

Words of Encouragement and Admonition

Fellowship from Minoru Chen on December 12, 2021

Introductory Word

So we're here, almost at the end of this year, and you heard my prayer. Maybe I'm a little bit too early, but I'm doing a little counting of blessings. And we really should not wait till the end of the year to count the blessings. We actually should count our blessings every day. May I say every night when we go to bed, we should count the blessings: count how the Lord has blessed us or blessed you. The Lord has been so faithful despite our shortcomings and our deficiencies, even our failures. And so in the morning, we should bless the Lord and thank the Lord for what is ahead. Well, you say the blessing has not come yet, but I'll tell you, our thanksgiving and praise anticipates more blessing from Him. When I say blessing, I don't mean a free ride. I don't mean everything will be hunky dory. I don't mean everything will be fine. I don't mean that. Life, as it is, has its troubles. And the Lord surely is in control of all our environment, according to His sovereignty and mercy to work on us. And so the "all things" of Romans 8:28 will always be there. And some things are not pleasant, somethings are difficult. But we still have to thank the Lord for "all things."

The Work of the Spirit

The Spirit works primarily in two ways. The number one way is within us. The Spirit of reality, the "another Comforter," dwells within us and abides in us. This is, of course, the pneumatic Christ, who is the last Adam. This last Adam became the life-giving Spirit, lives within us, and is with us forever. This Spirit the world does not know, only we do, and how dear and how near He is, being one with our spirit, making our spirit today a mingled spirit. The work of the Spirit today, indeed,

the work of the Triune God upon us today, is from within. This Spirit within us shines and illuminates and exposes. The Spirit within us supplies, nourishes, and sustains. The Spirit within us shepherds and guides us. The Spirit within us corrects, adjusts, and perfects.

The Spirit Guiding and Declaring

All in all, as it says in John 16, this Spirit of reality's main work is to guide us into all reality. And we know reality is nothing but Christ Himself. "I am the way and the reality and the life." (John 14:6a) To guide us into all reality simply means to guide us into Christ, but not the objective Christ, not the historical Christ, not the doctrinal Christ, but the Christ who is reality, who is *alethia* (Greek), who is the one reality. The work of the Spirit is to testify of this Christ. And because the Father is in the Son, so effectively, this Spirit declares the Triune God to us. Quoting Psalms and Hebrews, the Lord says, the resurrected Christ says, even the ascended Christ says, "I will declare Your name to my brothers." (Heb. 2:12) Well, we know that that declaration is not just some kind of proclamation: that declaration implies dispensing and impartation. So when it says the Son declares the Father's name to us, it simply means the Son dispenses the Father. The name means the person, and the person is in the life of that person. So the declaration by the Son of the Father's name to us simply means He is dispensing the Father, His life and His nature, His being and His riches and His attributes into us for our enjoyment as our portion.

This Spirit of reality is actually constantly declaring the processed Triune God to us, in other words, imparting and dispensing. Without the Spirit, we may talk about the dispensing, but where does it take place? It's not outside of us; it's within us. It is this Spirit of reality, constantly doing this work, even when we're asleep. He is doing the dispensing work to guide us into all the reality.

Working in Our Environment

But the Spirit has another work in our outward environment. He who

is today's living Christ allows things to happen in our lives, all kinds of things, all things. And many a time these things are quite the opposite of what we want. They may not be pleasant; they may be even somewhat adverse. The environment may bring us some kind of persecution. It may bring forth suffering to us. You know what I'm talking about. But the Spirit knows, because right before that verse it talks about prayer - that we don't know how to pray. Because we just don't know, we groan. But the Spirit knows, am I right? Christ knows the mind of the Spirit. And so this Spirit, who knows what Christ is doing, would groan on our behalf, to groan along with us. Many times, brothers and sisters, you have the experience, you hardly know what to pray; you are so pressed, you are so dislodged from a kind of a normal situation. You are so bent, so much underlying hardship. You hardly know what to pray, you really don't know what to pray. That's when the Spirit comes alongside as the Paraclete, the Comforter, who knows all of our needs more than we do. And He would be there doing the praying, corresponding to the Christ as the heavenly Intercessor who is praying on the throne. That kind of prayer leads to the "all things" that work in our lives. All these things as we know, it's not just to cause us to suffer. But it is through the sufferings that we are conformed to the image of God's firstborn Son, which is really God's purpose and plan for each one of us.

