

Week Six

Entering into Christ's Wonderful Shepherding in His Heavenly Ministry to Shepherd the Church of God as a Slave of God for the Fulfillment of the Dream of God

Hymns:

Scripture Reading: Acts 20:19-20, 28, 31; John 21:15-17; 1 Pet. 2:25; Matt. 24:45-47; 25:3-4, 9, 22-23

Outline

§Day 1

- I. We need to enter into Christ's wonderful shepherding in His heavenly ministry by enjoying and ministering Christ to shepherd the church of God as a slave of God for the fulfillment of the dream of God, the eternal purpose of God—Acts 20:19-20, 28, 31; Rom. 1:1; Gal. 6:17; Mark 9:7-8; Eph. 3:11:**
 - A. God's dream is the dream of His eternal purpose to have the reality of Bethel, the house of God, the mutual dwelling place of God and man; in this universe God is doing only one thing—He is building His eternal habitation for His eternal expression—Gen. 28:11-12, 16-19a; Matt. 16:18; John 14:23; 15:5; Rev. 21:3, 22.**
 - B. Christ as the Slave-Savior did not come to be served, but to serve; as the great Shepherd of the sheep, He served us in the past, He still serves us in the present, and He is going to serve us in the future—Mark 10:45; Luke 22:26-27; 12:37; Heb. 13:20; Rev. 7:17; Gen. 48:15.**
 - C. Whenever we have a need, we can come to the Lord and let Him serve us so that He can serve others through us; as the**

life-giving Spirit, the Slave-Savior shepherds others through us by dispensing Himself as life into us so that we can become the channel for Him to dispense Himself as life into others—Matt. 26:13; John 13:12-17; 1 John 3:16; John 10:10; 1 Cor. 15:45b; 2 Cor. 3:6.

- D. Our service to the Lord in time is a preparation for our service to Him in the next age and in eternity—Matt. 25:21; Rev. 22:3:**
- 1. Our usefulness before God is the result of our being mingled with Him; the measure of God in us is the measure of our usefulness before Him—Col. 2:19; Heb. 13:20; Phil. 2:13; 3:8-9.**
 - 2. God's only goal in time is to dispense Himself into us day by day so that we may be fully mingled with Him; all our service is a matter of God coming into us and coming out of us—John 7:37-39; 2 Cor. 3:2-3, 6, 16-18.**
- E. Christ as the Steward in God's house makes us the dispensing stewards of the mysteries of God and of the varied grace of God for the carrying out of His eternal economy, His household administration—1 Cor. 4:1; Eph. 3:2; 1 Pet. 4:10; Isa. 22:15-22.**

§Day 2

- II. To shepherd the flock of God is to watch over the souls of the saints, being one with the Lord as the Shepherd and Overseer of their souls in His care for the welfare of their inner being and in His exercising His oversight over the condition of their real person—John 21:15-17; 1 Pet. 2:25; 5:1-6; Heb. 13:17:**
- A. For the sake of the flock, the elders must enjoy the Lord every day as grace and truth so that they may be dispensers of grace and truth—Eph. 3:2; 4:29; 1 Tim. 3:2b; 5:17; 2 Tim. 2:24-26; Titus 1:9.**
- B. For the sake of the flock, the elders need to buy the oil every day (Matt. 25:3-4, 9), to pay the price to gain more of the Spirit, by buying the truth of God's economy (Prov. 23:23), buying gold refined by fire that they may be rich toward God, buying white garments that they may be clothed with Christ by living out**

Christ, and buying eyesalve as the anointing Spirit to heal their blindness (Rev. 3:18).

- C. For the sake of the flock, the co-workers and elders need to be faithful and prudent slaves, taking care of the Lord's possessions and investing their spiritual gift by giving the food of the word of God, the full gospel of God's economy, to the sinners, the believers, and the churches—Rom. 1:1; Matt. 24:45-47; 25:22-23.**

§Day 3

III. The elders should not lord it over God's flock, which is God's possession; the churches are God's possession, allotted to the elders as their portion, entrusted to them by God for their care—1 Pet. 5:3-4:

