

WEEK 6

The Conflict of the Two Kingdoms and the Work and Responsibility of the Church

Scripture Reading: Matt. 6:10; 12:26, 28-29; Eph. 6:10-12; Rev. 12:10; 11:15

OUTLINE

« DAY 1 »

- I. In the universe there are two kingdoms—the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan (Matt. 6:10, 33; 12:26, 28):
 - A. A kingdom is a totality of a certain life:
 1. God has His life, out of which the kingdom of God comes into existence (Eph. 4:18; Matt. 12:28).
 2. Satan has his evil life, out of which the kingdom of Satan comes into existence (John 8:44; Matt. 12:26).
 - B. The two trees in Genesis 2:9, as signs of God and Satan, are two sources; the outcome of the two sources becomes the two kingdoms—the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan (Matt. 12:26, 28).
 - C. The entire human race is a kingdom not merely of the human life but even more of the satanic life (13:38; John 8:44; Acts 13:10; 1 John 3:10):
 1. Humanity has become the totality of the satanic life with all its activities (5:19).
 2. The human kingdom has become the satanic kingdom, the kingdom of Satan.
 - D. Satan, the god of this age, is the ruler of the world and the ruler of the authority of the air (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; 2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:2):
 1. He has his authority and his angels, who are his subordinates as rulers, authorities, and world-rulers of the darkness of this world (Acts 26:18; Matt. 25:41; Eph. 6:12).
 2. Satan has his kingdom, the authority of darkness (Col. 1:13).
 - E. There are two kingdoms on earth—the kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of God in the light; these two kingdoms are now confronting each other on earth (Acts 26:18).

« DAY 2 »

- II. Because the Lord Jesus, the heavenly King, has come to establish

the kingdom of God among men on earth, the two kingdoms are in conflict; a battle is raging, and there is the need for us to fight the battle (Eph. 6:12):

A. Spiritual warfare is the warfare between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan (Matt. 12:26, 28):

1. The purpose of spiritual warfare is to bring in the kingdom of God (Rev. 12:10).
2. The kingdom of God is the exercise of the divine will and the overthrowing of the power of Satan by the power of God (Matt. 6:10; 12:28).

B. There are two great principles in the universe—God’s authority and Satan’s rebellion; the unique controversy between God and Satan concerns authority and rebellion (Acts 26:18; Col. 1:13):

1. Rebellion is the denial of God’s authority and the rejection of God’s rule (Isa. 14:12-14; Ezek. 28:2-19).
2. Although Satan rebelled against God’s authority and although man violates His authority by rebelling against Him, God will not let this rebellion continue; He will establish His kingdom on the earth (Rev. 11:15).
3. The kingdom of God is the power to subdue rebellion (Mark 4:35-41).
4. The Lord Jesus, God incarnate, came to establish the kingdom of God—to establish a realm in which God can carry out His purpose through the exercise of His authority (John 1:1, 14; 3:3, 5; 18:36).

« DAY 3 »

C. The Lord cast out demons by the Spirit of God so that the kingdom of God might come (Matt. 12:28):

1. As the Lord cast out demons, He was fighting, destroying Satan’s kingdom, and bringing in the kingdom of God (v. 28; Mark 3:23-28; Luke 9:1).
2. The Spirit of God is the power of the kingdom of God; where the Spirit of God is in power, there the kingdom of God is, and the demons have no ground (Matt. 12:28).
3. Where the Spirit of God exercises authority over opposition and rebellion against God, that is the kingdom of God (v. 28).

D. Matthew 12 reveals that Satan is the strong man usurping the God-created people and that in order to bring people out of the usurping hand of the strong man, there is the need to bind him (v. 29):

1. Before the Lord Jesus cast out demons, He first bound the strong man; this is the secret of spiritual fighting.
2. The “house” in Matthew 12:29 refers to the kingdom of Satan, and “his goods” refers to the fallen people, who are under Satan, who are his vessels, his instruments, and who are kept in his house for his use.

3. This shows us that if we would establish the kingdom of God and take fallen human beings out of Satan's kingdom, we must first bind the strong man; the way to bind the strong man is to pray (Mark 9:25-29).
4. This is the fighting of the spiritual battle for establishing the kingdom of God (2 Cor. 10:3-5).