And so the Spirit would work, even the seven Spirits sent forth into all the earth would work in our lives, in each of our environments, to custom arrange various situations exactly according to what we need. We may not think so, but the Spirit knows, and the Lord Christ knows. All these things are for our profit, and for our benefit, and for the gain of those who love Him and who are called according to His purpose. So when that happens, when the Spirit works that way, what do we do? We say "amen." We obey God's hand in the environment, through the Spirit's arrangement.

You can call that kind of situation a kind of discipline. Now, discipline does not mean you did something wrong, so you are penalized or

punished. No, discipline does not mean that. I'm talking about the discipline of the Holy Spirit. The discipline of the Holy Spirit is one of the main works of the Spirit in all of our lives. Those who pursue Him, those who fall who are His followers, those who care for His purpose, we are all under the Spirit's work and discipline. That work is simply a work to break our natural man, to tear down our natural life, and to terminate our natural being, to bring our whole being, bit by bit and part by part, into a condition of being renewed. So, Paul said it well in Second Corinthians 4:16, "Though our outer man is being consumed or decaying, our inner man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day." This simply means that the environment is working. The Spirit's disciplining hand is upon us, but the inner man is being renewed. Here you see this very necessary process called renewal in our lives, to bring us fully into the new creation and make us really the beings of the New Jerusalem. It works like that.

Working Within and Without

So we have the Spirit's inner working, and we have the Spirit's outward working. Today the Spirit's work is simply to accomplish God's economy in this way. I say this brothers to admonish us to treasure the Spirit's work, to regard the Spirit's work, to cooperate with the Spirit's work, and I would say, to obey the Spirit's work. Those who are led by the Spirit are the sons of God. So, for us to be truly the mature sons, not just children of God, we need to learn to be led. Romans 8:14 does not say, "the Spirit leads us." It says that sons are led." So, we need to be those Christians who are constantly being led by the Spirit of God to wherever the Spirit goes and whatever the Spirit does. There is the guiding within us bringing us into all reality. This is coupled with the work in our environment. This is how we will be transformed and conformed. I hope a little word like this, which I did not prepare to speak, would be a comfort to all of us to strengthen us all.

An Atmosphere of Grace and Peace

Now, I would like to pay attention to the meetings. And today, I would

like to first say something to continue this vein on the Lord's table. But at the end, I would surely like to reserve some time to say a few words concerning some things we all should take heed of or should be aware of in order to preserve a pleasant church life, a good and pleasant environment in the church life. You may be surprised that a lot of the building up of the church depends on the atmosphere of the church. It does not just depend on activities and so forth. The atmosphere is of utmost importance.

So, in the New Testament, grace and peace to you is almost always the apostle's greeting and salutation. Well, it works practically both ways, peace and grace or grace and peace. Grace and peace means that wherever grace is, only there will be real peace. When grace is with us, then peace will be the result. But the opposite in our experience is equally true. And that is when we, in the church life, in our home life, in our marriage life, in our family life, and in our serving life, have a condition of peace, then grace will flow. The river of grace will flow. If there is no peace, but contention or argument, if there's discord in the church life between elders, between saints, between couples, then grace cannot come. Grace does not visit a quarrelsome situation. Grace flows when there is peace, so that is also true. So my burden is that in every locality we will preserve a precious, peaceful atmosphere in the church life, so that grace can flow and the church can be built up.

We're going to get into First and Second Samuel next week in the training and it talks about Samuel, Saul, and then finally and mainly about David. David wanted to build a house for God, but God forbid that because David was a warring king. He fought, he possessed the land, and he assembled the materials, but that's it. God's house awaited Solomon, his son, his seed, to do the building, because that's when there was peace. The building of God's house took place in an environment of peace, not in an environment of war. Now, there is always a war against Satan; that's another matter. But I'm talking about Israel itself, and talking about us, the members of the church. If

we are at war with one another, forget about it. I'd like to say a few words about this.