- A. To lord it over others is to exercise lordship over those who are ruled (Matt. 20:25); among the believers we are all brothers, and only Christ is our Lord, our Master, and the Lord of the harvest (23:8, 10; Luke 10:2).**
- B. The elders in the church can take the leadership (not the lordship) only by becoming patterns of the flock, taking the lead to serve and care for the church so that the believers may follow—1 Pet. 5:3; 1 Thes. 5:12-13; 1 Tim. 4:12; 5:17.**
- C. We should not tell the saints where to live, what to do, or where to go without directing them to pray so that we can honor Christ as the Head of the Body:**
- 1. Any decisions that you make by yourself for others are an insult to Christ as the Head of the Body; none of us should ever tell others where they should go; what an insult this is to the Lord!—Col. 2:19; Eph. 4:15-16.**
 - 2. If you have told others where to move, you must repent and ask them to forgive you because you gave them instructions about what they should do; to do this is to usurp the position of the Lord and to make yourself the Lord.**
 - 3. Concerning any move you make in the Lord's recovery, you must go**

directly to the Lord Himself and pray; you must have the assurance that the Lord is sending you; everything must be brought into the presence of the Lord, and everyone should pray until he is clear about the Lord's leadings—Mark 1:35-38; 2 Cor. 2:12-14.

D. We also need to check whether the leading we have from the Lord corresponds to the feeling of the Body—Acts 13:1-4a; 21:4, 11:

1. If the leading ones, after much prayer, are truly burdened about a certain matter, through fellowship they should pass on their burden to the saints and ask the saints to pray; eventually, the saints will receive a personal leading from the Lord, and they may move accordingly.
2. If you move to a place without prayer and fellowship, you will be shaken when tests, afflictions, and persecutions come; if you pray and fellowship, you will have the assurance that the Lord sent you there, and you will never regret your move, no matter what the outward situation may be.

§Day 4

E. We need to be careful about directing or controlling the young saints related to their marriage—Matt. 19:5-6:

1. In the church life all we can do concerning the young people's marriage is to minister life to them; we must help them to look to the Lord's leading, to learn how to walk in the Spirit, and help them not to indulge in lust or to have their own taste or choice—Gen. 2:21-24; 24:64-67; 49:31.
2. We should not try to conduct them into a marriage or match them; only the Lord knows who is a good match for another person; we do not know.
3. We do not control and, even the more, we do not conduct or indicate what brother or sister might be best for them; if we leave this matter to the Lord and pray for the ones concerned, we will save the church much trouble.
4. On the one hand, we should not interfere with them; on the other hand, we have to help them in morality, in life, in human living, in taking care of the future, concerning their parents, and even in praying and seeking the Lord concerning the one whom they marry not being their choice.

§Day 5

IV. We need to take care of the saints in everything and in every way for the dispensing of Christ into them:

- A. The elders must minister Christ to meet the need of all kinds of people, contacting and visiting them regularly and inviting them to their home for meals—1 Tim. 5:1-2; 2 Chron. 1:10; Col. 1:28-29; Jude 12; John 12:1-11.**
- B. We must contact the saints and minister Christ to them as the sin-dealing life; the life of Christ is a life that deals with sin, a sin-dealing life—Lev. 10:17:**
 - 1. If we are going to minister Christ to a person who has been committing sins, we have to trust in the Lord that we may have the grace with the Spirit to soften his hardened heart—Rom. 2:4; Titus 3:3-4; cf. Heb. 3:13.
 - 2. We do not need to mention his weakness, fault, or sin, because the life of Christ ministered into him will heal him, killing the germs, destroying the problems, and building up a permanent, lasting oneness of the Spirit.
 - 3. We have to do our best to recover a fallen saint; even if it took eight months or a year to get one or two sinful saints recovered, this would be a great thing—Gal. 6:1-2; 1 John 5:16a.
 - 4. This is to bear away the iniquity and solve the problems of the people of God; furthermore, this kind of ministry by the Spirit and in love will maintain the oneness of the Spirit in the church life—Col. 3:12-15.

§Day 6

V. In their fellowship with one another, the elders need to be restricted in their speaking—John 6:63; Acts 6:10:

- A. Those who cover others' sins, defects, and shortcomings enjoy, gain, and receive blessing, but uncovering brings in a curse—Prov. 10:12; James 5:19-20; Gen. 9:21-27.**
- B. The elders need to realize that in their shepherding, they have to cover others' sins, not to take account of others' evils—1 Cor. 13:5-7.**
- C. Love covers all things, not only the good things but also the bad things; whoever uncovers the defects, shortcomings, and sins of**

the members of the church is disqualified from the eldership—cf. Matt. 24:49.

