer, but they have hardly any concern for sinner's salvation and whether someone will go to the lake of fire or not. It does not bother them. There is something very wrong.

We need to have that spirit, that burning, that burden, that heart of the gospel. It is best to read some stories of past evangelists and missionaries. Sometimes we may talk down and say, "Oh these are just 'Christian' or 'Christianity' things. Don't say that so quickly. Many of them put us to great shame. They live for people's salvation and they care for people's souls much more than we do. We know God's economy and we know all these deep things, but when we see people, we don't have a burden for their salvation and for them to come to know the Lord, the Savior. We don't have that kind of feeling like the Lord. Please read the Gospels to see that kind of compassion and heart, the feeling like the Good Samaritan as a case in point. That is only a parable, but it's a parable about the Man-Savior, Jesus. This man was beaten to death and left in the trench, and the Levite passed by, the lawyer passed by, and nobody cared that he was half dead. Then this Samaritan, who was not a pure-blooded person, came by and had compassion on him. That story is so moving and so touching. He poured the oil and the wine on him, put him on a donkey, and then took him to the inn and told the innkeeper to take care of him and he would compensate him. That inn refers to the church, and this Good Samaritan, of course, is Christ. But that can be applied to us, brothers and sisters. I really feel it is good for us in these days to go back and read the Gospels of Christ repeatedly not for doctrines but for the

stories.

The Lord as a man is just so moving. If He did not have this spirit within Him, or this heart within Him, what was the Lord doing here? He could just go straight to the cross. But He set up a model, a model life and a model service as a mold for us to conform to, in a very good sense for us to imitate. Paul said he imitated Christ and we should imitate the apostle (1 Cor. 11:1). We should learn this way.

Dear saints, chapter two in the wonderful book *The Character of the Lord's Worker* is "A Lover of Men." Please read this tonight. "A Lover of Men." The original Chinese title is even better: "Considering Men Lovable." That is the Chinese title. You will not love men if you do not think they are lovable. Who will love something that is not lovable? God so loved the world and gave His only begotten to us (John 3:16). There is love there. He did that because we are lovable to Him. We, sinners are lovable to Him. Even the most awful kind of sinners are lovable to God.

Dear brothers and sisters, this may sound so basic, not so "high peak." But you know what? We are missing this in our lives and in our church life. When people come among us in the church life, what do they feel? What kind of spirit do they touch? Do they touch this warmth? Do they touch this beating heart? Do they touch this compassion? Brothers, read that chapter. By the way, in that chapter, in the first paragraph, if I remember correctly, Watchman Nee said that he was not talking about loving the brothers. That is not what he was talking about. He was talking about the loving of all men, all people, all colors, sizes, shapes – just loving people that God created for Himself.

## ***2. The Atmosphere***

Not only should we have this spirit of love towards mankind, but we also need an atmosphere in our church life. Even in our homes, brothers and sisters, there is an atmosphere. There is also an atmosphere of sharing the gospel, sharing the word, giving our

testimony, gaining people, and leading men to Christ. That should not be an event or just some special gospel conference or some gospel campaign. No, it is an atmosphere in the church life.

When I come to your home, I do not just see the furniture. When I come to your home, I touch a certain kind of atmosphere in your home. It is unique. That atmosphere exudes the owner of that house – what they are and who they are. If I go to a hippie's house, that will exude a certain kind of atmosphere in the decoration, for example. Dear brothers and sisters, in the house of God, the church of the living God, there should be an atmosphere among us of preaching the word, sharing Christ, and a kind of longing and burden for people to be saved. In our meetings, people can touch it and feel it. This church is burdened for people. This church is interested in people. This church is not just doing their thing. They are just so warm and so loving for people's souls, for people to know God. Even down to having tracks by your door, in your car – there is this kind of atmosphere. That atmosphere requires building up.

### ***3. The Habit***

The third thing is habit. Brothers and sisters, in all our churches, we need to deliberately build up in ourselves to have a habit of regularly bearing fruit, of praying for fruit, of petitioning God with names. We need a habit even of spending a certain amount of time every week on this matter, just like we now have a habit of going to meetings. Do you not have a habit of going to the Lord's Day meetings? You feel terrible if you do not remember the Lord, because it has become a habit. But somehow preaching the gospel is not a habit. It is a once-in-a-while thing. That is very wrong. That is not the Lord. We need to make the preaching of the word, the sharing of the gospel, and leading people to the Lord, even teaching the truth to seekers, something as our daily and weekly habit. I am going to say a little bit more in a moment about this.