Learning How to Have the Table Meeting

First, very quickly, I want to strongly promote the book *Lessons on Service*. You just have to get it. There are some books, like this one that for me are a must have. It's better even that you don't have it in digital format but have it in the old school analog print so that you can underline and turn the pages. Well, maybe I'm old school, but I suggest that. And I suggest that you not only to get the book and get into it, but I surely hope that the churches and the leading brothers will take it upon themselves to use these lessons year-round. I don't even mean just this book, there's also a sister-book called *Lessons on Life*, which is kind of a bluish color. These messages were all given in 1978, after we had been through a severe turmoil, as part of Brother Lee's help to establish the churches in southern California, one of the most hard-hit places by the rebellion at that time. I was not even serving full time then; I was working a job. But I served, and I was taking some leading responsibility in the church life and in a new church that was raised up kind of like a GTCA church. We took these trainings from Brother Lee with his very brief outlines, and he would speak something to us. Then we would turn around and go back to our localities to carry on a weekly training with the saints. I don't know about the saints, I'm quite sure they received much help. But for me, that was not only a salvation from that tumultuous situation, but also provided a real view, a real help to me in how to build up, how to edify the saints in the most basic things of life, truth, and service. There are also a series of books called *Truth Lessons* you have to look for.

Now I just want to go down some points, but I think it helps to reiterate this matter of the Lord's table. First, I would like to quote this portion. I told you the first chapters in *Lessons on Service* are on this matter of meetings, and specifically on the Lord's table. Let me read to you that we all need to be trained, we need training to partake of the Lord's table in a proper way. This requires training; it's not natural.

Before we were saved there was no such thing as attending the Lord's table. That was a foreign thing to us. After we were saved, we attend the Lord's table in remembrance of the Lord weekly on the first day of the week. Sorry to say, many of us don't know how to partake of the Lord's table. There is a way to do it, otherwise we will just be wild, uncultured, or unlearned. We need to learn how to enjoy this table. In the past we have had the Lord's table in an untrained way. I have seen many of our Lord's tables filled with untrained saints who have never learned. They use their hands to eat, sorry to use that illustration. They don't wipe their mouth. It spoils the whole situation because the attendees are unlearned. But now we're going to have the Lord's table in a civilized way, in a cultured way, in a trained way. In the past, we ate wildly without "table manners." We teach our kids table manners, right? We tell them not to put their feet on the table, not to throw their food on the floor, not to talk while they are eating, and to say, "pass the bread please." There are certain table manners that make eating at the table pleasant. Now we are training the saints to have table manners. This is what it means to receive some training to have the Lord's table.

The table manners at the Lord's table are not formal things; there are no rules or regulations. To have proper table manners at His table means that we exercise our spirit and release our praise to Him in the right way. Brother Lee said that the Lord's table is the best meeting, but it is the most difficult meeting for us to have. I'd like you to remember that. If you think it's easy to have the Lord's table, you're wrong. It is the most difficult meeting for us to have. But brothers and sisters, let's encourage one another. We do this every week; we have a lot of chances to learn and be trained. But sorry to say we don't do this, we just have table after table after table, and we never improve. We haven't learned. How about we all put ourselves in training mode? Every time we come to the Lord's table, "Lord, I need further training." If all the saints would have this attitude, trust me, the table standard would rise. No other meeting, even the prophesying meeting, exposes where we are as much as the Lord's table meeting does. The table

meeting exposes us the most as to where we really are as the church. So let us go forward and learn with the help of our brother's speaking. It's just good to be reminded again of some of these points. Some of these are basic, but some of these matters really need our further training and speaking on the Lord's table meeting.

