

Message 4

The Increase of Christ for the Increase and Spread of the Church through the One Accord with Prayer, the Spirit, the Word, and the Homes

Scripture Reading: Acts 1:14; 2:46; 4:24; 5:12; 15:25; Rom. 15:6; 1 Cor. 1:10; Phil. 1:27; 2:2; 4:2

OUTLINE

<< DAY 1 & DAY 2 >>

I. In order to have the increase of Christ for the increase and spread of the church, we must have the one accord; the Greek word for one accord is homothumadon from homo, “same,” and thumos, “mind, will, purpose (soul, heart)”:

- A. The one accord is the master key to every blessing in the New Testament; to apply the oneness is to keep it, and to keep it is to practice the one accord (Acts 1:14; 2:46; 4:24; 5:12; 15:25; Phil. 1:27; Eph. 1:3; Rom. 15:29).
- B. In order to have the one accord, we need to care for one thing; the one thing, the unique thing, in the Lord’s recovery is God’s eternal economy with Christ as the centrality and universality (Col. 3:10-11):
 1. The one thing that should be focused on, stressed, and ministered in the Lord’s recovery is the eternal economy of God (1 Tim. 1:3-4).
 2. The content of God’s eternal economy is Christ; actually, Christ Himself in His full ministry of three stages is the divine economy (John 1:14; 1 Cor. 15:45b; Rev. 1:4; 3:1; 4:5; 5:6).
 3. God’s desire is to have a recovery purely and wholly of the person of Christ (Col. 1:17b, 18b; 2 Cor. 12:2; 2:10; 3:3).
- C. The one thing in Philippians refers to the subjective knowledge and experience of Christ; the one thing is the pursuing of Christ to gain Him, lay hold of Him, and possess Him (1:20-21; 2:5; 3:7-14; 4:13):
 1. Christ and Christ alone should be the centrality and universality of our entire being (Col. 1:17b, 18b).
 2. Our thinking should be focused on the excellency of the knowledge and experience of Christ; focusing on anything else causes us to think differently, thus creating dissensions among us (cf. 1 Cor. 1:10; Phil. 4:2):
 - a. “Make my joy full, that you think the same thing, having the same love, joined in soul, thinking the one thing” (2:2).

- b. “Not that I have already obtained or am already perfected, but I pursue, if even I may lay hold of that for which I also have been laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brothers, I do not account of myself to have laid hold; but one thing: Forgetting the things which are behind and stretching forward to the things which are before, I pursue toward the goal for the prize to which God in Christ Jesus has called me upward” (3:12-14 (lit.)).
- c. “Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; but there is need of one thing, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her” (Luke 10:41b-42).
- d. “One thing I have asked from Jehovah; / That do I seek: / To dwell in the house of Jehovah / All the days of my life, / To behold the beauty of Jehovah, / And to inquire in His temple” (Psa. 27:4).

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- D. We need to consider one new man in Ephesians 2:15 together with one mouth in Romans 15:6 and speak the same thing in 1 Corinthians 1:10:
1. For the church as the one new man, we all need to take Christ as our person in the matter of speaking (Matt. 12:34-37; Eph. 3:17a; John 7:16-18; 8:28, 38a; 12:49-50; 14:10).
 2. The entire Bible has one mouth and speaks the same thing (Heb. 1:1-2a).
 3. In today’s Christianity there are many mouths, each speaking a different thing; this is the pitiful situation of every preacher wanting to speak his own thing and thinking it a shame to speak what others have spoken (Gen. 11:7, 9).
 4. In the past there were too many mouths because there were too many persons.
 5. In the one new man there is one mouth to speak the same thing (Rom. 15:6; 1 Cor. 1:10).
 6. There is only one new man, and the one new man has only one person, so the one new man speaks with one mouth and says the same thing.
 7. With one accord and with one mouth (Rom. 15:6) mean that even though we are many and all are speaking, we all speak the same thing (1 Cor. 1:10):
 - a. The church is the one new man with only one person—Christ—and this person controls our speaking; thus, whatever He speaks is surely the same thing.
 - b. When we are about to speak, we need to resolve a basic question: in this matter of speaking, am I the person or is Christ the person?
 - c. If in our speaking we do not take ourselves as the person but allow Christ to be the person, then there will be one mouth, and everyone will speak the same thing.
 8. In the one new man there is only one person, and only this person has the freedom to speak (Matt. 17:5):
 - a. In the one new man there is no freedom for us to speak our own things.
 - b. The Lord Jesus has the absolute freedom to speak, and our natural man has

absolutely no freedom to speak.