- D. The elders should not speak reviling words (to revile is to rebuke or criticize harshly or abusively; to assail with abusive language); those who take in reviling words bear the same responsibility as those who speak reviling words; in order for the church to maintain the oneness, the brothers and sisters must withstand reviling words—1 Cor. 6:10; cf. Num. 6:6; Lev. 5:3.**
 - E. The consciousness of sin comes from knowing God; in the same way, the consciousness of reviling words comes from the knowledge of the Body; reviling words are opposed to the testimony of the Body—1 Cor. 1:10.**
 - F. God will never entrust authority to those who by nature like to criticize others; the elders, on the one hand, should have a clear sight over the people with much discernment, and on the other hand, they should be blind spiritually—Eph. 4:29-32.**
- VI. The organic maintenance of the golden lampstand is Christ's heavenly ministry to cherish the churches in His humanity and nourish the churches in His divinity to produce the overcomers through His organic shepherding—Rev. 1:13; 2:7; John 10:11, 14; 1 Pet. 2:25; 5:4; Heb. 13:20.**
- VII. The goal of Christ's wonderful shepherding in His heavenly ministry is to build up the New Jerusalem for the accomplishment of the eternal economy of God; for eternity we will enjoy the Lamb, who is in the midst of the throne, shepherding us and continually guiding us to springs of waters of life—Rev. 7:13-17.**

WEEK 6—DAY 1

Morning Nourishment

Mark 10:45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many.

Luke 22:26-27 ...Let...the one who leads [become] like the one who serves....I am in your midst as the one who serves.

12:37 ...When he comes, ...he will gird himself, ...have them recline at table, and...serve them.

Three passages [in Mark and Luke] help us see how Christ served us in the past, still serves us in the present, and is going to serve us in the future. Mark 10:45... mentions that the Son of Man came to serve everybody. Whoever comes to the Lord, the Lord always serves them. The Lord feeds the hungry; He heals the sick ones. Without regard to the time and place, the Lord always serves us. The highest service of the Lord was giving His life as a ransom for many. He gave His life to serve man.

Luke 22:26-27...concerns Christ serving His disciples. "I am in your midst as the one who serves." We should remember that the Lord is among us to serve us. This is grace!

Luke 12:37... is too gracious! How can this be possible? However, the Lord said He will serve us again in the future. Have we ever asked Christ to serve us? Some brothers have said that their prayers are too cold and that they have to do something to stir themselves up again. At such times they should realize that Christ can serve them in that very matter. Some have felt that they have no interest in the Bible and worry about what they should do the next day. They should realize that in that very matter, Christ can serve them also. (CWWN, vol. 17, pp. 191, 193-194)

Today's Reading

The bread before us at the Lord's table clearly demonstrates how Christ has served us. His body was broken for all of us. The meaning of

salvation is that Christ serves us first, and then we serve Him. His serving does not end with the cross. Even now He is among us to continue His service. Whenever we have a need, we ought to come to the Lord and let Him serve us. (CWWN, vol. 17, pp. 191-192)

God has put us in time in order to train us and make us useful for eternity. Time is like a school; it is a place where we receive spiritual training and education. Our spiritual training and education in time will make us useful to God in eternity.... Our service in time is a preparation for our service in eternity. If we learn our lesson well, the Lord will entrust us with greater works when He comes back [cf. Matt. 25:21]. Today is the time for us to learn; our proper service does not begin until the Lord comes back.... Revelation 22 tells us that we will serve God in eternity (v. 3). God places us among His children today in order for us to serve together with all of them. I say again: Our service in time today is a preparation for our service in eternity.

On the day that we were saved, the Lord put His life within us. Thereafter, He has been training us step by step by means of specific instances, so that we would learn to cooperate with God and be mingled with Him. God wants to mingle His nature into man and make man useful in His hand. The measure of God in us is the measure of usefulness we have before Him. When the measure of God increases, our usefulness also increases. His measure does not increase merely through studying the Bible and prayer; He mingles Himself into us through the things we do. All spiritual usefulness comes from God's life being mingled into us. In fact, our usefulness before God is nothing other than the result of the mingling of His nature within us; that which is mingled into us becomes our spiritual usefulness. When God mingles Himself into us, the expression of such a life becomes our usefulness....God's only goal in time is to dispense His element into us day by day. (CWWN, vol. 37, pp. 181-182)

