

Uplifting Our View of Meetings, Especially of the Lord's Table

Fellowship from Minoru Chen on December 5, 2021

Prayer

Lord, You are the Spirit of reality. Lord, as You promised, You have given us of the Spirit. You have given us and sent us the Spirit in the Father's name. May the Spirit guide us all into reality. Lord, we pray for this and are one with this that this would be experienced very much today in the church life. Lord, guide us into more of the divine reality. Lord Jesus. In today's fellowship, Lord, continue to guide us. Lord, continue to infuse us and to enlighten us. Continue to work in us all things related to Your economy. Lord, be with us today. Cleanse us with Your precious blood. Amen.

Introduction

I'd like to remind all of us, brothers and sisters, that this is not a time that I'm giving messages as such. This fellowship is not something prepared and very composed and very sequential and logical in that way. These times are more free talks and fellowship. Although it is of a perfecting nature, and you may even say it has a kind of a training aspect to it, they're not messages in that sense. And I appreciate this format and to have this opportunity to have this kind of fellowship. I hope the Lord would continue to give us this kind of opportunity in the coming days as He leads.

An Assembly of Called Out Ones

We had a pivot or turn two Lord's days ago prior to the Thanksgiving conference. I said it's a kind of a turn from so many things we've been covering. Those of you who have been following this fellowship know what

I'm talking about. The turn is to talk about meetings – the church meetings, the meeting life of the church. As we have mentioned, the church is the *ecclesia*. This means the church is the assembly or gathering of the called ones or the called-out ones. No doubt referring to us, the Lord's believers, who have been not only predestinated and chosen, but in time have been called out by God to Himself and to His purpose for His interests and for His Kingdom. This calling is out of everything that is not God, out of everything of the world, everything of Satan, and everything that is idolatrous. God is calling us out of all of that to be a peculiar people, to be His special treasure. That's how much we mean to God, and as such, this people have now formed into a new kind of community that this earth has never seen.

The Holy Assembly in the Old Testament

In the Old Testament, God's people were the Jews, the Hebrew descendants. They were that holy assembly of God in the Old Testament, and you had to be born into that to gather with them. If you weren't a Jew, then you were out of luck and you were just part of the nations. But the point is they were an assembly. After the Lord called or saved Israel out of Egypt, the story began. The patriarchs and their descendants ended up in Egypt, then after more than four hundred years, God called them back to the land that He had given to the ancestor, their forefather, Abraham and his sons and the tribes of Israel. They were delivered or saved from Egypt through the Passover and crossed the Red Sea and entered into the wilderness. The wilderness clearly was never the destination. God wanted to bring them into this land of milk and honey. He promised this land to their forefathers and made a covenant with them. Then He, in His faithfulness, brought His people into that land. And there He established His kingdom on the earth in that place. Of course, this would be a special nation of the nations. They were a peculiar treasure to the Lord, and they would be the people who would take the lead among the nations to worship the true God and living God.

But they had to pass through the wilderness and of course, the unfortunate things happened because of their unbelief. Because of their rebelliousness,

and because of their hardness of heart they failed God again and again and again. So, God had to leave them in this wilderness for another generation. The whole generation, those who were twenty years old and above when they left Egypt, all died off. There would be a new generation, those who were under twenty and who were born, I suppose, in the wilderness to go in and take the good land. While in this wilderness these forty years, God did a lot to train them, to discipline them, and of course, above all, gave them His law. Which really, as we know, is in the end, not for them to keep because who can keep the law? But it was more a photograph or a picture of who their God really is and what His attributes are, and the ten commandments were just a picture of this righteous, holy, and glorious God. The point is that He wants a people who will become His expression on earth.

