

**GENERAL SUBJECT:
BEING CONSTITUTED IN LIFE TO MINISTER LIFE
FOR THE BUILDING UP OF THE CHURCH AS A LIVING ORGANISM**

Message One

**Being Constituted with Life
to Become Living Members of the Body of Christ**

- I. God's economy is to impart Christ as the life-giving Spirit into a group of people to produce a living organism, His Body, for His expression (1 Tim. 1:4; Eph. 5:18).**
- II. For this we need to learn to enjoy Christ daily by calling on His name, praying, singing, and enjoying Him in His Word (Rom. 10:13; 1 Thes. 5:16-18).**
- III. God's desire is that all His redeemed ones would become His witnesses, priests of the gospel, ministers of Christ, and living members of His Body (Acts 1:8; Rom. 12:4; 15:16; 1 Pet. 2:5, 9a; Eph. 3:7-8).**
- IV. For God to gain a living, functioning Body as His organism, we must be rescued and saved from deadness, lukewarmness, barrenness, and the clergy-laity system (Rev. 3:1, 15-16; John 15:2; Rev. 2:6, 15).**
- V. As ministers of Christ and laboring priests of the gospel of God, our main service is to minister life to others (Rom. 15:16):**
 - A. The main purpose of our service is not administrative or practical but the giving of life to others (1 John 5:16a).**
 - B. The church is not an organization but a living organism; giving life to others to build up this organism is a great privilege.**
- VI. For us to minister life to others, we must be filled and constituted with life (Eph. 3:2); we can have life by:**
 - A. Contacting the Lord with a turned heart and an exercised spirit (2 Cor. 3:16; 2 Tim. 1:7).**
 - B. Spending time with Him by loving and listening to Him; in this way we enjoy His lovingkindness and new compassions every morning (Lam. 3:22-23; Isa. 50:4-5).**
 - C. Being enlightened and dealt with by Him to confess our shortcomings and sins and consecrate to Him (1 John 1:9; Rom. 12:1-2).**
 - D. Being revived every morning and being renewed day by day as we enjoy Him in the Word (2 Cor. 4:16-18; Col. 3:16).**
 - E. Finding God's words in the Bible and eating them through pray-reading; thus they become the gladness and joy of our heart (Jer. 15:16; John 6:57; Eph. 6:17-18).**
 - F. Reading the Bible, a wonderful way to receive, breathe in, and live upon every word that proceeds through the mouth of God; we are profited through the teaching, conviction, correction, and instruction in righteousness in the Word to become men of God equipped for every good work (2 Tim. 3:16-17).**
 - G. Musing with much reconsideration over the holy Word to be saturated and soaked in life (Psa. 119:15, 147-148).**
 - H. Studying the Bible with the excellent help found in the Recovery Version, the Life-study messages, and the ministry books, which open, expound, and release the unsearchable riches of Christ to us (Luke 24:27, 31-32, 44-45; Acts 8:30-35; 2 Tim. 3:16-17).**

A Christian Caring for Both Life and the Gospel

What I have fellowshiped with you is the way that the Lord has shown us during the past four years. We see from John 15 that we are all branches of the vine (v. 5). The destiny of the branches is to bear fruit. No matter how much you say that you enjoy the Lord, if you do not bear fruit, there is something wrong. Moreover, if a branch does not bear fruit, it will be cut off. This does not refer to perdition but to the loss of the rich enjoyment of Christ.

We know that the Christian life is two-sided. On the one hand, as a branch in the vine, a Christian should absorb the riches of the tree. On the other hand, as a branch, he must bear fruit. The Lord Jesus said, "You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and I set you that you should go forth and bear fruit and that your fruit should remain" (v. 16). Hence, a Christian must match his gospel preaching with life, and he must also realize that life supplies us for the purpose of preaching the gospel. In this way we will become balanced Christians.

Many times when we pursue after life, we forget about the gospel. At other times when we are zealous for the gospel, we neglect life. Both are wrong. We can never neglect the pursuit after life. But the pursuit after life should supply us to the extent that we will go forth to preach the gospel, to bear fruit, and to have the fruit remain. This means that not only do we need to preach the gospel, but we should also have the nourishment and care in the home meetings, and we should bring the new ones to the group meetings for help and perfecting and also to the church meetings, so that this life can receive all the supply. This is the proper church life. By this the church as the organic Body of Christ will be built up.