Further Reading: Life-study of Genesis, msgs. 68-69, 77, 120; CWWN, vol. 37, chs. 2, 29; Life-study of Isaiah, msg. 42

WEEK 6—DAY 2

Morning Nourishment

1 Pet. 2:25 For you were like sheep being led astray, but you have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

5:4 And when the Chief Shepherd is manifested, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

Peter was so impressed with [the] commission of the Lord [to shepherd His sheep] that in [1 Peter] he tells the believers that they were like sheep being led astray, but they have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer (Christ) of their souls (2:25). Christ's shepherding of His flock includes His caring for their outward things and also their inner being, their souls. He takes care of the things concerning their souls by overseeing their souls. Christ indwells us to be our life and everything, but He is also overseeing, observing, the condition and situation of our inner being. He shepherds us by caring for the welfare of our inner being and by exercising His oversight over the condition of our soul, our real person.

Peter exhorts the elders to shepherd the flock of God among them so that when the Chief Shepherd is manifested, they, the faithful elders, will receive the unfading crown of glory (5:1-4). (CWWL, 1994-1997, vol. 4, "Crystallization-study of the Gospel of John," p. 448)

Today's Reading

To be filled with the Spirit in our soul requires that we pay the price to deny our self in every aspect of our living. How much we deny the self determines how much room we give to Christ and how much oil we buy. In our daily life and in every matter, we all need to pay the price by denying our self to gain more of the Spirit as the oil. As a result, Christ will make His home in our heart, spreading Himself into all the parts of our inner being. Eventually, our being as the vessel to contain Christ will be completely filled with the Spirit as the oil.

We have Christ in our spirit as the lamp, but our soul as the vessel may be filled with many useless things. We need to pay the price to throw out all these things. The more we empty our vessel in this way, the more Jesus as the oil comes into it. The oil is in our spirit, waiting to invade and penetrate our mind, emotion, and will. If we afford an opening in our soul, the oil will come in. The more we empty and unload our vessel, the more room we will afford for the divine oil to fill us. Christ is making His home in our heart until we are filled unto all the fullness of God. To be filled is to have the oil in our vessel. This is our need today. (CWWL, 1972, vol. 1, pp. 545-546)

Matthew 24:45 tells us the way to serve; it is to “give them food at the proper time.” Give them food refers to ministering the word of God and Christ as the life supply to the believers in the church. Our speaking in the meetings and our visiting people in their homes to minister Christ to them is our giving them food. Toward ourselves, we must deny our soul and follow the Lord in spirit, and toward others, we must learn to always minister the word of God and Christ as the life supply.

A young person should not make an excuse and say, “I cannot feed others; I need them to feed me.” The Lord will not accept this excuse. If the young ones enjoy the Lord and experience Him day by day, they will have some riches that they can minister to their parents. When a young sister comes home from a meeting, her father may be in need of food, and the next day at the breakfast table he may be in need again. At such times there is no need for the young sister to teach her father. She can simply pass on to him something of the nourishment of Christ that she has received. This is to give food to a member of the Lord’s household at the proper time. Such a sister will also be able to feed her classmates at school and even her teachers. She will even be able to speak something in the church meetings and feed the whole congregation. (CWWL, 1970, vol. 1, p. 228)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1994-1997, vol. 5, “The Vital Groups,” chs. 4, 11; CWWL, 1994-1997, vol. 4, “Crystallization-study of the Gospel of John,” ch. 13

WEEK 6—DAY 3

Morning Nourishment

1 Pet. 5:2-3 Shepherd the flock of God among you, overseeing not under compulsion but willingly, according to God; not by seeking gain through base means but eagerly; nor as lording it over your allotments but by becoming patterns of the flock.

Any decisions that you make by yourself for others are an insult to the Spirit. If you have done this, you must repent and, if necessary, ask the others to forgive you because you gave them instructions about what they should do. None of us should ever tell others where they should go. What an insult this is to the Lord! Who are you? Who authorized you to make suggestions to others? You need to help the others to contact the Lord. Young brothers and sisters, you need to pray. Yes, we are burdened and led of the Lord to work on the campuses. But the young people must bring this matter to the Lord, pray, and offer themselves to the Lord once again, saying, “Lord, I want to go on with You. Lord, where do You want me to go?” Everyone must pray until he is clear about the Lord’s leading. Do not expect others to instruct you where you should go. That is organization, religion. Every one of us, from the leaders to the least among us, must be brought into the presence of the Lord to contact Him. Yes, the Lord is moving to the campuses, but perhaps in His sovereignty He will not allow you to go. He may lead hundreds of others to go, but He may tell you to stay where you are. This will be a proof that what is taking place among us is not a movement but absolutely a matter of the Lord’s leading. (CWWL, 1977, vol. 2, “The Spirit and the Body,” pp. 285-286)

Today’s Reading

We all must go into the presence of the Lord and pray for some time....We are not in any kind of movement. Everything must be brought into the presence of the Lord. I cannot go to the Lord for you; you must go to the Lord yourself. We all must learn this lesson that no one can go to the

Lord for someone else. That is the clergy-laity hierarchy.