God's Expression

From the beginning of Genesis in the first chapters, God wanted to have a corporate expression and representation of Himself. This was God's intention. But the Adamic race failed. From Adam onwards until Abraham, it was just failure after failure. And so, God had no choice but to call out a special race to accomplish His heart's desire. That would be the race of Abraham. And you all should know that today we are real Jews. We are the race of Abraham. We are the people of faith. So, Abraham is our real ancestor. But the Jews who are the blood descendants of Abraham overall failed God repeatedly, but God's covenant with them still stands and God will still one day work out that covenant that He made with them. That covenant that God made with them in the desert or in the wilderness was not with the patriarchs; it is with the people. That old covenant that is based on the law of the commandments will become old and decrepit and useless. In its place God made a new covenant with this people, which was prophesied in Jeremiah 31. Hebrews chapter eight makes it very clear – "...I will consummate a new covenant upon the house of Israel and upon the house of Judah" (8:8). This covenant was not based on the law but based on grace. It signified a dispensational change from the age of the law to the age of grace. This dispensation and covenant came into being through God's

incarnation of the Eternal Word, that is, God in the person of Christ. So, today we are people of this new covenant.

The Reality Today

But I say all these things to say that today we are God's people in this new covenant. This time in the millennial something else will happen, and it will happen in the new heaven and the new earth and the New Jerusalem. The ultimate things will happen with all the Jews and Gentiles, those who are saved, redeemed, regenerated, renewed, transformed, and glorified. They will be that one entity, the New Jerusalem, in the new heaven and new earth. The New Jerusalem is both God's eternal expression and God's eternal representation. And that should be the case today. That reality should be the reality of the church today. The church today should be a house for God's expression and a kingdom for God's rule and God's reign. That's what we are and who we are, and as such we are a new community just like the Jews of old. They were a new community. There was never such a community before; it was just people on the earth. But starting with Abraham, there was a new people, a new nation, a new a new thing. These people gathered and they assembled. Their assembly was very important. The tabernacle, which was the center of the Jewish life in the wilderness, was the center because this was a place where they worshipped the only true God. All the nations had idols; but this was the only true God. This was the tabernacle of the testimony because the ark of the testimony was in it. That ark was simply Christ, the embodiment of the Triune God. So, that testimony that contains this ark in the holiest place becomes also a tabernacle of testimony, and that tabernacle was simply the enlargement of that ark. The enlargement of the ark is simply the enlarged Christ in fulfillment. And of course, Christ enlarged is really the church, the Body of Christ. That tabernacle of the testimony was also called the tent of meeting. It's a meeting place. What kind of meeting? The meeting between God and His people. God dwells in the tabernacle and not in the tents of these hundreds of thousands of Israelites. They encamped all around this tabernacle as the center of their communal life.

That was a picture for today. In the New Testament we have the fulfillment in the church life. The meeting life is the center. The ecclesia is the center of our community. Our gathering, our meeting together, brothers and sisters, is the center of our existence. It's the center of our lives. Your family, as wonderful as it may be, is not the center. My family is not the center. The center is ecclesia; the assembly of God's called out ones. In other words, God's people are supposed to meet with God, to worship God, to have fellowship with God, to contact God, and if they have problems, they come to this place with all the offerings and so on. All these wonderful offerings in the Old Testament refer to the many aspects of Christ for God's people to offer to God for His satisfaction and for God's people's enjoyment and participation. All this takes place in the place of gathering or the tent of meeting. The tent of meeting is also the place where God speaks through His deputy authority, through the priesthood of Aaron's house, especially the high priests. In the Old Testament, they had Moses, who technically was not the priest, but in actuality was absolutely a priest, a man who lived in God's presence and who had the word of God.

In the tent of meeting God would speak to His people or appear to His people. Whenever God appears, He speaks. And God's speaking is actually His appearing. God does not appear in a silent way. Whenever God appears, He appears to say something on His heart according to His intention. This place of assembly was the place where they came to hear the Lord speak to them. So, to these people surrounding this tent of meeting, this was their center, and this was their focus.

Meeting Today in the Spirit in Our Spirit

I say all this not just to rehearse the Old Testament history, but in a very simple way to impress us again that this is a picture of our church life today. This is our kingdom life today. This is what we do on the earth. In this city or in that city, the center of our existence or the center of our collective and communal life or our heavenly community is this place. Of course, in the New Testament this is not a matter of a physical place. In the Old Testament, there was the physical tabernacle, or, after they entered the