« DAY 4 »

III. The work of the church is to bring in the kingdom of God; the church bears the responsibility of bringing the kingdom of God to the earth (Matt. 6:10; 12:22-29; Rev. 11:15; 12:10):

- A. The church was brought into being for the purpose of bringing in the kingdom (Matt. 16:18-19; 18:17-18; Rev. 1:6, 9; 11:15):
 1. The church's responsibility is to perpetuate Christ's victory and to bring in God's kingdom (12:10; 11:15).
 2. The work of the church on earth is to bring in the kingdom of God; all the work of the church is governed by the principle of the kingdom of God.
 3. The church is responsible for bringing heaven's will down to earth and for carrying it out on earth (Matt. 6:10; 7:21; 12:50).
- B. The church, which comes into being under the rule of heaven, by reason of her submission to the heavenly rule, deals with God's enemy (16:19; Eph. 6:10-18):
 1. In order for the kingdom of the heavens to be established, there is the need of spiritual fighting (Matt. 12:22-29).
 2. The responsibility of the church is to continue the warfare that Christ fought on earth; the church must continue the victorious work that Christ has carried out against Satan (Heb. 2:14; 1 John 3:8b; Col. 2:15; Psa. 149:5-9).

« DAY 5 »

- C. The church should pray to bring in the kingdom of God (Matt. 6:10):
 1. The coming of the kingdom is not automatic; if there is no prayer, the kingdom cannot come.
 2. The prayer of the church is the most effective means of curbing Satan (16:19; 18:18).
 3. The church must be the outlet of heaven, allowing heaven's authority to be expressed on earth (16:18-19; 18:18).
 4. Genuine prayer is a joint labor with God to bring His kingdom to the earth and to carry out His will on earth; hence, prayer is a spiritual battle (6:10; 2 Cor. 10:4; Eph. 6:12).

« DAY 6 »

D. The church needs to utter prayers of warfare in order to bring in God's kingdom and to drive out God's enemy:

1. Such prayer indicates that we are standing on God's side and are opposed to God's enemy.
2. Fighting prayers drive away the power of darkness, bring in God's authority, and enable God to have His will done on earth (Matt. 6:10).
3. Whether or not the kingdom of God can come to the earth and God can rule on earth depends on whether or not we pray fighting prayers, prayers of spiritual warfare (Psa. 144:5; Isa. 64:1).

<< WEEK 6 — DAY 1 >>

Morning Nourishment

Matt. 6:33 But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Eph. 6:12 For our wrestling is not against blood and flesh but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenlies.

It is of tremendous importance to realize that at the very beginning, there were two trees—the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:9). The tree of life signifies God, and the tree of knowledge signifies Satan. Man took the tree of knowledge into him, meaning that Satan entered into man. Satan, as sin personified, is now inside of man (Rom. 7:8, 11, 17, 20). After coming into man, Satan began to saturate him, poison him, and take full possession of him. Thus, man became corrupted and darkened. To be darkened and corrupted by Satan means to be placed under the authority of Satan. Man became a citizen in Satan's kingdom, subject to the rule of Satan. Everyone born of man is likewise a citizen in Satan's kingdom. Every human being is subject to Satan by birth. Therefore, men steal, fight, and kill. This is the kingdom of Satan. This is the totality of the satanic life with all its activities. (CWWL, 1972, vol. 2, "The Kingdom," p. 67)

Today's Reading

One day Jehovah-plus came. God was incarnated as a man. God's desire is to come into man. When we call on the name of the Lord Jesus, He comes into us as life. From that point on, God grows within us....The more God grows, the more He spreads, and the more ground He occupies within us. The more ground He occupies, the more He reigns. The kingdom is God's divine reign in us through the inward growth of life. The kingdom of God is God being life to us, spreading in us, occupying the ground in us, and reigning over our whole being.

There are two kingdoms, and there are two spirits. John 4:24 shows that God is Spirit, and Ephesians 2:2 reveals that Satan, the ruler of the authority of the air, is also a spirit. This evil spirit is operating in every human being.