#### **4. The Culture**

Then number four, eventually, when we build up this habit in the church, there will be this culture. Firstly, I talked about this kind of personal spirit. Then there would be this corporate atmosphere. Then I talked about a personal building up of a habit. Corporately, that habit will become a culture among us. The church life as a community has a culture that you can almost feel and touch. What is the culture of the church? Well, we should enjoy Christ. We should be in the word. We should do all these things. But I am here stressing something that is missing. That is the culture of fruit-bearing. Even if the elders do not say anything, even if we are not promoting anything, the church automatically, regularly, normally, and consistently would have this culture of speaking the word, of sharing the word, of bringing people to the Lord, and bearing fruit.

I pray for this. I pray for the spirit, the atmosphere, the habit, and the culture. Not just sharing the gospel as an event to stir things up or to go out there and do the tables. As an event, that won't last. My daughter cannot grow that garden as an event. There will be no garden, trust me. But it's every day, rain and shine, she is out there, clipping and doing all kinds of things to grow this lovely garden and to produce fruit. It is a regular thing. It is a long-term labor. But the fruit will come. The fruit will come in persons. You will bring men to the Lord. As that hymn says, "Must I go, and empty-handed? Must I meet my Savior so?" That will be a very sad thing if one day, when we meet the Lord, we have to say, "Lord, I did nothing. I have no souls to bring to You." What if rather there would be some that would be standing there to welcome us into the eternal tabernacles – people that we had a share in saving and bringing to Christ? Dear ones, I hope there can be a major shift, an adjustment, in our personal lives and in our church life. I do not trust in campaigns. I trust in long-term rebuilding of the kind of church life that pleases God.



## **Six Necessities for Fruit-Bearing**

### ***1. Confession***

There are six things that I want to mention today, two of which I already mentioned two weeks ago. I am adding four other things. The first thing I mentioned two weeks ago was confession. We must start with confessing our sins, our transgressions, our shortcomings, our wrongdoings in many ways. I cannot tell you what to confess, but the Lord knows. When we come to contact the Lord and open to Him, His light will shine within us to touch many areas of our lives. It could be anything. I do not know what, but the Lord knows. He will spotlight. That light will spotlight different areas that are wrong, sinful, evil, and selfish. These things become a kind of blockage in our blood vessels, in the flow of the Spirit. They become a kind of obstacle or insulation in our fellowship with the Lord. It is like pruning the vine tree, pruning the excess branches, so that the sap can flow and bear fruit.

I am not talking about introspection. I am talking about proper confession before the Lord. The more we have this kind of confession, the more these barriers are removed between us and Him, and the more we can live in a state of abiding in the Lord in this fellowship. The Lord can just flow freely within us. There will be nothing bothering our conscience. The sense of guilt, the sense of the stain of sin will be lifted from us. We will just be ones that can really live with the Lord, be one with the Lord, and in fellowship with the Lord all the time. This is the Christian life.

This flow of the Lord's life within us is essential. Just like the sap flowing through a tree all the way to the branches to work to eventually bear fruit. This flow within us will eventually result in an overflow, and the overflow of this flowing life within us will bear the fruit. We will have something to minister to people. We will have something to say to people. The Lord will be there to flow in us without any kind of restriction. So, brothers and sisters, we need a regular life of confession. I do not care how advanced you are, how spiritual you are. We still need confession with the Lord, and from

time to time we need a longer period in the Lord's presence to confess our sins more thoroughly. Trust me, brothers and sisters, this is a principle. This is a law. We must start here if we mean business to bear fruit.

Through confession we empty ourselves and pour ourselves out and are forgiven by the Lord. Oh, what a joy to be forgiven and to be cleansed by the blood of the Lamb, by the Lord's blood. My, how clean we feel, how light we feel, how ready we are to flow and soar and move. What a condition this is. So many of us have a bothered conscience, sins that are undealt with, or hidden things that we never really dealt with the Lord about. If we are always heavy laden and depressed, this is not a good condition. Then we are not vital. So, let us start there. There should not be one day that there is no confession, brothers and sisters.