Some Basic Matters

First, of course it takes place on the first day of the week, according to the word, on the Lord's Day. Number two, it is to partake of the Lord's table. Number three, it is to eat the Lord's supper. Now, these may be for you very factual statements. What's the big deal? I don't know about you, but for me, even when I survey these outlines, after reading that I would go to the verses. I would go to some of the footnotes in the Recovery Version. And before long, just a short sentence, "to eat the Lord's supper," becomes very fresh to me. I don't know when saints go to the Lord's table, what are they going for? What is their intention? What are their thoughts? I'm going to partake of His table, I'm going to be there to eat His supper. When we see this, the whole feeling, the whole attitude toward the Lord's table is upgraded. It's not low, it's not common, because this is not a common meal. The word supper does mean the main meal of the day. In different cultures, the main meal takes place at different times, some take place in the morning, not necessarily in the evening. Brother Lee just means the main meal.

Remembering the Lord

And then, of course, the Lord's table is to remember the Lord. This is a big one. We go there not to remember things, but to remember Him, to remember this One, our Savior, our Redeemer, our Lord Jesus Christ. Brother Lee continued to say that the focus of the Lord's table is knowing that we're there to remember the Lord. The Lord should be the focus. All hymns, praises, thanks, prayers, and testimonies, or even words spoken, should be concentrated on the Lord Himself. I mean, we've been to table meetings where it's almost like a prayer meeting. It is not the prayer meeting, it's not the time for you to pray

for needs. There's another time to do that. The Lord's table is exclusively to remember the Lord. He should be the One who fills our entire vision. We are there to see Jesus only, we are there to concentrate on the Lord Himself. Everything we do should be directed towards Him. Anything else distracts us, even a prayer can distract us. The wrong testimony will distract us. We have to learn to avoid the distractions. You see, this is to be cultured, this is to be trained. You know, even today at the Lord's table saints pray for help. And well, I sympathize with that, I'm not against that, but that is the wrong time. You go to the Lord's table to remember the Lord. By breaking the bread, which we do, we apprehend with appreciation. The whole spirit in that meeting should be one of appreciation, not requests, not complaints, for sure, but appreciation. Everyone is filled with appreciation of the Lord, giving thanks to Him for His physical body being broken, which the emblem of the bread signifies. We are there to appreciate what He did through his broken body. There are so many things included in the table; His redemption and life impartation because we eat this body, and so forth.

Eating the Bread

Another point is that we eat the bread after the bread is broken. As we eat the bread symbolically, we should be eating the real bread, which is the Lord. What does it mean to eat the bread? Well, simply speaking, we are there to enjoy the Lord as our life supply. And we testify that because we eat Him, we live by Him or we live because of Him. "He who eats Me will live because of Me." (John 6:57b) So the table testifies that we eat this bread and also that we live by this bread, meaning that we live by the Lord. And the eating of the bread also means that we are in fellowship. We're in fellowship, we're in participation, of Christ, of His mystical body, the Body of Christ. This emblem, this sign, signifies not just His physical body but also His mystical Body the church. We are in that fellowship. The fellowship of the one bread is the fellowship of the Body. Is it not the fellowship of the Body of Christ? So as we eat the bread, we are also enjoying that horizontal fellowship.

Drinking the Cup

When we drink the cup, it is not just to physically drink. We review, as it were, the eternal redemption accomplished, the establishing of the new covenant. This cup is the new covenant established in My blood (Luke 22:20b). Through the shedding of blood, Christ established a new covenant, a covenant that God promised in the Old Testament, but fulfilled when Christ came. The Lord came and through His death and resurrection that covenant became a testament to us. This became a bequest to us for our enjoyment. As we drink this cup, we're reminded that there's a covenant here that allows us to enjoy God as our recovered portion. Isn't this wonderful brothers and sisters? To drink the cup is to enjoy God's blessing; all of God's blessing is in that cup. As we drink, we're receiving the blessing, God's blessing, Himself as a portion. It is also as the apostle said, to partake of the Lord's blood is to have fellowship in the blood of Christ. We not only have fellowship in the Body of Christ, but we also have fellowship in the blood of Christ. (1 Cor. 10:16) We drink the same cup. We share the same portion. We have fellowship in that cup. All the New Testament blessings, from A to Z, are in that cup that we drink.