good land, the temple, which was situated in a physical place called Jerusalem where God chose to put His name there. If you wanted to meet God, you had to go there. But in the New Testament, according to John 4:24, *“God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truthfulness.”* Such a physical location is no longer. The real place for us to meet with God is in Christ. Christ is our meeting place. In Christ, only in Him we can meet with God because He is the reality of all the offerings, furnishings, structure, and everything of the tabernacle. Whether it's “hardware” or “software”, it's all Christ. And so today, we meet with God in Christ. Christ is our gathering place. Christ is our place of assembly. However, this Christ today is the Spirit. This Christ today is not just in the heavens, and this Christ for sure is not today in a physical person. Through His death and resurrection, He has become the Spirit, and more than that, that life-giving Spirit that this Christ became entered our human spirit and regenerated it. Not only so, but today the Spirit has made His home in our spirit, at least as a start. Eventually, this Spirit, this Christ, this pneumatic Christ, wants to make home in every part of our being, our soul and eventually our entire being.

We must go back to John 4:24 that says God is Spirit. This is not even just the pneumatic Christ, this is the Father God. He by nature is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in reality. You will not say you will meet with God in this mountain or in that mountain, in the Samaritan mountain or in the Jewish mountain, you meet with God in your spirit because today, this Father in the Son as the Spirit, this Divine Trinity, is entirely in our spirit. Our spirit is the place to meet.

Do you follow me, brothers and sisters? Firstly, we establish that we are here as a church people to meet to worship God and to receive God's oracle and speaking, so that we would be His expression and His representation on the earth to be His testimony. Secondly, we established that this “place” of meeting is not physical, not even the meeting hall or my home or your home, but it is any place where we are in our spirit. For us, the New Testament saved believers, it is in our regenerated and mingled spirit. In

other words, if we gather together without the spirit, there is no real gathering and no real worship. There is nothing but emptiness and vanity. Sorry to say this explains the poor situation of Christendom or Christianity, whether Catholic or Protestant. They have the cathedrals, the fancy meeting places, all the rituals and programs, the technology, multimedia, etc. They have everything, but worshipping God is not that. It is people who are in their spirit, and who are touching reality (again, reality is simply Christ Himself). Without being in the mingled spirit and without having Christ as reality, there is no worship as far as God is concerned. You can have 50,000 people and you can be a mega church, but unless there is this, there is no worship to God. God is not satisfied, and neither are we, the worshipers. There is no drinking of living water. I hope that in all the GTCA cities, there would be new light, new understanding, revelation, and entrance into that revelation in our practices as a result of the meetings of the church.

Importance of the Meeting Life

The meetings of the local churches are a great thing. It is a supreme affair, the highest thing, because this is the place where God's people collectively, corporately, commune. To commune means to fellowship with God. Personally, we can all fellowship with God privately, even in our closet. The Lord told us to pray in our closet, so we can contact the Lord personally for sure, and we must, and we should. But we are not talking about that here. We are talking about the church life here. We are talking about the church as God's kingdom with all the subjects of the kingdom, and the church as God's house with all of God's family. For sure, the church is the Body of Christ with all its members. We are not scattered or detached. We are not just on our own. We are not individualistic and independent believers. There is no such thing. We come together as the church, as that holy, heavenly community on earth, to be God's expression and representation, especially when we meet together. Therefore, we must meet.

I hope there would be a revival of our meeting life, and I think it is time for a revival of our meeting life. Our meeting life has become routine, common, not special, and it has become just some kind of formality, a habit, even I

will say a ritual that we do – we know we need to do that, but it has lost its significance, its importance, and its meaning. The result is that our gathering many times becomes empty, like a shell without the substance and reality. This is a very serious thing. It has lost its weightiness. What does that translate into? That translates into the losing of our testimony, the losing of our expression and our representation of God on this earth. There is a lot that hangs on our meetings.

Vision of the Meeting Life

Brothers and sisters, there is just this burden within that we need to come back to this matter. I'm not even just talking about let's make a meeting a little livelier, a little bit louder with less silence, or little bit more released. Yes, those things are part of it, but we cannot start there. You know why? Because without a vision, we will just invent a new form of meeting, almost like a new religion. I remember in the old days, Brother Lee spoke about Christ versus religion, so we were all touched but a bit not the right way. We all went out the door determined to be not religious, which is the wrong thing. We are not here to be “not religious.” That is not God's economy, but that's all we knew. I remember there were Lord's Table on a coffee table (which is fine in a home with the elements there), and the brothers proceeded to put their feet on that coffee table just to be unreligious. Brothers, that's wrong. We're not talking about that kind of thing. Christ is versus religion, but not in that kind of a way. We are not trying to do that. What the Lord must recover is the genuine meeting life that is up to standard and fulfills all that is typified in the Old Testament, as well as all that is a pattern to us in the New Testament.