9. Although we are many and come from many places, we all have one mouth and we all speak the same thing; this is because we all are the one new man having only one person (Eph. 2:15; 4:22-24; 3:17a; Rom. 15:6; 1 Cor. 1:10).

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10. Only one kind of ministry builds up and never divides—this is the unique ministry of God’s economy (1 Tim. 1:3-4):
 - a. “Human pride always likes to make the self different from others. You may speak one thing, but I would never speak what you speak because of my pride. I want to speak something different from what you speak, something new and something better. This is the self, and this is fleshly pride” (The Divine Economy, p. 124).
 - b. The only way that we can be preserved in the eternal oneness for the one new man is to teach the same thing, the economy of God (Rom. 15:6).

« DAY 5 »

II. The book of Acts shows that the God-ordained way to carry out God’s move to fulfill His New Testament economy is entirely by three main substances—prayer, the Spirit, and the Word:

- A. Prayer, the Spirit, and the Word are the three substances of the power in the Lord’s recovery (1:8, 14; 4:31; 6:4, 7; 12:24; 19:20).
- B. We must pray that we might have the Spirit as the power to spread the Word (6:7; 12:24; 19:20; 1 Tim. 2:1-4, 8; Eph. 6:17-18; cf. 1 Tim. 5:17-18):
 1. We must get ourselves saturated, constituted, and even soaked with the holy Word; if we are burdened to preach the gospel, we must get into the Word and be persons who know the Word (Col. 3:16).
 2. We should ask the Lord to bring our entire being into the light and be dealt with by Him to become persons of power, who are full of the Spirit within and without, essentially and economically (Eph. 5:18; Acts 2:38; 5:32b; 4:8, 31; 13:9, 52).
- C. The early disciples could not have maintained the one accord if they had different ways, means, agents, or substances for them to carry out the Lord’s move on the earth; in order to maintain the unique one accord, we all have to learn to do the same thing by the same way (1:14; 4:31).
- D. We must not think of taking a way other than prayer, the Spirit, and the Word; any other way will cause dissension and division.
- E. The book of Acts shows that the apostles never initiated any work without prayer; whenever they wanted to do something, they stopped themselves by their prayer, giving God a way to come into them, to fill them up, and to

saturate their entire being so that all their activities would be the activities of the acting God (1:14; 2:1-4, 16-17a; 4:24-31; 10:9-16; 12:4-14; 13:1-4; 16:23-26; 22:17-21):

1. In order to be one with the Lord in His work, we need to pray ourselves into God and pray God into us so that we are mingled with God (Matt. 6:6).
2. To pray means to stop ourselves from doing anything apart from the Lord, so that He can do His work through us (14:22-23).
3. To pray means that we realize that we are nothing and can do nothing; prayer is the real denial of the self (Gal. 6:3; cf. Mark 9:28-29).
4. To pray by calling on the name of the Lord is to deny ourselves and to declare, “No longer I...but...Christ” (Gal. 2:20a).

« DAY 6 »

III. Meeting together in homes as the Christian way of meeting together is fitting to God’s New Testament economy:

- A. This way differs from the Judaic way of meeting in the synagogues:
1. The believers broke bread and prayed together from house to house (Acts 2:46).
 2. They also announced the gospel and taught Jesus as the Christ from house to house; the gospel can be and should be preached in every home (5:42).
 3. Paul spoke of teaching and admonishing the believers from house to house (20:20).
- B. This became a continual and general practice in the churches (cf. Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 16:19; Col. 4:15; Philem. 2).
- C. The base for the increase and spread of the church is the establishing of small, vital group meetings in the homes:
1. Small groups in the homes are able to retain people.
 2. Small groups in the homes are in the nature of home nurturing, whereas joint meetings of the church and the ministry are in the nature of school education; in order for a church to go on in a good way, we must have small group meetings for home nurturing, and we must also have joint meetings to educate in the truth (cf. 1 Cor. 14:26; Acts 19:9 and footnote 2; 20:7-9; 28:30-31):
 - a. We need to be balanced, because a large meeting hall can help us gain better results; even though we continually beget those who can be nurtured in the homes, there must be a large meeting hall as a “university” to teach and perfect them.
 - b. The principle of houses still applies today, but this does not mean that the church will always meet separately; in fact, it is important and of great profit for all the believers to gather quite regularly in one place (1 Cor. 14:23a).
 3. The “defensive” function of the small groups is to uphold and restore the saints.
 4. The “offensive” function of the small groups is to preach the gospel.