Displaying His Death Until He Comes

Another significant point concerning the Lord's table according to the apostle Paul's word, is that it displays the Lord's death. The table declares, proclaims, or testifies of the Lord's death. Whenever blood and flesh are separated, that means death. On the table, the bread and the cup are separated. The Lord's flesh and blood are separated. This means death has taken place. This is not the Adamic death. This is Christ's death, this lovely death, this sweet death, and this is an all-inclusive and effective death. Death's Old Testament type is myrrh. Myrrh is a very strong and sweet spice, and this is a type of the Lord's death. The Adamic death is ugly, terrible, and stinks. However, the Lord's death is ever sweet. We display that death. All the angels and all the demons have to look at the Lord's death. It destroyed the one who has the might of death. This death terminated the old man. This death dealt with sin, the flesh, the world, and the whole creation.

What a death! My goodness, we're here to display this death to the whole universe every time at the Lord's table. This is too rich.

Another point related to the display of the Lord's death is that Paul said that we “declare the Lord's death until He comes” (1 Cor. 11:26). Paul put the Lord's death and the Lord's coming together. So, the Lord's table straddles between the two comings of Christ. Do you know what we are doing here? Starting two thousand years ago with the disciples and until now and unto the end of this age we are taking the Lord's table. In these two thousand years, generation after generation of Christ's believers have been breaking the bread to display His death until He comes. There is an anticipation. There's an expectation about the Lord's coming, the Lord's return whenever we are at the Lord's table.

Even the Lord implied this when He said, “I shall by no means drink of this product of this vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in the kingdom of my Father” (Matt. 26:29). So even the Lord, when He instituted this table, anticipated His own coming in the Father's kingdom, in the heavenly side of the millennium kingdom of Christ. When we eat at this table, do we have a feeling that day is coming when we will eat together with Him again? Wow. The table should remind us of His coming, brothers and sisters.

Christ Leading Our Praise to the Father

Now after that, we usually worship the Father, though worship of the Father is not part of the Lord's table. However, it is part of our meeting. Why? After the Lord and the disciples ate supper, they went out, on the way to the place of Gethsemane, and they sang a hymn. I don't know what they sang, but they sang a hymn. Because the Lord was also singing, this is not a hymn to Him, to the Lord. This is a hymn that the Lord took the lead to sing to the Father. By this example, we practice that after we enjoy the table of the Lord with Him and with one another, we follow Him as the Firstborn Son of God, to sing a hymn to worship the Father. “Saying ‘I will declare Your name to My

brothers; in the midst of the church I will sing hymns of praise to You.” (Heb. 2:12). That is the Firstborn taking the lead to sing to the Father, and we the many begotten, the many brothers of Christ who are also singing with Him. In fact, He sings in our singing, and we praise in His praising. We're one at that time. He is taking the lead, leading us to the Father to praise the Father. That itself is a very rich thing and deserves another kind of training: how to worship the Father. I won't get into it today.

Proving Ourselves and Discerning the Body

We all need to receive some warning because the apostle gave specific warnings about how we treat the Lord's table. Clearly, in Corinth they had a problem because they partook of the Lord's table in a wrong way, in a messy way, in an unpleasing way.

What are the warnings? The warnings are that we have to prove ourselves and discern the body. This is all in First Corinthians 11. We should read it so that we won't eat and drink the bread and the cup in an unworthy way. There's a possibility that we are at the Lord's table, but we are doing it, eating and drinking, in an unworthy manner. We did it for the worse, Paul says, because we're meeting in divisions. The problem with the Corinthians is that among them were divisions. When they were in that state, they still partook of the Lord's table. That indicated they didn't examine themselves. They didn't prove themselves, and they didn't discern the Body, that this Body is really one. We should have no division. We cannot partake of this bread when we're divided.

Speaking to these Corinthians, he said, “for he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not discern the body. Because of this many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep.” Some of the Corinthians died because they partook of the Lord's table in such an unworthy way (1 Cor. 11:29-30). On the negative side, there's also this kind of training that we need. This is why every time before the Lord's table we should make sure that we

are good with all the brothers and sisters, that there is no offense, division, or discord among us. There should be none of that because we respect that this is the Body of Christ, and we are enjoying this table in the one fellowship.