We are a meeting people. I know that today, we are forced to use Zoom, but whether on Zoom or in person, we are a meeting people – we meet with God, and we meet with one another, and we are in the presence of God. This meeting is where fellowship occurs – the fellowship between God and us, and the fellowship between us and one another in God. This is the testimony of the church life in a locality. If our meeting life is not up to standard, it is just hollow and empty. That is serious. If our meetings are just

formal, without the Lord's presence, doing the right thing, but really not having the substance, then the testimony is gone.

It is with this view and this burden that I'm making this pivot, this turn in the fellowship. I'm so burdened that in at least in these GTCA cities, there is a chance, an opportunity that we can rebuild our meeting life, upgrade our meeting life, and not just keep on doing the same thing and think that is okay.

The Lord's Table

I don't have the time today to get into some of the more detailed things, but I must tell you that, as I was praying and considering this time, I have a strong burden to start with the Lord's table, the Lord's supper, the gathering to break the bread. As I get into this matter and as I am before the Lord, I must, even today sitting in front of you, repent to the Lord myself. I feel I have a great repentance. I must repent personally before the Lord for the way I treat the Lord's table, for the way I fail to esteem the Lord's table for what it is, even for the way that I may have said certain things or promoted certain things that may give the saints a kind of impression that the Lord's table is not that important. As I'm reconsidering this matter, with the help of the ministry and with the Word of God, I myself feel that I need to re-study this matter. I'm not talking about what kind of bread to make, what kind of juice or wine to drink, what kind of cups to use, and all these kinds of things. I'm not even talking about how to call hymns or what to do in the Lord's table meetings – we will get there, but it is not those things. It is almost like a thunderbolt hit me with this matter of the Lord's table. This is far from the Eucharist and sacraments in the Catholic Church, the wafer, the drink, and all the associated rituals, or a so-called holy communion in the Protestant churches.

Brothers and sisters, there is a reason why the Lord Himself instituted this table of His. Actually, He didn't call it that; it was Paul who used those terms, the Lord's supper or the Lord's table. Those were Paul's terms in chapters 10 and 11 of First Corinthians. When he was dealing with the believers

eating of food offered to idols, he brought up the Lord's table, which the Corinthians also abused. The Lord Himself never said the Lord's table, or My table or My supper, but he did say, My body and My blood. Of all the things, the Lord's table was something instituted by the Lord Jesus Himself for us to do in remembrance of Him. We practice this in a symbolic way. Of course, we reject the Catholic teaching of transubstantiation, that somehow after the sacraments are consecrated, they become the real body of Christ and the real blood of Christ. That teaching is leaven. These are symbols, but the Lord did use these physical symbols to charge us to remember Him, by breaking and eating that bread, and by drinking of that cup, physically. There are not many of the physical things for us as New Testament believers to do. Another one is baptism. There is a physical aspect of baptism but there is always, behind the physical, a mystical aspect to these practices. Baptism signifies the mystical union between the believer and the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, the Triune God. The mystical union is what baptism conveys and testifies. However, there is a physical aspect to that as a testimony.

Similarly, we have these physical things for Lord's table – the bread and the product of the vine, whether its juice or wine. These are just the physical things, but we are to take these physical things as symbols, as a declaration, as a testimony, and behind this are all the mystical realities. That is what is important and what makes the physical practice not empty. It's the inward reality that gives substance to the outward practice. The laying on of hands is another physical practice, but again, it is also not just the outward laying on of hands, but there is the inward reality, which really means the identification with the Body of Christ. Paul practiced that in those days. This matter of the Lord's table, the breaking of bread, is something that the Lord did. In the beginning of His ministry, He subjected Himself to John the Baptist, in order to fulfill the righteousness of God, the Lord Himself would be physically baptized. At the end of His ministry on the earth, He instituted and establish this table, this thing for us to do – “This, do in remembrance of Me.”