Matthew 12:26 indicates that Satan has a kingdom, and John 12:31 describes Satan as the ruler of this world. Satan is not only the operator; he is the ruler. He rules the whole earth, and he has many subordinates, many ranks, under him, which Ephesians 6:12 describes as rulers and authorities....He is the ruler of this world, and he is also the ruler of the authority of the air. On the earth there is the human race, and in the air there are the rebellious angelic powers. Satan's kingdom is composed of the fallen human race and the rebellious angels. On the earth, the members of the fallen human race are the citizens of the kingdom of Satan; in the air, the rebellious angelic powers and principalities rule this earth for Satan. He is the ruler of the authority of the air. Satan, as the evil spirit, has come into every human being. He operates in every human being without exception. By being such an operator, he has produced a kingdom. Satan now dwells in man's body.

Satan takes the human body as his dwelling place, but the Lord Jesus takes the human spirit as His dwelling place. God in His sovereignty has preserved the human spirit for Himself. Although the human spirit has been influenced by the evil body and the corrupt mentality to the point that it has been deadened, we can find no hint in the Bible that Satan has ever entered into the human spirit. When we repent and believe in the Lord Jesus, He immediately comes into our spirit. The enemy tries his best to hide this matter of the human spirit from Christians. The Bible tells us clearly that the Lord Jesus Christ is with our spirit (2 Tim. 4:22). From our spirit He is growing and spreading within us, taking possession of more ground in our being. By occupying more ground within us, He actually reigns within us. This is the inward reigning of the Lord Jesus. (CWWL, 1972, vol. 2, "The Kingdom," pp. 67-69)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1972, vol. 2, "The Kingdom," chs. 8-9; Life-study of Job, msg. 37; CWWL, 1959, vol. 3, "Ten Lines in the Bible," chs. 6, 10

« WEEK 6 — DAY 2 »

Morning Nourishment

Acts 26:18 To open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light and from the authority of Satan to God...

Col. 1:13 Who delivered us out of the authority of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His love.

Have you ever realized how much the universe was affected by the fall of the angels and man and how big a problem this made for God? God desired that His creatures would accept His authority; however, both kinds of creatures rejected His authority. God was unable to establish His authority over the creatures. Nevertheless, God did not call back His authority. God can call back His presence, but He will never call back His system of authority. Wherever God's authority is, God is given a position of prominence. On the one hand, God maintains His system of authority, and on the other hand, He establishes His kingdom. Although Satan rebelled against God's authority, and although man daily violates His authority by rebelling against Him, God will not let this rebellion continue. He will establish His own kingdom. The Bible calls the kingdom of God the kingdom of the heavens because rebellion is not limited to just the world (Matt. 4:17; Mark 1:15). The angels in the heavens rebelled as well.

How did the Lord establish God's kingdom? He did it through submission. Whatever the Lord did on earth was entirely based on submission. He did nothing that opposed God's authority. Everything was in submission, in perfect cooperation with the authority of God. In this realm the Lord set up the kingdom of God and executed His authority. The church today must also allow God's authority to have a free way and manifest His kingdom through submission. (CWWN, vol. 47, "Authority and Submission," pp. 147-148)

Today's Reading

God determined to become a man; He became a man in the Son. This is a great matter. God became a man in the Son and entrusted all His authority to the Son. Therefore, all of God's glory is in the Son. We can say that the Son is the embodiment of God's authority. When the Lord Jesus stood as a man among the Jews and was questioned by some of them as to when the kingdom of God was coming, He answered, "The kingdom of God is in the midst of you" (Luke 17:20-21).

When the Lord Jesus spoke this word, He meant that He Himself was the kingdom of God—His being in the midst of the Jews was God's kingdom being in their midst. He did not want the Jews to think that the kingdom of God was "here" or "there"; actually, the kingdom of God was in their midst (v. 21). He Himself was the kingdom of God. All of God's authority was with Him, and God's throne also was with Him.