I think this is good enough as just a kind of quick review. Is it helpful brothers and sisters? Some of you may know these things already, but it is still good to review, and there's actually a lot more about the meeting itself: how to praise, how to initiate the meeting, how to uplift the praise in the meeting, how to bring the meeting to a peak or high point, and how to come into the worship of the Father. So many things are just done by us in a very natural way, I would say, and this is why the Lord's table is less than fulfilling, even less than satisfying to the Lord and to ourselves. I hope that we will look into these things and even begin to put these things into practice. It's really good for the churches to take some time, week by week, maybe a little bit at the prayer meeting or even at the end of the Lord's table meeting.

Words of Admonition

I want to just say a few words at the end of this year. We have had so many of these meetings, and as I look around, I really thank the Lord for how much He has done through GTCA in these last two years. I am just filled with awe and gratitude. The Lord has done too much.

Caring for the Atmosphere of the Church

The few things I want to say are the few things that we need to be aware of. I will say that the atmosphere of the church is most important. We all need to take care of the atmosphere of the church. This has to do with our relationship with one another. This has to do with our being, our spirit's condition, and this has to do with the condition of our soul. This has to do with our human living. This touches everything. No one person can create an atmosphere; it takes the church to create an atmosphere. All of us are responsible to take care of the environment in the church life, the atmosphere in the church life. Paul certainly taught much about it. It should be an

atmosphere of love.

Keeping the One Accord

Then I would say the most important thing, of course, is to keep the one accord among us. This is the most foundational thing in maintaining a good and sweet atmosphere in the church, so that the building can take place and so that all the activities can take place. This is to keep the one accord. Brothers and sisters, I wouldn't even say "don't be divisive." I think we all know not to be divisive. I would say, don't do anything, don't conduct yourself, don't say anything, don't do anything that would even give room or give space for any kind of diverse mindedness to come into the church life. Sometimes it's not out and out division or fighting or infighting or contention. Sometimes it's not like that, but it is very subtle. There's just a diverse mindedness, different thinking. This happened with Corinth, with their divisions. Paul said, "... I hear that divisions exist among you..." and then he said, "For there must even be parties among you..." (1 Cor 11:18-19). So, he said, "Now I beseech you, brothers, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be attuned in the same mind and in the same opinion" (1 Cor 1:10). In spirit we're all one but not in the mind. It is key for us to be one in our mind by thinking the same thing.

Let's say there's a group of leading brothers, and they don't think the same thing. The church is through. I don't care what great plans they have. I don't know what activities they have. It's gone. The Spirit is like a dove. The dove is a very sensitive bird; just a little movement and it flies away. Just a little bit of dissension, just a little bit of argument, or just a little bit of offensiveness with one another and the dove flies away, the Spirit is gone. Really, brothers and sisters, we need to exercise to maintain the one accord by not being diversely minded. What you think, what your opinion is, doesn't mean much. It really does not mean much. This way or that way, it does not mean much. The oneness means too much. The blessing is not on your opinion or

mine, but the blessing is on the one accord. The blessing of eternal life is upon the place where there is a pleasant situation. How good and pleasant for brothers to dwell together in unity. When they are in this, the blessing comes. The dew of Hermon descends, and the ointment on the head of Aaron flows. That's the Triune God right there. That's the blessing, when there is the unity, when there is the pleasantness and the sweetness among the brothers, then there is Philadelphia. We all need to exercise to maintain that.

Not Being Opinionated

The next thing I would say is to give up your opinions. Don't treasure your opinions. Don't be opinionated. I tell you that opinions kill, opinions damage and delay the Lord's work, and opinions just bring in death. I don't mean that we don't have any feelings. I don't mean we don't have any discernment. I don't mean that we don't have any concerns when there's something not so good or something wrong. There are proper ways to fellowship but learn not to have opinions. This is what we learned from Brother Lee who was that way. When he was a co-worker with Brother Nee, sometimes Brother Nee would ask, "how do you all feel?" People had many different things to say. Brother Lee said, "I never said one word." Whatever Brother Nee said, that's it. He learned to not have opinions. Does that mean he had no opinions? He probably had a lot of opinions, but he never expressed his opinions.