D. Every believer should be a witness, a martyr, of the Lord (Acts 1:8), sharing with and testifying to others the Christ whom he has “seen and heard” (4:20; 22:15; 1 John 1:1-3).

<< WEEK 4 — DAY 1 >>

Morning Nourishment

Matt. 18:19 "Again, truly I say to you that if two of you are in harmony on earth concerning any matter for which they ask, it will be done for them from My Father who is in the heavens."

Acts 1:14 "These all continued steadfastly with one accord in prayer..."

In Matthew 18:19 the Lord spoke concerning two or three agreeing on something in prayer. The word "in harmony" in this verse is not as strong as the word "one accord." The word in Greek for one accord, homothumadon, is strong and all-inclusive. Homo means "the same" and thumos means "mind, will, purpose (soul, heart)." The Chinese version of the Bible translates this word into a Chinese word meaning the same mind and the same will. In Romans 15:6, the King James Version translates this word into "one mind."

In the book of Acts the one hundred twenty prayed together in one mind, in the same mind, in the same will with the same purpose around and within the soul and the heart. Whenever we pray, we surely should exercise our spirit, but we also should be in the same mind and the same will with the same purpose around and within our soul and heart. This means that our entire being is involved. After the Lord's ascension, the one hundred twenty became the kind of persons who were in one mind, in one will, with one purpose around their soul and heart. For them to be in one accord meant that their entire beings were one. (Elders' Training, Book 7: One Accord for the Lord's Move, pp. 10-11)

Today's Reading

The landmark that divides the Gospels and the Acts...was the one accord of the one hundred twenty. If you want to experience the baptism in the Spirit, you must have the one accord. If all the members of a local church have the one accord, the baptism in the Spirit will be there. If you really want to practice the proper way to preach the gospel, you need the one accord. Without this key, no door can be opened. The one accord is the "master key to all the rooms," the master key to every blessing in the New Testament. This is why Paul told Euodias and Syntyche that they needed this one accord (Phil. 4:2). Paul knew that these sisters loved the Lord but that they had lost the one accord.

Philippians tells us that this matter starts from our spirit (1:27), yet we must realize we are not persons of spirit only...For us to be in the same one spirit with the same one soul, one mind, and one will is to have the one accord, which is the key to all the New Testament blessings and bequests. (Elders' Training, Book 7: One Accord for the Lord's Move, pp. 18-19)

The one thing that should be focused on, stressed, and ministered in the Lord's recovery is the New Testament economy of God. God's New Testament economy is "the thing." The content of the New Testament economy of God is a person....There are three sections concerning this wonderful person. First, this person is the Son with the Father by the Spirit in the first four books of the New Testament, the Gospels. In the second section of God's New Testament economy is the Spirit, as the Son, with the Father. This section covers the twenty-two books from Acts through Jude. The last section of God's New Testament economy is covered...in Revelation...[where there are] the seven Spirits, out from the eternal One of the Redeemer. (Elders' Training, Book 5: Fellowship concerning the Lord's Up-to-date Move, p. 21)

God's intention is to have a recovery purely and wholly of the Person of Christ. God's desire is to have a recovery of the Triune God dispensed into His redeemed people, so that He would become their being, and that this would issue into the church life. This means that such a church life is a golden lampstand, the very embodiment of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. We must realize that the Lord's recovery is just the Triune God dispensed into His redeemed people. (Concerning the Lord's Recovery, p. 83)

Further Reading: Elders' Training, Book 7: One Accord for the Lord's Move, chs. 1-2; Elders' Training, Book 5: Fellowship concerning the Lord's Up-to-date Move, ch. 2

<< WEEK 4 — DAY 2 >>

Morning Nourishment

Eph. 4:3-4 "Being diligent to keep the oneness of the Spirit in the uniting bond of peace: one Body and one Spirit, even as also you were called in one hope of your calling."

Acts 2:46 "And day by day, continuing steadfastly with one accord..."

Phil. 2:2 "Make my joy full, that you think the same thing, having the same love, joined in soul, thinking the one thing."