## ***2. Consecration***

The second matter is consecration. After we have had a thorough confession, automatically, spontaneously, we will renew our consecration. We will renew the offering of ourselves to the Lord. Every day, brothers and sisters, should be a day of consecration. I told you that the priests in the Old Testament had to add wood night and day to the fire on the altar of the burnt offering. The fire came once. That was it. But from that time on, it was up to the priest to add the wood every day.

I hope we mean business to bear fruit for the Lord. We need to be a consecrated person, a living sacrifice, offering ourselves, our lives, our possessions, what we have, what we can do, what we are to the Lord for His purpose, for His use. This should be spontaneous. This should not be extraordinary. It should be quite a common thing to tell the Lord that we love Him, that we are here on the earth for nothing but for Him and for His church, to just renew our love for Him and our consecration to Him.

### **3. Resolution**

The next thing, which may surprise you, is resolution. Consecration is to offer yourself to God, or to offer yourself in Christ to God for His purpose, so that He can work in you and do something in you. Even in this matter of fruit-bearing, we need a specific consecration. By the way, I actually should say something more here. I want us to go and practice these next two weeks two specific things of confession and consecration, among other things that the Lord may touch you. In confession, how about we confess, “Lord, I have been barren. I have not borne fruit for a long time.” Some of us may say, “I have never borne fruit for You.” That is worthy of much confession. We were not even bothered by that. But we should be very bothered. Our conscience should bother us. The Lord is bothering us. “Lord, forgive me. I took care of my own growth. I took care of my own well-being, but I forgot about men. I forgot about souls. I forgot about people that are going to end up in perdition. I do not care about that. Lord, I do not have Your heart. Forgive me, Lord. Forgive me, Lord. I have no awareness and compassion for people. I just love myself. Lord, I confess.” The Lord may touch you to tears, with weeping, in this matter. In consecration, similarly, we have a lot of consecration that is quite general. How about consecrating yourself to bear fruit? Specifically, consecrate yourself to bear remaining fruit for the vine. How about that specific consecration? Be specific for reality. We have been very general, brothers and sisters, too general with the Lord. The Lord would like to be specific with us. “Lord, I consecrate myself, henceforth until You come, to be a normal fruit-bearing branch, to bear some fruit for Your increase.”

Now we come to resolution. When I say *resolution*, I mean to make a determination, to make a decision. You may say, “Wow, we are told not to do things with our own strength and not to strive to keep the law.” I understand that. But that is not what I am talking about. I am talking about exercising our God-given will, even the God-renewed will, the human will in us, to make a resolution, to make the decision, to bear fruit.

For example, if a couple is going to get married, they have the wedding and go through the motions, right? They make promises to do this or that, through thick and thin, for sickness or health. Once you do that, it doesn't take long before there will be a divorce. Real marriage is not just about promises, it's about making a decision, a resolution, a life-long resolution to each other because this is not going to change. You close all the backdoors. This is how it is supposed to be. A lot of these words are just empty words with no strong decision and determination.

### ***A Vow***

In the Old Testament, there is this word called "vow." A vow, like the Nazarite vow, is more than a promise. A promise of vow is a promise with an oath. An oath is like swearing to God, you swear and put your hand on the Bible. You are pledging an oath on top of a promise. You're not just promising something that you can rescind and reverse. No, you settle this promise with an oath, with a swearing to the heavens. This is a resolution. This is a decision. This is a determination. This is an exercise of your will that from henceforth I'm committed to this marital relationship.

When we got saved, we got married to Christ. We became betrothed to one Husband, the Lord. It's a marital covenant. The Lord made a covenant to us. And He expects us to respond with a covenant to Him. God is committing His everything to us, and we should be committing everything to Him. That is only right. So we should make a vow. I'm actually quoting Brother Lee's word concerning fruit-bearing. He said that we need to make a vow. He said that if we are kind of wishy-washy saying, "Well, maybe I will bear fruit. I don't know, we'll see," the chances are we won't bear fruit. Just like if I go get married and I say, "Well, we'll see how it goes. Okay, well, let's just try it. Let's put the rings on and give it a shot." Will you marry someone who says that? I hope not because there is no decision or vow there. There is no resolution. That commitment is totally untrustworthy.