Visiting People to Preach the Gospel

Our old way of preaching the gospel cannot be said to be bad or wrong. However, it is not good enough. For example, when we go out to travel today, do we go by car or by mule wagon? Although there is nothing wrong with riding on a mule wagon, and although whatever way we take, we are traveling, this way is too restricted. No one would travel today on a mule wagon instead of in a car.

Which way is more effective, the old way of preaching the gospel or the present way of visiting people by knocking on doors from house to house? According to our statistics, when we preach the gospel by knocking on doors, we can easily have one saved and baptized out of twenty doors. We do not need to go out to knock on doors every day. As long as we baptize one person a month, that will be enough. We do not need to knock on too many doors. Every one of you can do this. Today people talk much about childbearing and birth control; with respect to the preaching of the gospel, we should pay attention to these matters.

Nourishing Others through the Home Meetings

After we have baptized someone, we need to nourish him the next day. Once every two or three days after that, we need to continue going to him. At least we should visit him four times a month. The most important thing for a mother to do once a baby is born is to feed him. If the baby does not have milk for three or five days, he will starve to death. This was the problem among us in the past. The result is that not many people remained. Hence, we should have adequate care for the newly baptized ones.

Not only does a mother have to feed a newborn baby with milk, but she has to cherish him as well. When the baby is not comfortable and is crying, she has to rock him back and forth in her arms so that the child will feel comfortable. This is the cherishing. When a new one is saved, what follows is the care. Moreover, we must care for new ones in their homes rather than asking them to come to the meeting. This is the home meeting. Of course, the new ones cannot stay in their homes forever. After a while they need to be brought to the group meetings and the church meetings.

The Christian Meeting Being Fully a Matter of Speaking

The Christian meeting is fully a matter of speaking. This kind of speaking goes both ways, back and forth. As soon as you come to the meeting, you should open your mouth to speak, sing, praise, give thanks, and pray. This is toward God. On the other hand, you have to speak for God. In this way God's grace and riches will enter into others through your speaking. When we speak to God, we are giving ourselves to God. When we speak for God, we are allowing God to give Himself to us. The Christian meeting is nothing but a speaking to God and a speaking for God. Everyone can speak to God, and everyone can speak for God.

Group Meetings of Mutuality

There are many kinds of Christian meetings. The most important among them are two, the group meeting and the district meeting. When the Lord Jesus was on earth, He met with the disciples for three and a half years. Sometimes these meetings were in one person's home; sometimes they were in another person's home. Sometimes they were held at the seaside, and sometimes they were held on the mountain. All these meetings were group meetings. The real church life and the service take place in the group meetings. This is the clear revelation of the Bible. In Matthew 18:20 the Lord Jesus said, "Where there are two or three gathered into My name, there am I in their midst." The gathering together of two or three is surely a group meeting, for the number is obviously not large. Here we see that the meeting is in the Lord's name only.

Everyone Prophesying in the District Meeting

The preaching of the gospel, the home meetings, and the group meetings are all conducted during the week. On the Lord's Day we should bring the new ones to the district meetings. A church can be divided into a few districts. The best number for the district meeting is around fifty. When we gain some new ones through the gospel, we should nourish and establish them in the home meetings. We should also care for them and perfect them in the group meetings. In this way, when they come to the church meetings, every one of them will be able to prophesy.

In order for the saints to prophesy, they need to enjoy the Lord's word every day and be filled with the Lord's word. Every district can select its own portion of Scripture. Every week the saints can go through one chapter, and they can divide the chapter into six sections. Every morning the saints can read one section and pick out two verses for pray-reading. If we want to have an overcoming church life, we need to live this life of morning revival. For this reason we must help the brothers and sisters to live this life of revival and overcoming every day. Every morning we need to have some enjoyment, and every morning we need to soak ourselves in the Lord's word and be filled and saturated by the Lord's word. After six days we will surely have a rich reaping. By the weekend we can compile our inspirations into a composition for prophesying. On the Lord's Day we can bring this composition to the meeting. We should not read or recite it but should speak out with our spirit what we have prepared. This is to prophesy. (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee*, 1989, vol. 2, "The Riches and Fullness of Christ and the Advanced Recovery of the Lord Today," pp. 169-170, 166, 166-167, 173-174, 176-177)