When we believed in the Lord, we received the Lord Jesus as our Savior and prayed, "Lord, I receive You into my being." However, we did not know that the Lord whom we received is not only the Savior and the One who is life but also the King. He is the kingdom, and He is the authority....Today God's kingdom is not only outside of us but also within us. This kingdom is Christ, our Savior, who is the authority in us, having set up His throne in us and been enthroned in us.

As the Lord's disciples, we...must be clear that the Lord's primary focus is not that we would do good but that by being saved we would be brought under His authority and ruling. In the past our doing evil was rebellion toward Him, but our doing good also was rebellion toward Him, because we did not acknowledge His authority. Now because we repent and submit to Him, we should not take good or evil or morality as our standard. Instead, we should live under His ruling and government. If He forbids us, we should refrain from doing not only evil things but even good things. We must be restricted by Him and accept His ruling. (CWWL, 1957, vol. 2, "What the Kingdom Is to the Believers," pp. 427-428, 470-471)

Further Reading: CWWN, vol. 47, "Authority and Submission," ch. 6; CWWL, 1957, vol. 2, "What the Kingdom Is to the Believers," chs. 3, 6-7

« WEEK 6 – DAY 3 »

Morning Nourishment

Matt. 12:28-29 But if I, by the Spirit of God, cast out the demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. Or how can anyone enter into the house of the strong man and plunder his goods unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will thoroughly plunder his house.

The Spirit of God is the power of the kingdom of God. Where the Spirit of God is in power, there the kingdom of God is, and there the demons have no ground. By the Lord's word [in Matthew 12:28], we see that the battle fought for the kingdom is not fought by just a man himself, but by a man with the Spirit of God. In verse 28 the Lord said that He cast out demons by the Spirit of God and that this is the coming of the kingdom of God. Wherever the Spirit of God exercises His authority over the opposing situation, that is the kingdom of God. (Life-study of Matthew, pp. 410-411)

Today's Reading

[Matthew 12:29] reveals that before the Lord cast out the demon, He firstly fought against Satan. This verse says, "Or how can anyone enter into the house of the strong man and plunder his goods unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will thoroughly plunder his house." The "house" here signifies the kingdom of Satan, and "the strong man" is Satan, the evil one. The Greek word translated "goods" also means "instruments, apparatus;" hence, "goods, stuff." The fallen people under Satan are his vessels, his instruments for his use. They are his goods kept in his house, his kingdom. The word about binding the strong man indicates that when the Lord cast out demons, He first bound Satan. The people saw only the casting out of the demon. They did not see the binding of Satan, the strong man. Thus, the Lord used the opportunity afforded Him by the accusation of the Pharisees to reveal the secret of spiritual fighting. Apparently, the Lord was only casting out the demon; actually, He was fighting, binding the strong man. This shows us that if we would build the kingdom today, we must first bind the strong man.

The way to bind the strong man is to pray. When we come to chapter 17, we shall see that the disciples came to the Lord and asked Him why He could cast out the demon and they could not. In 17:21 the Lord told His disciples, "This kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting." If you do not pray and fast, you simply cannot cast out this kind of demon. The Lord's word to His disciples indicates that before He cast out a demon, He surely fasted and prayed. In order to bind the strong man, we must fast and pray. The Lord fasted and prayed secretly. The disciples did not see this. We must learn of the Lord to fast in secret and to pray in secret. I believe that when the Lord Jesus was on earth, He often fasted and prayed to fight the battle and to bind the strong man. We all must be in the same spirit today. Every day our spirit must be a fasting spirit and a praying spirit so that we may daily bind the strong man, who is Satan, the king of the kingdom of darkness.

Satan has a kingdom of darkness on earth, and the whole earth is under his usurpation. It is difficult to take one out of Satan's hand. Every fallen person is a vessel in Satan's house. Satan's house is his kingdom, and in his house are many vessels, the many fallen persons. In order to take a fallen person out of Satan's house, we must bind the strong man by prayer and fasting. This is the fighting of the spiritual battle for the establishment of the kingdom of the heavens.