When we say we make a resolution, that doesn't mean that we will use our natural strength to keep the law or something like that. But it does mean that we are serious with God, we make a decision in His presence. And we entrust ourselves to Him, to cooperate with him, so that this vow can be executed and carried out. Do you see this? This is very important. Don't be afraid to make a vow. The Nazarite vow was a vow. For their whole life a priest won't shave his head; he won't drink the fruit of the vine; he won't go near a dead body. And sometimes if they break the vow, they have to vow again. It's that serious to God. Dear ones, I really don't think it is too much that we would make such a vow to the Lord. You may say, "Well, what if I can't keep the vow?" That's possible, but that shouldn't keep us from making a vow. Make a vow and say, "Lord, I'm committing myself. Lord, now You bear the responsibility. Keep me and remind me. Work in me. I mean business Lord." Brothers, the wishy-washy way is no way to live a Christian life and no way to live a church life.

After all these 50 years in the church life, I can tell you, the secret of staying in the Lord's recovery is to keep your commitment. You make the decision to follow the ministry, to follow the Lord, and to take this narrow way. That's it, you don't change. You don't go by the weather; you just go through thick or thin. You might consider that I am really strong. I wouldn't say that I'm that strong. But I am saying my decision gives the Lord the way to keep me and to strengthen me and to make me faithful. That's not me, but Christ. But I must cooperate with Him. My will has to take the lead first. God has not given us a spirit of cowardice but of power. The first thing is our will. So brothers and sisters, vow to the Lord that you would bear fruit in the coming days, in the coming years make that vow. I'm not talking about how to here. I'm just talking about that decision. It's very right, very proper, very pleasing to the Lord, I believe.

When it comes to the gospel, there is the word "go" in the three synoptic gospels. "Go." Then you will say, "Well, there's no goal in the Gospel of John. You're more than wrong. Chapter 15 says "You did not

choose me, but I chose you and set you that you will go forth and bear fruit." That word "go" means that you move from point A to point B. You are really going, you're doing something to bear fruit so that your fruit would remain. Then whatever you ask to bear remaining fruit, the Father will give it to you. What a promise. Dear ones, we've been chosen already. We've been marked out already. And we've been set or grafted into this wonderful vine tree, that we would bear fruit and that our fruit should remain. The decision we make is entirely consistent with God's will, with the husbandman, and with the vine itself. Dear ones don't be afraid to make that vow. Even if you have never borne fruit, make that vow and see what the Lord would do.

#### ***4. Prioritization***

The next step after this resolution is prioritization. This means that we consider it as a priority. What I am talking about now is practical. We have 168 hours in every week, and we all have the same number of hours, no one has more, and no one has less. If you take away the hours of sleep at an average of eight hours a day, we still have 112 hours left, every one of us. These 112 hours are awake time moments. Everyone has to have a schedule as to how they live. Schedules are made according to priority. Whatever is important to you, you do. You work, you cook, you eat, you have all kinds of things that you have to do such as exercise and so forth. Even in our church life, we go to this meeting, to that meeting, we do this and that. But have we prioritized our weekly schedule to bear fruit? To prioritize is to have definite set apart times built into our schedule. These times are to contact people, to pray for people, to share the gospel with people, to preach the word to people, to visit people, to bring them the good news, and to bring them the truth of Christ? This is a huge matter. It is not that we don't have time for this. We are not speaking about a ton of hours. We are talking about setting aside one hour in one week. We prioritize one hour, two hours, or three hours. It depends, every one of us is different. But you prioritize this, you set the time aside and it becomes something regular. Just like you go to the meetings. When the time comes, you just go; it's a priority. It's set. This matter of bearing fruit

should be a matter of gaining increase and a set priority in our schedule.

We need to budget our time. We have 112 hours a week. Let's say we give one hour or 1.2 hours per week. That's 1% of our moments that we are awake. I think we have 1.2 hours because we easily let two to three hours fly by for nothing on computer games or things that are really not necessary. We consume minutes and hours on end. May we redeem the time by budgeting our time and energy for this matter. It's like Paul says, the exercise of the body has temporal profit, but the exercise unto godliness has profit, not only in this age, but in the age to come. Dear brothers and sisters that one or two hours every week you spend on bringing people to the Lord and bringing the Lord to people to bear fruit will be eternally memorable. It will have eternal value for sure before God. I mention this much to you to budget your time.