Do not say, as if it were a mere slogan, “I am following the flow.” The real flow is the Lord Himself. How wrong it is to stir up a movement! That is an insult to the Lord. It is an offense to Him. There must never be a movement among us in the Lord’s recovery...Concerning any move you make in the Lord’s recovery, you must go directly to the Lord Himself and pray... You must have the assurance that the Lord is sending you....We all must be clear concerning the Lord’s leading to this extent. None of us should give any instructions to others or make decisions for others. Do not take orders from anyone, and do not give orders to anyone. Go to the Lord and pray. This is the proper way.

Suppose the leading ones, after much prayer, are truly burdened about a certain matter. What they should do then is through fellowship pass on their burden to the saints and ask the saints to pray. Eventually, the saints will receive a personal leading from the Lord, and they may move accordingly. In this way no one will be individualistic or rebellious. This is why we have the Body. We have both the Spirit on the one hand and the Body on the other hand. The Spirit and the Body keep us in balance. You need to check whether or not the leading you have from the Lord corresponds to the feeling of the Body. We need to be balanced.

When some hear about being balanced by the Body, they may think that this matter of balance will produce the same result as if the leading ones made the decision and told them where to go. It is possible that the outward result may be the same, but the inward nature is absolutely different.

If you pray and fellowship, you honor the Lord, and you will also have the assurance that it is the Lord who is leading you. Then after you move to a certain place, you will have the assurance that the Lord sent you there, and you will never regret your move, no matter what the outward situation may be. (CWWL, 1977, vol. 2, “The Spirit and the Body,” pp. 286-289)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1977, vol. 2, “The Spirit and the Body,” ch. 1

WEEK 6—DAY 4

Morning Nourishment

Matt. 19:5-6 ..”For this cause shall a man leave his father and his mother and shall be joined to his wife; and the two shall be one flesh.” So then they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has yoked together, let man not separate.

The real, actual, and prevailing function of the elders is to minister life, to feed people....The saints may come to you, especially the young ones, to get your help concerning their marriage, their choice in marriage, and even concerning their dating. I do not mean that we older ones should not help them, but there is a great temptation in helping them in these kinds of things. Eventually, we could fall into directing them or even somewhat controlling them. This is very dangerous.

Only the Lord knows who is a good match for another person. We do not know.... In the church life all we can do concerning the young people’s marriage is to minister life to them. We must help them to look to the Lord’s leading, to learn how to walk in the Spirit, and we should also help them not to indulge in lust or to have their own taste or choice...We should not try to conduct them into a marriage or match them. (CWWL, 1984, vol. 2, “Elders’ Training, Book 4: Other Crucial Matters concerning the Practice of the Lord’s Recovery,” pp. 455-456)

Today’s Reading

There should not be any kind of controlling among us concerning the young saints’ marriage....There is a temptation that the older ones among us would think that they could help the young ones. This, however, is the human hand, not the Lord’s hand.

The matter of marriage is very complicated and is most perplexing. We should try to be very objective and try to render life to the young ones. Never try to bring two people together without any caution. This is dangerous....There is no need for us to touch this matter in a natural way.

We should leave this matter to the Lord and pray for the ones concerned. We should render as much life as we can to help them and never indicate who is their best match. We do not control, and even the more, we do not conduct or indicate what brother or sister might be best for them. If we leave this matter to the Lord, we will save the church much trouble.