In this series of messages I have put the genuine oneness first and the proper one accord second. Strictly speaking, the genuine oneness is not of the church but of the Body; it is the Body's own organic oneness. In Ephesians 4:4, after telling us to keep the oneness of the Spirit, Paul did not say, "One church and one Spirit..."; rather, he said, "One Body and one Spirit..." The church may be plural as the churches in different localities, but the Body could never be plural. Whether it is viewed locally or universally, the Body is one. In contrast, the church is universally one but locally many.

In the Body we need oneness; in the churches and among the churches, we need the one accord. The one accord is for our practice; the oneness is primarily for the actuality, for the fact. In John 17 the Lord Jesus prayed for such a fact, and on the day of Pentecost, by pouring out Himself as the consummated Spirit, He accomplished His prayer. That was the actuality of the oneness. After the accomplishment of the actuality of the oneness, there is the need for the practice of the oneness. When the oneness is practiced, it becomes the one accord. The one accord is the practice of the oneness. (The Intrinsic Problem in the Lord's Recovery Today and Its Scriptural Remedy, pp. 23-24)

Today's Reading

The practice of the proper one accord in the church is the application of the oneness. Although oneness and one accord seem to be synonymous, there is a difference between them. The Lord did not teach us concerning oneness. In John 17 He prayed for oneness, but in Matthew 18 He led us to practice the one accord. In Matthew 18:19 the Lord spoke of two praying together on earth in one accord. That was His leading, His training, and His directing us to pray in one accord. As a test of whether we are practicing the oneness or not, we may check to see whether there is one accord in our prayer meeting. When certain ones pray, we may shake our head as an indication of our displeasure, and when others pray, we may nod our head as an expression of our agreement. Such a shaking and nodding of our head is strong evidence that we do not practice oneness, because we do not have the one accord.

To say Amen in response to others' prayer is a practice taught by Paul in 1 Corinthians. In 14:16 Paul said that we need to pray in such a way that others can say Amen. If there are no Amens to indicate our one accord, we should not expect that our prayer will be heard. If only two on earth pray in one accord, their prayer will be answered. The one accord is the practice, the application, of the oneness, and the oneness is the basis on which we practice the one accord. This is very meaningful.

To keep the oneness, to apply the oneness, to use the oneness, to enjoy the oneness, to spend the oneness, we need to practice the one accord. However, we should practice the one accord not only among the saints in our particular locality; we must practice the one accord among all the churches universally. (The Intrinsic Problem in the Lord's Recovery Today and Its Scriptural Remedy, pp. 24, 26)

According to the context of Philippians, the one thing here must refer to the subjective knowledge and experience of Christ (1:20-21; 2:5; 3:7-9; 4:13). Christ, and Christ alone, should be the centrality and universality of our entire being. Our thinking should be focused on the excellency of the knowledge and experience of Christ. Focusing on anything else causes us to think differently, thus creating dissensions among us. (Phil. 2:2, footnote 6)

Further Reading: The Intrinsic Problem in the Lord's Recovery Today and Its Scriptural Remedy, ch. 2

<< WEEK 4 – DAY 3 >>

Morning Nourishment

Eph. 2:15 "...That He might create the two in Himself into one new man, so making peace."

Rom. 15:6 "That with one accord you may with one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

1 Cor. 1:10 "Now I beseech you, brothers,...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."

The church is not merely the Body but also the one new man. The Body needs Christ as its life, whereas the new man needs Christ as his person. When you want to speak, when I want to speak, when any one of us wants to speak, we must resolve the basic question: who is the person that is speaking here?...When anyone speaks, it is Christ who is the person. What is the result? The result is that there is only one mouth.

This is why in 1 Corinthians 1:10 Paul says that all "speak the same thing"...The church is the one new man with only one person, and this person controls our speaking, so whatever He speaks is surely "the same thing" that we all speak as the new man.

Whenever the brothers and sisters are about to speak something, they do not take themselves as the person; instead, they allow Christ to be the person. You let Christ be your person when you speak, and I let Christ be my person when I speak. Eventually, everyone speaks the same thing. (CWWL, 1977, vol. 3, "One Body, One Spirit, and One New Man," pp. 310-311)

Today's Reading

The entire Bible has one mouth and speaks the same thing, even though it was written over a long period of time by many different people in many different places....Although we are many and we come from many places, all of us have one mouth, and we all speak the same thing. This is because we all are the one new man having only one person.