Opinions don't work in the church life. There's a book called *Perfecting Training*. If you go to middle-age training, you will become acquainted with it. A good portion of this book is on the problem of opinions, the biggest enemy in the church life. Learn to go along brothers and sisters, learn to say it's okay. Whether it is my way or your way, what does it matter. As long as the Lord can have His way, that is what matters. Sorry to say, but the older we become, the more opinions we have because we have more experience and learning. So I would say especially to the older brothers and sisters, try not to have opinions. I know you have learned a lot and I know you have a lot of feelings and

experiences, but just don't have opinions. If there is a younger brother who is taking the lead and he does something that is not the best, just pray for him. Especially don't go around gossiping and spreading your opinions. That brings death into the church. Without knowing it, you will open the door for death to come in.

Forsaking our Disposition

Another thing I would like to say is that we all have to learn to overthrow, discard and forsake our disposition. Disposition is a big problem. I won't get into that. A lot of problems are among the middle aged and older saints. If you dig deep, it is really one of disposition—the natural makeup. That's just the way they are. It's their background, culture, makeup and constitution. It's something that they're born with that needs to be crucified. It needs to be put to death. Regarding the source of disposition, let's put it this way, disposition is just an expression of the self. Opinion for sure is an expression of the self, but disposition is also deeply related to the self. We just have to be careful. Brother Lee spent much time on this matter in the book *Perfecting Training*. It is very helpful. I cannot tell you how many times I have read it because I have to give a class on it. I still have my disposition and I'm more and more aware of how damaging my disposition is. A lot of times I react a certain way. And then I ask, why do I react that way? I find it's just me, nobody reacts that way, just me. That is Minoru Chen's very peculiar disposition. I need to let that go. I need to terminate that for the sake of the body life, the church life. That needs a lot of light and shining from the Lord.

Letting Go of Pride and Ambition

I would like to say to the brothers, another problem is pride and ambition. These are the two gophers, right? Just don't be proud. Don't be proud, even if you did something well. Even if you really contributed. Don't be proud. You know, there's a parable here, where the servant said, I am an unprofitable servant. After you have done something good, you still say this to the Lord: "I am but an unprofitable slave." Oh, that is so helpful to me. If the church life can

be free of these two gophers of pride and ambition, the church life will be preserved. Satan would have his door of Hades shut. We need to shut up the doors of Hades and throw away the keys. Let's do that.

Be Pleasant

And then one other thing is, you may laugh at this, but it's to learn to be pleasant. You may say, whoa, what's the big deal here? Let me tell you, it's a big deal. Psalm 133 says, "How good and how pleasant." One of my messages that I will give in this coming training is on the kindness of God. Remember Mephibosheth, the crippled son of Jonathan? That was a big story. I will be giving a whole message on the kindness of David toward this person, which reflects the kindness of God. God is kind. Let us be kind to one another, let us be pleasant. Let us smile more. Sometimes I look at some brothers who are elders and say, this brother cannot be a good elder, not because he doesn't know the truth or he does not have growth in life, but because he never smiles. I'm not talking about performing or of being popular. You know, Brother Lee was a very pleasant man. Of course, he was a lot of things, but he was a very pleasant man. He had a sense of humor and was so pleasant, and you just loved him. He was so dear, and so endearing. Brothers and sisters, this is not performing. If we live out Jesus' humanity, we should be pleasant, easygoing. Always saying never mind and it's okay. Always be forgiving and kind. Don't hold on to offenses or to grudges. Let things go, brothers and sisters. Learn to be pleasant and sweet with the Lord's humanity. You will bring joy, comfort and encouragement to the saints in your words and gestures, and in your facial expression.