Brothers and sisters, the condemnation that I have, and all the repentance I have is that my view concerning the grand and great reality of the Lord's table is still so shallow. It is still so traditional, may I even say, natural, and to some Christians, it's even so superstitious. This Lord's Table is what the early church kept and did on the first day of the week – they used to do it every day, but then eventually it was on the first day of the week that they broke bread according to the Lord's commandments, to remember Him. But my repentance is my view, my understanding, and therefore, my appreciation, and my treasuring of the Lord's table, is low. It is lacking. I'm just talking about me, myself. Without a full and high understanding and appreciation of this, my estimation of this meeting is also not that great. It is just a common thing. I don't know about you, but possibly the Lord's table among us, even in the church, could have become just a common thing. Let's just get it done and move on to the next program, the next meeting. We don't say that, but I'm just saying that when we would come very late to the Lord's table, we could feel like it is just late to a meeting. Needless to say, when we are there, often our heart is not there, our mind is not there, and our praise and engagement is not there. We just go through the things, just sing those songs and hymns, for some of us, we will even offer some praise and so forth, but there is not that level of appreciation of what this table entails.

Worship in the Divine Dispensing

So, I feel brothers and sisters, I have this burden to walk through this whole matter again with all of us. The Lord's table or the breaking of the bread encompasses everything related to the Divine Trinity and His economy. Brother Lee coined this term, “the worship in the divine dispensing,” which is not used very much among us. I would like to spend some time on this matter. I asked you to get the book, “*Basic Lessons on Service*” and I hope you are reading it. In this book, from chapter two through chapter ten, Brother Lee shares nine lessons on the practice of the Lord's table meeting. In the middle of these nine lessons, in chapter six, he mentions the worship in the dispensing of God, that is the worship in the dispensing of the *Triune* God.

In the recent Thanksgiving conference on the topic of living in and with the Divine Trinity, I gave the first message to give a definition of that phrase. There, the emphasis was on the fact that the Divine Trinity is for dispensing. This dispensing is the working of the Triune God into the tripartite man, which is the simple definition of God's economy. This working is so that man would become His expression and representation. Now here, in these basic lessons on service, Brother Lee said, "the worship in the dispensing of the Triune God is the worship to the Father by His many sons with His firstborn Son as the offerings and in His Spirit who mingles Himself with our spirit as the unique place for our worship." (Basic Lessons on Service, Ch. 6, Sec. D.) I'm not getting into this, but I wanted to make this reference. Brothers and sisters, there is not another gathering or meeting of the church, that would display, testify, and reveal such a worship that God desires in this New Testament age. I call it in brief, a dispensational worship, in the sense that the Divine Trinity comes to us, the Father, in the Son, as the Spirit coming into us, whereas this is His coming to us. Here, the worship implies our going to Him in the Spirit, with the Son, back to the Father. The real worship in this universe, brothers and sisters, is simply a triune worship of the Divine Trinity, and with the Divine Trinity. There's no other meeting of the church that would reveal, testify to, and explain this, like the Lord's table. But even if we are sitting at the Lord's table, we may not consider the Lord's table in this way, unless you and I have this level of realization and understanding.

Our Participation in the Body and Blood

I was considering how the Lord said, I will not drink this product of the vine again until that day in My Father's Kingdom. This means that the Lord's table points not only to the Lord's coming, of course we display His death until He comes, but the Lord's table also points to the establishment of the millennial kingdom. In the heavenly part of the millennial kingdom, called the kingdom of the Father, there the Lord will eat and drink with us in this manner. This eating and drinking, if you study the ministry, has to do with the wedding feast in the millennial kingdom. Therefore, it has something to do with the overcoming believers, us in the New Testament and those in the Old Testament. I'm not even here talking about the deep mystery of this

fellowship of the Lord's body and blood. This word *fellowship* can just open the whole window into the Lord's table. This table talks about participation, mutual enjoyment, and our partaking of Christ as the bread of life, that is his body, and also our drinking the cup, called the cup of blessing, which is the recovered portion of God Himself to us, as our eternal portion.