### ***5. Petition***

The next step is to petition. You can start with using this time to pray, and not just pray for the world. Of course, we need to pray for the world, but how about we start with our little Jerusalem and pray for the people that we know. We can pray for our family members, our relatives, intimate friends, and for people that we meet often and that the Lord put into our heart. This could be the grocer, the nurse, any people that the Lord put has placed in your surroundings. How about start with creating a list of all the ones that the Lord brings to your mind and then start praying. How about we start there to devote a time every week to consider this. You may even be led to find out where they are, where they are living, and how they are doing. But you pray for them, pray over them. You write down their names. These are not just souls in general but are those you are burdened for in your little Jerusalem.

### *The Account in Acts 10*

I would like you to go back and read the story of Cornelius, the Gentile in Acts 10. As a Gentile, the Holy Spirit was given to him or poured out upon him. On Pentecost the Spirit was poured out on the Jewish part, and in chapter 10 of Acts on the Gentile part of the Lord's Body. I am so moved today just reading about this man Cornelius when he got the vision and sent people to look for Simon Peter. At the same time Simon Peter saw a vision of these unclean things. Then eventually Simon Peter came to Caesarea where this man was, and he says, Cornelius was waiting for Simon Peter when he came. Listen to verse 24, "having called together his relatives and intimate friends." I find that to be so wonderful. And then in verse 33 he says to Peter, "Now, therefore, we are all present before God to hear all the things that have been commanded to you (Simon Peter) by the Lord." This was before Peter started preaching the gospel. What a lovely scene. Not just Cornelius, but his relatives and his friends were gathered together. He did not want to be the only one blessed. He wanted all of those close to him to share in this blessing.

Remember that household salvation is also a very strong matter in the Bible. Brothers and sisters, it is good to start with prayer, with a list of names in a very practical way. And today with Zoom, it almost doesn't matter where these people live. You can reach out to contact them with the Lord and with the gospel. Start with petition by making specific requests of the Lord. In John 15, when it speaks of the branches bearing fruit, it mentions twice to ask whatever you will. What a promise. In other things, we cannot ask what we will. But in fruit-bearing, the Father and the Son are so burdened for fruit-bearing that He said to ask whatever you will. This is to ask for people. Ask for these by name, ask for persons that they may come to know the Lord, that they may be saved and regenerated. Pray for this, pray for these names, pray for these people. These prayers will not be in vain.

George Mueller of Bristol had several hundred people that he prayed for in his list. Everyone got saved by the time that he died except one.



And soon after he died that one also got saved. Do you think that the prayer for our family members, for our relatives and friends and for people that the Lord has put on our hearts would be rejected by God? If you pray for a bigger pay paycheck, I'm not so sure whether that will be answered or not. But to pray for people, God would not reject it. No, He said the opposite. He said "Ask." Not just pray, but "ask" what you will. And it will be given. Let this faith be in us for fruit be borne brothers and sisters.

### ***6. Coordination***

The last thing is coordination. In time, we would not just be a lone branch. We would be two or three branches together to help one another to bear fruit in the long term. Yes, fruit bearing is very individual matter. John 15 speaks of "every branch" and "each branch. This is the Lord's word. One day, each one of us will have to give an account before the Lord. But there is another side. In the vine tree you cannot tell which branch is which. It's all twisted together and so on. Eventually we all need companions, gospel companions, and shepherding companions to sustain a long-term fruit-bearing practice in life. We do this by standing with one another, praying for one another, and coordinating with one another to contact people and care for them in a coordinated way. You may be good with this. I may be good with that. But together by two or three, we could bring someone solidly to the Lord. Two or three is the smallest unit of the church life. I will spend more time in the coming days to talk about the twos and threes. I'm very happy dear brothers and sisters to have a way to share this with you. Don't be weighed down by all these big words thrown around. They are very practical and practice-able, if we would only do this in the Lord's presence. I hope you will all take this to heart and practice. The Lord bless all of us. Amen.