There are two kingdoms on earth: one is the kingdom of darkness, and the other is the kingdom of the heavens in the light. These two kingdoms are now confronting each other on earth. Therefore, there is the need to fight the battle. We all must fast and pray to bind the strong man. Then we shall be able to plunder his house. This is a real revelation. Not many Christians have read Matthew 12 in this way because they do not see the kingdom. To them, the kingdom is either simply a doctrinal term or something suspended for a future time. But we realize that all that the Lord is doing with us today is for the establishment of the heavenly kingdom. We are the kingdom people. (Life-study of Matthew, pp. 411-413)

Further Reading: Life-study of Matthew, msg. 33

« WEEK 6 — DAY 4 »

Morning Nourishment

Rev. 11:15 ...The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign forever and ever.

12:10 And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, Now has come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ, for the accuser of our brothers has been cast down, who accuses them before our God day and night.

The work of the church on earth is to bring in the kingdom of God. All the work of the church is governed by the principle of the kingdom of God. The saving of souls is under this principle, and so is the casting out of demons and all other works as well. Everything should be under the principle of God's kingdom. Why should we win souls? For the sake of the kingdom of God—not just because man needs salvation. We must stand on the position of the kingdom of God whenever we work, and we must apply the kingdom of God to deal with the power of Satan. (CWWN, vol. 34, "The Glorious Church," p. 63)

Today's Reading

The Lord wants us to pray, "Our Father who is in the heavens, Your name be sanctified; Your kingdom come; Your will be done, as in heaven, so also on earth" (Matt. 6:9-10). If the coming of the kingdom of God was automatic, the Lord would never have taught us to pray in this way. But since the Lord asked us to pray in this way, He simply showed us that this is the work of the church. Yes, the church should preach the gospel, but much more, the church should pray to bring in the kingdom of God. Some people think that whether or not we pray, the kingdom of God will come automatically. But if we know God, we will never say this. The principle of God's work is to wait for His people to move. Then He will move.

God needs man to cooperate with Him in His work. When God's people move, He will also move.

Even the birth of the Lord Jesus was the result of the cooperation of some of God's people with Him. In Jerusalem there were some who were continually looking for the consolation of Israel. This is why the Lord was born. Although the purpose of God is to bring in His kingdom, His part alone is not sufficient. He needs the church to work with Him. Through prayer, the church must release the power of the kingdom of God upon the earth. When the Lord comes, the kingdom of the world will become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ (Rev. 11:15).

Since the work of the church is to stand for God and not give any ground to Satan, what manner of living should we have to accomplish this task? All our sins and unrighteousness must be dealt with, our consecration to God must be thorough, our soul-life must be put to death, and our natural man must be abandoned. The ability of the flesh is absolutely useless in spiritual warfare. "I" cannot resist Satan. "I" must go! Whenever "I" goes out, the Lord Jesus will come in. Whenever "I" enters, there is failure. Whenever the Lord comes in, there is victory. Satan recognizes only one person—the Lord Jesus. We cannot resist Satan. The fiery darts of Satan can penetrate our flesh, but, praise God, we can put on Christ who has won the victory. (CWWN, vol. 34, "The Glorious Church," pp. 63-64)

The cross of Christ produced the church, and the church brings in the kingdom. Hence, the church stands between the cross and the kingdom. The present age is the time for the church to practically realize the victory of Christ. The Head has overcome; now the Body must also overcome. The Lord destroyed the devil on the cross and produced the church with resurrection life. Today God is establishing His kingdom on earth through His church. The church must continue the victorious work that Christ has carried out against Satan. It is responsible for bringing heaven's will down to earth and for carrying it out on earth. (CWWN, vol. 44, "God's Eternal Plan," p. 778)

Further Reading: CWWN, vol. 34, "The Glorious Church," ch. 3; CWWN, vol. 44, "God's Eternal Plan," chs. 94-95

◀◀ WEEK 6 — DAY 5 ▶▶

Morning Nourishment

Matt. 16:18-19 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of the heavens, and whatever you bind on the earth shall have been bound in the heavens, and whatever you loose on the earth shall have been loosed in the heavens.

