

Guidelines for the Exercise of the Lord's Day Prophesying Message Two : The Original Condition of the Church, the Degradation of the Church, and the recovery of the Church

I. Overview :

Our history in the Lord's recovery is a history of recovery. The word recovery means that something was there originally and then was degraded, damaged, or lost; thus, there is a need to bring that thing back to its original state and to its normal condition. In order to recognize the need for the recovery of the church, we need to know the original condition of the church and the degradation of the church. The recovery of the church has been gradual and progressive. The Lord's recovery is different from today's Christianity; it is impossible for there to be reconciliation between the recovery and Christianity.

II. Truth and Enlightenment :

Day 1 --

A. How do we see the principles of the recovery in Matt. 19:8?

In the beginning, God ordained one husband and one wife, and there was no divorce. Because of the hardness of the people's hearts, Moses tolerated divorce. The Lord was asking the Pharisees if they would care for God's ordination or for the hardness of their heart. Every seeker of God should say, "O Lord, have mercy upon me that I may care for Your original ordination. I condemn and reject the hardness of my heart and return to Your original ordination.

B. How did God's enemy come in to destroy what God had accomplished?

The satanic way to destroy God's accomplishment has two aspects: the inward and the outward. The inward aspect is to damage and corrupt God's people. Then Satan seeks to destroy God's accomplishment outwardly. Nevertheless, God is a God with an eternal purpose. Once God has made up His mind to do something, nothing can change His mind or stop Him.

Day 2 --

A. How does Satan use his evil strategy to damage the church?

After Satan began by using so many substitutes to usurp the place of Christ, he invented the clergy-laity system. His first step is to replace the life. He does this with anything other than Christ. His second step is to kill the function. He has done this by installing the clergy-laity system.

B. Show the original church's characteristics of being no hierarchy among them.

All the saved ones are brothers without any distinctions in rank. When the Lord was on the earth, He told the disciples clearly that the rulers of the Gentiles exercise authority over them, but it shall not be so among you. In the church, whoever wants to be great, to be first among you shall be your servant. All the believers are brothers on the same level of no distinctions.

Day 3 --

A. What is the supreme characteristic of the original church?

In principle, a local church should live directly before Christ and honor Christ as the Head. The church is the Body of Christ, and Christ is the Head of the church, reigning in the church through the Holy Spirit. It was this way in the early church. There was neither human

opinion nor human authority. The believes honored Christ as the Head and obeyed the authority of the Holy Spirit. This is the supreme characteristic of the original church.

B. Explain what the most serious point of the degradation of the church is.

The most serious point of the degradation of the church is the usurpation of the headship of Christ and the encroachment upon the authority of the Holy Spirit. When the church began to have an unlawful organisation for unification, Christ lost His position in the Church and the Holy Spirit could no longer rule in the church. Today all of the characteristics of the church have become completely degraded; none of its original characteristics are left.

Day 4 --

A. What did the Moravian brethren recover by the beginning of the 18th century?

The Moravian brethren not only had the Bible in their hands, but they also obeyed the words of the Bible. They were truly freed, separated, from the world, did not mix themselves with politics, were absolutely not defiled by idols, removed distinctions in rank, endeavour to keep the oneness by abandoning differences in doctrinal views, did not have a head church and branch churches, allowed Christ to be the Head and allowed the Holy Spirit to rule among them.

B. What did the Brethren recover by raising up in the 19th century?

This recovery was very thorough. First, they obeyed the Lord's words absolutely. It was not until the time of the Brethren that the hierarchy in the church was truly and thoroughly eliminated. They were purely before God as brothers and as fellow members of the Body of Christ, paying attention especially to mutual love and fellowship, and they came together to maintain the testimony of the oneness of the church.

Day 5 --

A. What did the Lord do by the Far East in 1933-1934?

In 1933-1934 we clearly saw a crucial matter--the principle of the church taking a locality as its boundary and ground; that is, he saw the light of one locality, one church. Based on this principle, no matter how large or small a city is, we have taken the way of having only one church. The church in each locality should live directly before the Lord and be responsible to the Head, Christ. There should be no head church, and no federation.

B. Explain the revelation and practice of the universal priesthood.

We emphasized that all brothers and sisters are the children of God, members of the Body of Christ, and priests to God; all can approach God and serve God directly. We also emphasized the Body's coordination in service, keeping the principle of the Body by serving together in coordination instead of serving independently. We emphasized the practical church service as well.

Day 6 --

A. How is the Lord's recovery absolutely different from today's religion?

We are here to carry out God's economy in His recovery. In the recovery we repudiated the wood, the grass, and stubble, but we would rather have a small amount of gold, silver, and precious stones. We do not care for the traditional teachings but for God's revelation in His Word.

B. How to apply the words in Galatians 1:10?

Because of our standing for the pure church life, others have been offended. But what can we do? Paul said in Galatians 1:10, "If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a slave of

Christ." If we were men-pleasers, we would not suffer persecution as Paul did. We should be what we are without compromise or pretense.

III. Conclusion :

In order to recognize the need for the recovery of the church, we need to know the original condition of the church and the degradation of the church. The original condition of the church has no hierarchy among the believes, is completely separated from the world, forsakes idols and fully allows God to speak, has only one church one expression of the Body of Christ in a locality without head church, only allows the Holy Spirit to have authority. The degradation of the church involves hierarchy, union with the world, idols, division, not allowing God to speak, having organization for unification, and usurping the headship of Christ and encroaching on the authority of the Holy Spirit. The Lord's recovery is for bringing us out of this unscriptural system of clergy-laity back to the beginning for the pure practice of the church life according to the divine revelation.