Be Forbearing

And lastly, of course, I will just end this way. Following Paul's word in Colossians 3:12 on kindness, lowliness, meekness, and long-suffering: meekness means never fighting back; long-suffering means you exercise great patience. You know we try each other's patience but let us have the long-suffering of the Lord. And it says bearing, even forbearing one another in Philippians 4. The top-most virtue is

forbearance. Forbearance means that you give up your right and let other people have their rights. This is not easy to do, but that's the top virtue.

And always forgive one another. If the church is full of forgiveness to one another, that church will be spared a lot of problems. A lot of problems are just small, normal, average problems, but they grow and expand and get inflated because no one forgives. Everyone insists on their being right. This is the wrong tree anyways, but I tell you that it spoils the church life. All these matters I have talked about are little foxes that spoil the blossoming vine. Let us exercise with the Lord in all these things so that the church has a good and pleasant atmosphere. And then all these good things, positive things, can be carried out in the church life. This is my last word this year to all of us.

Confirming Word One

Well saints, I would just like to mention a few things before we proceed. In fellowship, we felt like this would be a good time, at the end of this year, to suspend our Lord's Day GTCA fellowship for a period of time. As you know, our brother has been sharing now for close to two years, when you add in the time with the leading brothers and all the saints in the GTCA cities. And particularly in the last months, I think we've all been convicted that we need to practice the things that we have been hearing. We can get somewhat lulled into coming to these times of fellowship week after week and receiving more light and education and fellowship, but not really taking the time to practice these things, to really focus on our practice. So we felt like we would like to suspend this fellowship for now. We'd like the leading brothers in the ten cities know that this is a time to really consider how to carry out and to practice and implement what we've been fellowshiping about week after week. It does take time to do that. It takes time to labor in that way and to be very practical about how we practice these things. So let us pray that this time we all could really put these things into practice.

Confirming Word Two

Well, I would like to say the same thing. I think we all are very thankful to the Lord for releasing so many valuable things to us in these times of fellowship every week. I don't know if you saints are aware, but this has been going on for over 40 weeks. And you can look online and find all these messages for your review. There were about twenty-five messages given in this general time with all the saints, and another twenty times of fellowship with the leading ones.

We have received so much over this last year, and the help has been very practical. I just looked through some of the titles of what we have gone through. We have heard many precious things about how to be revived on a personal basis, how to spend time with the Lord to confess our sins, and how to give ourselves in consecration to the Lord in a daily way. We also enjoyed hearing about how to be burdened before the Lord for others and how to petition the Lord for fruit bearing. There was also some speaking regarding how to have some solid companions, how to be related and be built up in the twos and threes. We also enjoyed fellowship on how to have a group life, a daily house to house church life, among us. I think that during this last year we were brought into becoming more vital and active, and considered our time and how to be exercised individually and corporately in the church meetings. In these last few weeks there also has been speaking about the importance of the church meetings, especially of the Lord's table.

So I agree that after receiving all these things, they have been placed on our shoulders now. What are we going to do with all these things? There is only one thing left for us to do saints, and that is to practice, to pick these matters up, and to endeavor to really apply them personally, in the twos and threes, and in our small groups, in the gospel, and in an outward facing church life, a new church life among us. It is good to take a pause and to really consider and ask ourselves whether we just heard a bunch of good things or will we genuinely pick these matters up and apply them to ourselves, to our church life and

in our place. Let us see what develops down the road. We should pray not only for the existing GTCA cities, but even that the Lord will have a way to keep going on in another round with more places and more saints. The Lord has been faithful, and it is a good time to give thanks to the Lord and go forward from here.

Concluding Word

As I said already, I am very thankful that we had this opportunity. I consider that I got the most blessing. It is interesting that over these two years of the pandemic, this technology has allowed us to have this kind of fellowship. These Zoom meetings seem to be here to stay, even though we are starting to return to in-person gatherings. Let us continue. I encourage all of you to “sail on” as Brother Lee would say. There's no reason to believe that the Lord will not do a new thing in America. Actually, He has started already with us. I am just really encouraged and very much appreciative of this time with you all.