Many times I wanted to speak, but I checked within, asking myself, "Is it I who want to speak, or is it the Lord?" In other words, in the matter of speaking, is the Lord the person, or am I the person? If it is I, there will be a problem; if it is the Lord, there will be no problem....In Christianity today you see a pitiful condition because every preacher wants to speak his own thing, and he thinks it is a shame to speak what others have spoken.

Everyone knows that what limits you the most is the matter of speaking....In the church, in the Body of Christ, and especially in the new man, neither your natural man nor my natural man has freedom of speech. This is because we ourselves are not the persons. In the one new man there is only one person. Only this person has the freedom to speak, and our natural man has absolutely no freedom of speech. The Lord has the absolute freedom to speak, and I absolutely have no freedom to speak.

You have to consider one mouth in Romans 15:6 and speak the same thing in 1 Corinthians 1:10 together with one new man in Ephesians 2:15....Humanly speaking, this is absolutely impossible. However, we must see that in Romans 15, Paul is speaking of a local church. In a local church there must be only one mouth....When there are many persons, there are many ideas; when there are many ideas, there are many opinions, but we thank the Lord that now there is one mouth and one person here....You may be about to speak, but something "pinches" you from within, telling you not to say anything. All you can say is, "Thank the Lord!" When you want to speak again, the Lord pinches you again, so you simply say Amen!

In our moving we take Christ as our life, and in our living we take Christ as our person. In the Body, Christ is our life, and in the new man, Christ is our person. In the Body we are members one of another, and in the new man we all have one mouth to speak the same thing. This is the church. (CWWL, 1977, vol. 3, "One Body, One Spirit, and One New Man," pp. 311-313, 316)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1977, vol. 3, "One Body, One Spirit, and One New Man", chs. 5, 7; The Satanic Chaos in the Old Creation and the Divine Economy for the New Creation, chs. 1, 4

<< WEEK 4 — DAY 4 >>

Morning Nourishment

1 Cor. 1:10 "...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 Tim. 1:3-4 "Even as I exhorted you...in order that you might charge certain ones not to teach different things nor to give heed to myths and unending genealogies, which produce questionings rather than God's economy, which is in faith."

We want the teaching which teaches God's economy. Now we can understand Paul's charge in 1 Corinthians to speak the same thing (1:10). What same thing should we speak? Should we speak Bible teaching, how to meet, the way to baptize, the way to edify the saints, the way to help people to be spiritual, or the way to render much help to the Christians that they may grow in life? These are right things to teach. Something from the Bible such as evangelism is altogether right. However, if you do these things and teach them apart from God's economy, you are divisive....To teach the Bible and to preach the gospel are not pagan. They are altogether right and altogether scriptural, but we must be on the alert as to whether or not we are divisive. Whatever you teach should not be measured by whether it is wrong or right. It must be measured by whether it is divisive or not. Only one kind of ministry builds up and never divides—this is the unique ministry of God's economy. We must be reminded that Paul left Timothy in Ephesus with a charge to tell certain ones not to teach differently and that what they teach should be related to God's economy. (Elders' Training, Book 3: The Way to Carry Out the Vision, p. 45)

Today's Reading

What then, we may ask, is the unique thing which all the Christian teachers should teach? Christian teachers today teach many things such as the presbytery, baptism by immersion, the episcopalian way, holiness, how to preach the gospel, and the way to teach the Bible. We would all agree that to teach the way of Judaism is surely wrong, but what about teaching how to preach the gospel? What is wrong with preaching the gospel? We must realize that even the teaching to preach the gospel creates division. This is wrong. There is only one ministry which always builds up, edifies, and perfects with no destruction at all. There is only one unique ministry that is justified, promoted, uplifted, and even glorified in the New Testament. In 1 Timothy 1:4 Paul went on to tell Timothy what those ones who were teaching differently should be occupied with—God's economy.

Please do not have the peace and assurance that as long as you teach things scripturally that it is all right. It is not all right because your teaching creates division. Even your right teaching creates division. We all must realize that, generally speaking, the different denominations do not teach anything wrong. They have all tried and endeavored to teach the right things, the scriptural things. Eventually, however, the Body of Christ has been cut into pieces.