On the other hand, when the elders realize that some young saints are dating in an improper way, they must render them some help. They should tell the ones concerned that it is altogether not safe for a young brother to be with a young sister in a loose way. Also, the elders should help them to consider their future. They should consider the matter of not getting engaged too quickly before marriage. They also must consider things regarding their family, their parents, their job, their financial situation, and other responsibilities. This is a real help in their human life. Sometimes young people are careless and are too much in their lust. We should help them to learn how to pray about their marriage and how to look to the Lord to restrict their indulgence and lust. We have to help them in morality, in human life, in spirituality, and in the Lord's way. They are young in the Lord and need this kind of help. On the one hand, we should not interfere with them; on the other hand, we have to help them in morality, in life, in human living, in taking care of the future, concerning their parents, and even in praying and seeking the Lord concerning the one whom they marry not being their choice. They should be helped to leave this matter to the Lord. As elders, we should do this because we are shepherding the flock....To help the saints in the matter of their weddings is a "pure help." There is nothing wrong with this. To help them sign the papers for their marriage does not mean that we are doing our best to bring them together. The Lord has already brought them together. (CWWL, 1984, vol. 2, "Elders' Training, Book 4: Other Crucial Matters concerning the Practice of the Lord's Recovery," pp. 456-457)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1984, vol. 2, "Elders' Training, Book 4: Other Crucial Matters concerning the Practice of the Lord's Recovery," ch. 9

WEEK 6—DAY 5

Morning Nourishment

Lev. 10:17 Why have you not eaten the sin offering in the place of the sanctuary? For it is most holy, and He gave it to you to bear the iniquity of the assembly, to make expiation for them before Jehovah.

Heb. 3:13 But exhort one another each day, as long as it is called “today,” lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

If you know that someone has committed some sins, you have to pray for him and learn to minister Christ as the sin-dealing life to him that he may deal with his sins.... First, you yourself must be dealt with by enjoying Christ’s sin-dealing life. Then you must minister such a Christ as the sin-dealing life to others.... Leviticus tells us that the priests were to eat the sin offering in the holy place that they might “bear the iniquity of the assembly, to make expiation for them before Jehovah” (10:17). As you are enjoying Christ as the sin-dealing life, you must have the capacity to bear the iniquity of God’s people. You must learn to minister Christ to the dear ones who are in sin.

To minister Christ as the sin-dealing life to someone is not to go to him to point out his fault and condemn him. This will only cause damage.... A person who sins usually has his heart hardened (Heb. 3:13). If you are going to minister Christ to him, you have to trust in the Lord that you may have the grace with the Spirit to soften his hardened heart. You have to soften his heart and warm up his heart. Then the very Christ as life will be actually, really, and richly ministered to him, and this life, which is the Spirit, will work within him. You do not need to mention his fault, because the life that gets into him as the life supply will do a lot....This is the way to get rid of the sins among some saints. (CWWL, 1988, vol. 3, “A Timely Word,” pp. 54-55)

Today’s Reading

The work to recover the sinful saints takes time. It cannot be quick. You have to be patient. Even if it took eight months or a year to get one or two sinful saints recovered, that would be a great thing. Galatians 6:1 says that when a brother is overtaken in some offense, those who are spiritual should restore him. We have to do our best to recover a fallen saint. Out of one hundred saints meeting together, maybe two or three are living in a sinful situation. Since you are enjoying Christ, you can pick up the burden to take care of one of them. Another brother may have a burden for the same person. Then you and he can fellowship about this one saint and work together to help him. If you two can work together for half a year to get this sinful brother recovered, this is a great, great help to the church life. This kind of ministry is the element for us to maintain the oneness of the Spirit in the church life.

The oneness can be maintained only in love by the Spirit. Criticism only builds up division and destroys the oneness.... After six months of your ministering Christ as the sin-dealing life to [a brother], his problem may be gone. This is not only to bear the iniquity of the people of God but also to solve the problems of the people of God. Furthermore, this is a practical way to maintain the oneness of the Spirit among the saints.

Let us all be diligent to keep the oneness and endeavor to live a life of love in the church life. Love builds up, but knowledge kills (1 Cor. 8:1; 2 Cor. 3:6). Always live a life in love. Whether or not you go to help a certain one is secondary. The primary thing is to love all the saints, whether they are good or bad, with the same love. We have a tendency to love the stronger saints but not the weaker ones. We must love all the saints with the same love. As long as someone is a saint, he is a member in the church, and we should love him with the same love with which we love the other saints. This will kill the germs, destroy the problems, and build up a permanent, lasting oneness of the Spirit. (CWWL, 1988, vol. 3, "A Timely Word," pp. 55-56)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1988, vol. 3, "A Timely Word," ch. 1; CWWL, 1994-1997, vol. 5, "How to Be a Co-worker and an Elder and How to Fulfill Their Obligations," ch. 4

WEEK 6—DAY 6

Morning Nourishment

Psa. 32:1 Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven; whose sin is covered.

