

Guidelines for the exercise of the Lord's day Prophesying Message Six : The Factor of Dealing with Our Natural Disposition for Our Growth in Life and Our Usefulness in Service.

I. Overview:

We must deal with our natural disposition for our growth in life and our usefulness in service. Our natural disposition denotes what we are in our makeup by birth, and our character is the outward expression of our natural disposition. The way to deal with our natural disposition is to realize and remember that we are crucified persons and remain under that realization and reality throughout the day. We should not be limited by our natural disposition in the Lord's work; instead, we should learn to live a life of opposing our disposition. The compound Spirit includes the precious death of Christ and the sweetness and effectiveness of Christ's death, which can kill our natural disposition; the church life, fruit-bearing, and lamb-feeding are three matters that kill our natural disposition. God's dealing with Jacob is a full picture of the Holy Spirit's discipline and His transforming work in the New Testament believers to deal with their natural disposition. The strongest manifestation of Jacob's maturity in life is the fact that Jacob blessed everyone; his supplanting hands became blessing hands; blessing is the overflow of God as life to others.

II. Truth and Enlightenment:

Day 1 —

A. Expound the spiritual significance of the disposition and the character.

We define disposition and character according to their spiritual significance. Within we have our disposition, and without we have our character. Disposition is what we are within, and character is what we express without. The inward disposition and the outward character are the extract, the essence, of our being. If our character and disposition were taken away, there would be nothing left to our being.

B. Illustrate to prove the differences in disposition.

To illustrate the differences in disposition, we may use different animals, such as a turtle and a rabbit. A turtle walks slowly, and a rabbit runs quickly. Each activity is related to a particular thing within the nature of each animal. The turtle and the rabbit each has its own disposition, its own makeup. Your disposition denotes what you are in your makeup by birth. Although our disposition is something made by God, it still needs to be dealt with by God.

Day 2 —

A. Explain the thing that most damages our usefulness in the Christian life being our living according to our disposition.

Some brothers and sisters have a strong element in their disposition that hinders them from coordinating and cooperating with others. If certain brothers or sisters are assigned a certain work, no one else can be included with them to help in that work; they must do it exclusively. Such brothers or sisters are usually very capable, and they can also easily stir up trouble in the church life.

B. Why do we need to be people who are always opposing ourselves, our disposition?

The Lord's work is a work of the Body and by the Body; therefore, coordination is desperately needed. The apostle Paul was very capable, but he also needed a number of others to help him and coordinate with him. Actually, most of us do not like to work with others. To oppose ourselves being to oppose our disposition, we must learn to be people who are always opposing ourselves.

Day 3 —

A. Explain what kind of person being useful to the Lord.

First, he must love and desire the Lord. Second, he must have a revelation that God's eternal purpose is to work Christ into us and to express Christ through us. Third, his person must have been dealt with by the cross. The fourth, regarding the aspect of character, we do not minister our character to others, but we bear Christ to them by our character.

B. Expound the relationship between our function and disposition.

In order to serve Him, we should be very useful. Unfortunately, we are extremely limited by our disposition and, as a result, too little of our function is manifested. If we do not overthrow our old disposition, I am afraid that our

usefulness in the hand of the Lord will cease. If we can break through the constraints of our disposition, the effectiveness of our work will more than triple.

Day 4 —

A. Explain that our disposition is expressed in many forms.

One type is that of the “hero.” Brothers or sisters who have this type of disposition must do everything in an impressive, perfect, and complete way. If they are to speak, they must do it in an outstanding way, or they will not speak. They are also very strong and quick in doing things. Another type, the “non-hero” does not do anything in a thorough or complete way.

B. Expound what the spiritual meaning of the word in Second Kings 4:8-9 implies.

Elisha did not give one message or perform one miracle. Every time he passed through, he turned aside and had a meal there. The woman identified him as a man of God by the way he took his meal. Today we have to ask ourselves, “What is the impression that we give to others?” If the outer man is not broken, the spirit will not be released, and the impression to others will not be an impression of the spirit.

Day 5 —

A. Expound that we who would follow the Lord must know ourselves properly.

We have Christ as the treasure in a poor earthen vessel. We are all descendants of Adam with the same fallen nature. We need to realize that the natural life is the enemy of God and of Christ. If we intend to follow the Lord, the first condition is that we deny ourselves and apply the killing power of the cross to the self constantly. We need to let the cross put the self to death.

B. Explain that the breaking of the outer man is the breaking of our disposition.

Our disposition is our self. It is in us, and it is us. Our disposition makes it hard for us to release our spirit. The breaking of the outer man is the breaking of our disposition. Whatever we are by birth, whether good or bad, must all be torn down in order that the Holy Spirit may form in us a new disposition, new character.

Day 6 —

A. Expound what revealed to us in the entire life of Jacob.

The most outstanding characteristic in the entire life of Jacob is his natural endeavoring and scheming. All those who scheme are inevitably crafty. So also was Jacob. The afflictions, sufferings, and troubles that beset him were for the breaking of his natural constitution. When Jacob’s natural constitution was thoroughly broken, his life in God attained to a mature and full stage.

B. Testify that God’s breaking is not a matter of cruelty but of being gracious to us.

What He tears down is our worthless self. However, what God builds into us is Himself, the peerless and infinite One. The end of the Bible shows the New Jerusalem with the tree of life. The New Jerusalem is a structure built with pure gold, pearl, and precious stones, all of which refer to God Himself.

III. Conclusion:

Our natural disposition is what we are in our makeup by birth, and our service depends entirely on what we, the persons, are. Thus, we should pray that the Lord would teach us how to work so that we may supply others with the building God and the built God. The God of building denotes the processed and consummated Triune God as the life-giving Spirit, and the God of being built refers to the Triune God who dispenses into us and works into our whole being. Therefore, what we are is very crucial. We must deal with what we are, that is, our natural disposition, for our growth in life and our usefulness in service. Jacob’s life reveals that a natural person must pass through breaking in order to become Israel, a prince of God; what God tears down through our environment is our worthless self, our natural disposition. He matures in life and becomes one who blesses the overflow of God as life to others.