“Your kingdom come!” This is not only a desire of the church, but also a responsibility of the church. The church should bring in God’s kingdom. In order to bring in God’s kingdom, the church has to pay the price to be restricted by heaven and come under heaven’s rule. It has to be the outlet for heaven, and it has to allow heaven’s authority to be expressed on earth....It has to put on the whole armor of God and stand against the stratagems of the devil (Eph. 6:11), for wherever the kingdom of God is, the devil is cast out. When the kingdom of God rules on earth fully, Satan will be cast into the abyss (Rev. 20:1-3). Since the church has such a tremendous responsibility, Satan will do all he can to attack the church. May the church pray like the saints of old,...“Oh that You would rend the heavens, that You would come down” (Isa. 64:1). At the same time, we should say to Satan, “Depart from the earth immediately, and go to the eternal fire which God has prepared for you” (cf. Matt. 25:41). (CWWN, vol. 22, “The Prayer Ministry of the Church,” pp. 164-165)

Today’s Reading

God has a very great will, and the miscellaneous matters of His will are included in this great will. When we pay attention to God’s great will, all the miscellaneous matters will be accomplished. God has His will in heaven, and His Spirit conveys this will to us. Therefore, we can echo with the cry, “God, we ask that You accomplish this.” When this happens, God accomplishes His will. This is the principle of prayer as revealed in the Bible. God’s move today is affected by our prayer on earth. We have to ask God to open our eyes so that we can see that the move in heaven is affected by our prayer on earth. Our Lord has revealed this mystery to us which was hidden from the ages....If we are willing to make a sacrifice and set aside the time to pray, we will see that this kind of prayer will not only receive God’s answer but will also receive a reward.

God’s will is like a river, and our prayer is like the channel. If our prayer is big, the accomplishment of our prayer will also be big. If our prayer is limited, the accomplishment of our prayer will also be limited...God brought in a great revival [in Wales in 1903-1904] through a coal miner, Evan Roberts. He did not have much education, but his prayers were profound. Later he did not engage in any public work for seven or eight years. When a brother met him, the brother asked, “What have you been doing all these years?” He answered with one short sentence, “I have been praying the prayer of the kingdom.”...If there is no prayer, the kingdom will not come. If the channels are blocked, the water cannot flow through. In teaching us to pray, the Lord revealed God’s mind and God’s demand on us. Whenever God’s children place their will in harmony with God’s will, God’s name will be sanctified, His kingdom will surely come, and His will will indeed be done on earth as in heaven. (CWWN, vol. 22, “The Prayer Ministry of the Church,” p. 167)

In John 12—16 Satan is spoken of as the ruler of this world three times (12:31; 14:30; 16:11). Presently, he is the ruler of this world, and the nations of this world are his domain. In the millennium, he will be bound and cast into the abyss. Before that time, the church is on the earth to curb the activities of Satan. The prayer of the church is the most effective means of curbing Satan. The church is a miniature of the kingdom. Any place that manifests God’s authority is a place where the kingdom is realized (Matt. 12:28). It is our responsibility to put a halt to Satan’s will. Wherever the church is, Satan’s authority will retreat. The church is on the earth to perpetuate and manifest Christ’s victorious stand over Satan. (CWWN, vol. 44, “God’s Eternal Plan,” p. 778)

Further Reading: CWWN, vol. 22, “The Prayer Ministry of the Church,” ch. 2

« WEEK 6 — DAY 6 »

Morning Nourishment

Matt. 6:10 Your kingdom come; Your will be done, as in heaven, so also on earth.

Psa. 144:5 O Jehovah, bow Your heavens down and descend...

May the Lord grant us mercy and show us that His prayer is for the unlimited spread of the kingdom of God on the earth and in the whole universe. Of course, in order to carry out such a plan of God, there is the need for God's people to pray sufficiently. The true prayers of God's people are for His kingdom. You and I may pray for numerous things, but unless the ultimate purpose is for God's kingdom, those prayers are of no value before God. We admit that in the Lord's prayer there is the matter of dealing with sins and the matter of the daily living, but its beginning and ending are entirely for the kingdom of God. In the beginning it says, "Your kingdom come; Your will be done...on earth." At the end it says, "Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever." Therefore, this prayer shows that He wants our prayer to be wholly for God's kingdom. (CWWL, 1959, vol. 4, "Lessons on Prayer," pp. 189-190)

Today's Reading

God wants man to cooperate with Him; Satan also wants man to cooperate with him. God wants to enter into man; Satan also wants to get into man. God wants to be mingled with man; Satan also wants to be mixed with man....On the one hand, prayer is man expressing to God that he wants God and that he is standing on God's side. On the other hand, it is man telling Satan that he is standing with God to oppose Satan. Hence, the purpose of prayer is to bring in God's kingdom and to drive Satan away.