1 Cor. 13:4-5 Love suffers long. Love is kind; it is not jealous. Love does not brag and is not puffed up; it does not behave unbecomingly and does not seek its own things; it is not provoked and does not take account of evil.

Nearly everyone loves a good person, but... if a brother is led astray from the truth to attend the denominations or go to the movies, our small group may feel that we do not need him, and we do not accept him because he is not qualified. This is not love; this is hate. Love covers many sins....To uncover is not love. Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all sins [Prov. 10:12]. We would rather be like the sons of Noah who covered their father's nakedness, which was due to his drunkenness.... Covering brings in blessing, but uncovering brings in a curse. This is not a small matter. Those who uncover suffer the curse, but those who cover others' sins, defects, and shortcomings enjoy, gain, and receive blessing. Cover a multitude of sins in James 5:20 is an Old Testament expression used by James to indicate that turning an erring brother back is to cover his sins so that he is not condemned. Cover...sins here equals sins... forgiven in verse 15, as in Psalm[s] 32:1...[and] 85:2. (CWWL, 1994-1997, vol. 5, "A Word of Love to the Co-workers, Elders, Lovers, and Seekers of the Lord," pp. 15-16)

Today's Reading

Love is not jealous, is not provoked, does not take account of evil, covers all things, endures all things, never falls away, and is the greatest (1 Cor. 13:4-8, 13). Jealousy is in our nature. Also, love is not provoked. People are easily provoked because of the shortage of love. Regardless of how much we are rebuked, we will not be provoked if we are filled with the divine love. Love does not take account of evil. We have to confess that we have taken account of other people's evil. Some wives have a record, an

account, of their husband's failures and defects. This record may not be written, but it is in their mind.

The elders need to realize that in their shepherding, they have to cover others' sins, to not take account of others' evils. Love covers all things, not only the good things but also the bad things. Whoever uncovers the defects, shortcomings, and sins of the members of the church is disqualified from the eldership. (CWWL, 1994-1997, vol. 5, "The Vital Groups," pp. 123-124)

Both 2 Peter and Jude speak of the matter of reviling. Reviling is done through our speaking....Those who take in reviling words bear the same responsibility as those who speak reviling words.... In order for the church to maintain the oneness, the brothers and sisters have to withstand reviling words.

The consciousness of sin comes from knowing God. In the same way, the consciousness of reviling words comes from the knowledge of the Body. Reviling words are opposed to the testimony of the Body.

We need to be a person who has been taught by God and who is under control. Only those who do not speak carelessly or express their opinions carelessly can hope to be used by God. Only these ones can represent the Head. Only such people can lead the brothers and sisters on in the way ahead of them. God will never entrust authority to those who by nature like to criticize.... If you are a person with your head removed, you immediately sense when others' heads have asserted themselves.... You know it because you have been judged in this matter already... If a brother has been dealt with in these two things, that is, in the matter of speaking and in learning not to assume headship, there is no difficulty in the exercise of authority. Those who cause problems in these two matters do not know what the Body is. (Messages Given during the Resumption of Watchman Nee's Ministry, 1st ed., vol. 2, pp. 505-507, 509-510)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1994-1997, vol. 5, "The Vital Groups," ch. 8; Messages Given during the Resumption of Watchman Nee's Ministry, 1st ed., vol. 2, ch. 66

<< **WEEK 6 — HYMN** >>

Hymns, #1221 Jesus, our wonderful Shepherd

The Church — As God's Flock

1

Jesus, our wonderful Shepherd
Brought us right out of the fold
Into His pasture so plenteous,
Into His riches untold.
Glorious church life,
Feasting from such a rich store!
Here where we're dwelling in oneness
God commands life evermore.

2

In the divisions He sought us,
Weary and famished for food;
Into the good land He brought us,
Oh, to our spirit how good!

3

Jesus Himself is our pasture,
He is the food that we eat;
We as His sheep are fed richly
Each time, whenever we meet.

4

Dwell we here on a high mountain,
Wet with the morning-fresh dew,
Slaking our thirst at the fountain,
Water so living and new.

5

Christ is our rest and enjoyment,
Here we have nothing to fear;
Here all the sheep dwell securely,
Kept by His presence so dear.