The only way that can preserve us in the recovery is the unique ministry. If we say that we are in the recovery, yet we teach something so lightly, even in a concealed way, that is different from God's economy, we sow the seed that will grow up in division. Therefore, the only way that we can be preserved in the eternal oneness is to teach the same thing in God's economy. This kind of teaching is called the New Testament ministry, the ministry of the new covenant. The ministry of the new covenant is only to minister the Triune God, processed, to be dispensed into His chosen people as life and life supply to produce members of Christ to form the Body to express the Triune God. This is the New Testament economy. To teach anything, even good things and scriptural things, which is even a little bit apart from God's New Testament economy will still issue in division, and that will be very much used by the subtle one, the evil one. We must, therefore, be on the alert. (Elders' Training, Book 3: The Way to Carry Out the Vision, pp. 43-45, 47-48)

Further Reading: Elders' Training, Book 3: The Way to Carry Out the Vision, chs. 4, 12; Life-study of Mark, msg. 27

<< WEEK 4 — DAY 5 >>

Morning Nourishment

Acts 1:8 "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

14 "These all continued steadfastly with one accord in prayer..."

4:31 "...And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness."

The book of Acts begins with the one accord and stresses the one accord. The early disciples could not have maintained or kept this one accord, however, if they had had different ways, means, agents, or substances for them to carry out the Lord's move on this earth. If we read through the entire book of Acts, we can see that the way they took to carry out God's move on this earth to fulfill His New Testament economy was entirely by three main substances—prayer, the Spirit, and the Word. Not only in Acts but also throughout the entire New Testament, prayer, the Spirit, and the Word were used for the carrying out of God's economy....The substances which constitute the unique way for the Lord's move are prayer and the Spirit, which result in the Word. (Elders' Training, Book 7: One Accord for the Lord's Move, p. 21)

Today's Reading

Acts never tells us that the Spirit grew and multiplied but that the Word grew and multiplied....What we do actually is to carry the Word to people. The Word is the real contents, the real constituents of the New Testament economy of God. God's Word constitutes the New Testament Bible and also constitutes the very New Testament economy of God. We should pray that we may have the Spirit as power to spread the Word.

Let us toil in the Word, labor in prayer, and be diligent in dealing with the Holy Spirit. This is worthwhile. We have to spend much time to get into the Word; we have to get ourselves saturated, constituted, and even soaked with the holy Word. We must also get ourselves constituted with our contact with the Lord. We have to contact Him day by day and hour after hour; then we will be the right person. (Elders' Training, Book 7: One Accord for the Lord's Move, pp. 21-22, 28)

For the organic building up of the Body of Christ, we need the divine life, and we also need prayer....To pray means that we realize that by ourselves, with ourselves, and in ourselves, we are nothing....If we are going to do God's work, we need to get into God. Furthermore, God is not that much in us. Therefore, we need to pray God into us. Then we can do the work in a way in which we are mingled with God. In other words, we are in God, and God is in us....When we pray, we do not need to pray too much for affairs or for the work. We need to pray ourselves into God, and we need to pray God into us. This is the principle of prayer.

When we want to preach the gospel, we have to stop a while to pray. To pray means to stop ourselves from doing anything....If we look into the New Testament, we can see that the Lord Jesus always prayed first. His prayer was to stop Himself from doing anything apart from the Father. His prayer afforded Him the opportunity to be fully one with the Father. Then the work done by God the Father was through Jesus, the man. It was the same with the early apostles. The book of Acts shows us that whenever there was some activity, the apostles firstly prayed. They never initiated work without prayer. Whenever they wanted to do something, they stopped themselves by their prayer. Their prayer gave God a way to come into them, to fill them up, and to saturate their very being. Then the apostles began to work. That work was not something done by the apostles independent from God. Instead, the work done by the apostles was only done in full dependence on God. (The Practical and Organic Building Up of the Church, pp. 92-93)

Further Reading: Life-study of Acts, msg. 49; The Practical and Organic Building Up of the Church, ch. 9; The Way to Practice the Lord's Present Move, ch. 2; Crucial Words of Leading in the Lord's Recovery, Book 1: The Vision and Definite Steps for the Practice of the New Way, chs. 13-14; Life-study of 1 Timothy, msg. 3

<< WEEK 4 — DAY 6 >>

Morning Nourishment

Acts 2:46 "...Continuing steadfastly with one accord in the temple and breaking bread from house to house..."