This is the cup of our new covenant brothers and sisters. The whole new covenant with all its blessings are involved in the Lord's table. You must read Hebrews and study what blessings are there that have to do with the covenant. In fact, in Luke, it says this blood is the covenant. (Luke 22:20) It is not just a cup in my covenant, but this blood is the covenant. This covenant includes the forgiveness of sins. Without the shedding of blood, there's no forgiveness of sins. This has to do with our redemption and the eternal redemption that Christ accomplished. All of these things are included in this judicial redemption—our justification, our reconciliation as an enemy to God, our propitiation, the forgiveness of sins, our sanctification, and on and on. Then, the partaking of the bread, is the bread of life from heaven for us to eat which speaks of God becoming our food. Christ, as that heavenly bread, is talking about the eternal life that we enjoy today. All the precious things related to that eternal life are supplied to us today. Brothers and sisters, if you consider these things and think about our meetings today, you will realize our prayers and praise compared to this are still elementary, simplistic, and short. Week after week, our meetings are too much the same.

The Centerpiece of our Church Life

You know, we are what we eat. The bread for us to eat implies our union, our incorporation, and our oneness with the Lord. All these things that have to do with God's economy are in the bread. I hope that after this speaking, we will no longer think that we've got it or that we know the Lord's table. Brothers and sisters, we hardly know it but if we would come to know it, that would be the beginning of a revolution. I want to stir up your interest and your burden in this matter. I would say that the Lord's table is the centerpiece of our church life. It is the most important gathering of the

church. We gather for many reasons, but the Lord's table is the most central gathering. It is the highest, deepest, and all-inclusive. Yet today, it is by accident or default, relegated to just another common little meeting. It has become a meeting that we cannot even fill up the time because we're not there, we don't have the praise, the training, the learning, or the appreciation of just what we are doing. And so our Lord's table is quite void of that level of reality. I don't know, brothers and sisters, how the Lord would lead us. But I just feel that a recovery of the Lord's table, with all of its grand significances as revealed in this word, is central to our church life and to the Lord's testimony among us. And I repent. I need to be before the Lord myself. There is no fellowship to tell you what to do or how to change the meeting but let us start here with the proper view of the Lord's Table.

Reality of Fellowship

I'll just say this last word for today. To Paul in First Corinthians, the key word is fellowship— fellowship of the body and of the blood. The Lord didn't use this word, but it's implied in His eating and drinking with His disciples since they were in a situation of fellowship. I want you to leave today with the understanding at least that, that meeting is a fellowship and it is a worship. When we use the word worship, we refer more to the second section of the table meeting which involves the worship of the Father. But the first part, which is the section involving our partaking of the bread and the wine, it is fellowship. The fellowship is between us and the Lord, through the very bread that we're eating and the very blood that we're drinking, we participate in reality, in the Lord. By drinking the cup, we're also in fellowship and partaking of the very triune God as our recovered portion. It is a very serious thing to be cut off from or to be out of this particular fellowship. At the end of First Corinthians, Paul said much to the Corinthians about how serious the Lord's table is and how they must judge themselves when they come and break the bread, so that there's no divisions among them, and also to prove to themselves meaning to have a discernment of the body when they come. However, because they did not do that, they ate idolatrous food and entered a divisive situation. They didn't prove, judge, or examine themselves. They were flippant. So among them, there was

sickness and even physical death in the church in Corinth, as a result. I'm not saying this to scare anyone, I'm just telling you what is in the word. So you can definitely say that even the Lord's government is involved in this matter.

But I come back to the word fellowship. This is all a matter of fellowship. We can practice starting this week to prepare ourselves for the Lord's table meeting during the week. Our preparation involves maintaining this fellowship with the Lord in our daily lives. May we be those who would keep ourselves eating this holy diet of the bread of life. That we would be those who are continuously receiving the forgiveness of sins by the Lord's blood. Through this practice in our daily lives, we would be right with the Lord and in a condition to fellowship with Him at the Lord's table. For us to be able to sit at the Lord's table meeting, to have our conscience to be in the right condition, to enjoy that moment of fellowship, we need to live like this. If I fellowship with the Lord in my daily life like this, and you do the same, and the whole church does the same, then when we come together, we would have the reality of that corporate fellowship. This time, not just one on one, but the vertical and horizontal fellowship with the Lord and with one another. Then we could really be in the fellowship of the bread, of the body, and of the blood. Amen.