True prayers for men's souls are to deal with Satan and to bring in God's kingdom. When a person does not believe in the Lord Jesus, it is not just a matter of his soul going to hell. Even more, it is a matter of Satan's ruling over him. His going to hell is a matter bound up with the great matter of Satan's ruling over him. So, I need to pray for him in order to chase Satan away from him, to deliver him from the power of darkness, and to bring God's kingdom to him. True prayers will always, on the one hand, bring God's kingdom to man and, on the other hand, drive away Satan's power from man. Every time a sinner gets saved, it signifies a partial defeat of Satan's power and a partial coming of God's kingdom. This is the prayer of warfare.

Please consider: Is there a sinner who does not want to be saved? Is there a saint who does not want to love the Lord? All sinners want to be saved, and all saints desire to love the Lord. But because there is someone in the air who usurps men and controls the men on earth, sinners are prevented from receiving the gospel, and saints are hindered from seeking the Lord. So it is not enough that we only preach the gospel and minister the Word. We must rise up and live in the heavenly realm to touch the throne of God as Daniel did. We must pray to God that God's heavenly authority may be brought down to the earth. If this is done, you will see that one by one sinners will be saved, and one by one saints will rise up to seek and love the Lord, for here there are fighting prayers driving away the power of darkness, bringing in God's authority and, as a result, causing God to have His will done on earth. They enable God to carry out His salvation and give grace to His children according to His good pleasure.

So every praying person should be one who is in the heavenly realm, touching God's throne, and therefore, able to pour down prayers from heaven. As you are above the earth, the air, and the power of darkness and are seated together with Christ on the throne of God in the heavenlies, the prayers that you utter are prayers of warfare. Having understood this point, you will turn the focus of your attention from man to the devil. When a sinner fails to receive salvation, you should pray, "O God, it is not that he would not repent, but it is the devil that is usurping him. I pray that You cast out the devil from him." (CWWL, 1959, vol. 4, "Lessons on Prayer," pp. 192, 196-197)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1959, vol. 4, "Lessons on Prayer," ch. 18; CWWL, 1963, vol. 3, "Basic Principles for the Practice of the Church Life," ch. 6

<< WEEK 6 — HYMN >>

Hymns, #893

1 Conflict today is fierce,
The cry of battle calling now
The rebel voice of hell
But list, the midnight cry resounds,
2 Trials more bitter grow;
Hell's forces rally all their pow'rs
Yet while we wait and watch
We hear the joyful song ring out,
3 'Tis harder at the end
For Satan fights with all his pow'r
Much greater strength we need
How happy when the Lord we see
4 Who then will forward go
Who then will firmly trust the Lord
Till with the conqu'rors blest,
That man will then rejoice to hear,
5 Who then will choose God's best
Though passing through the wildest storms,
Who now will dare press on,
All such will then rejoice to see
6 Though deep the darkness be
Till we the day of rapture greet
'Tis there we'll see the Lord
The overcomers will rejoice:
The strength of Satan more;
Is louder than before.
E'en stronger now becomes.
"Behold, I quickly come!"
The fighting doth enlarge.
And gather for the charge.
And feel the war severe,
"Jesus, the Lord, is near!"
The word to testify,
Our witness to defy.
The foe to overcome;
And all our sighing's done!
Strong in His mighty pow'r?
Until the vict'ry hour,
The triumph song's begun?
"Behold, I quickly come!"
And take the narrow track,
Yet never turning back?
Enduring pain and fear?
Jesus, the Lord, is near!
We still would onward go,
And glory 'round shall glow.
And Satan overcome;
Jesus, the Lord, has come!