5:42 "And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and announcing the gospel of Jesus as the Christ."

20:20 "How I did not withhold any of those things that are profitable by not declaring them to you and by not teaching you publicly and from house to house."

The book of Acts not only records the facts related to the church's increase and spread; it also shows four important means of the church's increase and spread. The first means is the economical Spirit, the Spirit of power, descending on the lovers of the Lord (1:8; 2:2-4). The second means is prayer, which is continued steadfastly (6:4; 1:14; 2:42). The third means is God's word (6:7), which is Christ Himself. God's word has power, because the word of God is life, light, and truth. As such, it brings salvation to man....The fourth means is the believers' homes; this is the practical means for God's increase and spread. Acts does not contain a record concerning meetings in a chapel, but there is a record of meeting "from house to house." The believers broke bread and prayed together from house to house (2:46). They also announced the gospel and taught Jesus as the Christ from house to house (5:42). Finally, Paul spoke of teaching and admonishing the believers from house to house (20:20).

The means for God's spread is through His Spirit, by the prayer of the believers, by the release of God's word, and through the believers' homes....In addition to these four aspects, we need to be His witnesses [1:8]....Witness in Greek means "martyr," one who lays down his life, who pays the price of his life, to be a witness. (Crucial Words of Leading in the Lord's Recovery, Book 4: The Increase and Spread of the Church, pp. 29-30)

Today's Reading

[In Taiwan] from 1949 to 1956...we gained people through the preaching of the gospel, and we retained people by meeting with them in small groups....The means and base for the increase and spread of Christ...is the small groups. By 1980 all the small groups were gone. In place of the small groups, there were big joint meetings, mass gatherings, and meetings involving one man speaking. This was a return to the old condition of Christianity.

Strictly speaking, the meetings of the church in Acts occurred mainly "from house to house." The saints went from one house to another, house after house. This is the correct meaning of from house to house in Greek. Even if a house was large, it would not have been able to accommodate a mass gathering. At the most, it would have been able to provide a place for immediate neighbors; the capacity of a house is always small. This is the reason that we refer to such meetings as small group meetings.

Homes are for nurturing, and schools are for educating. Both of these components are necessary. Therefore, after studying our situation, we realize that there is still a need for joint meetings in the church life, which are in the nature of school education, and for small group meetings, which are in the nature of home nurturing.

Although the small groups can uphold existing saints and restore dormant saints, the increase and spread of the church will not proceed in a full way if we focus only on this "defensive" function. We also must focus on the "offensive" function of preaching the gospel from house to house. Through the supply of life and the teaching of the truth, we can uphold and restore the brothers and sisters. Yet when we look around, we still see many relatives, friends, and neighbors who are unbelievers, and we surely have some feeling for them...that they may know the gospel and receive the blessings of the Lord's salvation. (Crucial Words of Leading in the Lord's Recovery, Book 4: The Increase and Spread of the Church, pp. 35-37, 39, 176-177)

Further Reading: Crucial Words of Leading in the Lord's Recovery, Book 4: The Increase and Spread of the Church, chs. 2-3, 12; CWWN, vol. 30, "The Normal Christian Church Life," pp. 167-171

WEEK 4 — HYMN

Let's take the land! The land that God has given us

Spiritual Warfare — Taking the Land

1287

1. Let's take the land! The land that God has given us; In all our living,
Christ can be so much: To take this land, we have the equipment that we need—The blood, the Word, the
Spir - it, and the church. Let's take the land! O Christ - ian broth - ers, The land that God has given
us. Be strong and take it, for we can make it And gain this land so glo - ri -
ous! Let's take the land! O Christ - ian sis - ters, And to these things give earn - est
heed. The Lord implores us; He's gone before us And given ev - ery - thing we need!

2. We have the blood! Christ is our spotless offering,
Who gave Himself, our God to satisfy;
And so we come with boldness to the throne of grace,
And all day long, the precious blood apply.
3. We have the Word! The written Word's our daily food;
We mix this Word with faith and say "Amen!"
Then thro' the day, the spoken Word will speak to us
And regulate our living from within.
4. The Spirit's ours! The Spirit of reality,
He's independent of the way we feel;
He dwells in us, and teaches us to dwell in Him,
And guides us into everything that's real.
5. We have the church! All saints are needed to possess
The fullness of this vast reality;
Together we will gain this all-inclusive Christ,
And He to us our everything will be.