

## Outline of the Messages for the Thanksgiving Conference

November 26-29, 2009

### GENERAL SUBJECT: THE PRAYER OF THE AGE

#### Message One

#### The Central Goal of Prayer and the Prayer of the Age

**Scripture Reading:** Acts 2:36; Eph. 1:19-23; 3:19b-21; 4:22-24; 5:27; Matt. 16:18-19

**Acts 2:36** Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you have crucified.

**Eph. 1:19-23** And what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the operation of the might of His strength, **20** Which He caused to operate in Christ in raising Him from the dead and seating Him at His right hand in the heavenlies, **21** Far above all rule and authority and power and lordship and every name that is named not only in this age but also in that which is to come; **22** And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him *to be* Head over all things to the church, **23** Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.

**Eph. 3:19-21** And to know the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ, that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God. **20** But to Him who is able to do superabundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power which operates in us, **21** To Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all the generations forever and ever. Amen.

**Eph. 4:22-24** That you put off, as regards your former manner of life, the old man, which is being corrupted according to the lusts of the deceit, **23** And *that* you be renewed in the spirit of your mind **24** And put on the new man, which was created according to God in righteousness and holiness of the reality.

**Eph. 5:27** That He might present the church to Himself glorious, not having spot or wrinkle or any such things, but that she would be holy and without blemish.

**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. **19** 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.

#### I. The central goal of prayer is for God to have a glorious church; this prayer is according to the ministry of the age and the vision of the age:

- A. The particular recovery and work that God is doing in one age are the ministry of that age, the ministry that ministers the vision of that age—Prov. 29:18a.

**Prov. 29:18** Where there is no vision, the people cast off restraint; / But happy is he who keeps the law.

- B. Today we can be in one accord because we have only one vision, an up-to-date, all-inheriting vision, the vision of the eternal economy of God—Acts 26:19; Eph. 1:17; 3:9.

**Acts 26:19** Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision,

**Eph. 1:17** That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of Him,

**Eph. 3:9** And to enlighten all *that they may see* what the economy of the mystery is, which throughout the ages has been hidden in God, who created all things,

- C. The central goal of prayer is the goal of the eternal economy of God, the goal of Christ having a glorious church as His counterpart for His satisfaction—5:27; John 17:23; Eph. 1:23; 3:19b-21.

**Eph. 5:27** That He might present the church to Himself glorious, not having spot or wrinkle or any such things, but that she would be holy and without blemish.

**John 17:23** I in them, and You in Me, that they may be perfected into one, that the world may know that You have sent Me and have loved them even as You have loved Me.

**Eph. 1:23** Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.

**Eph. 3:19-21** And to know the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ, that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God. **20** But to Him who is able to do superabundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power which operates in us, **21** To Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all the generations forever and ever. Amen.

- D. Christ as the High Priest is caring for us and praying for us according to God's need, God's interests, and God's goal:
1. God will listen to our prayer when our prayer to God is toward Christ, the kingdom of God, and the house of God as the goal in God's economy—1 Kings 8:48; Dan. 6:10.

**1 Kings 8:48** And *if* they return to You with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their enemies, who have carried them captive, and they pray to You toward their land that You have given to their fathers, the city that You have chosen, and the house that I have built for Your name;

**Dan. 6:10** Now when Daniel came to know that the writing had been signed, he went to his house (in his upper room he had windows open toward Jerusalem) and three times daily he knelt on his knees and prayed and gave thanks before his God, because he had *always* done so previously.

2. No matter for whom we are praying, our prayers should be aimed at the interests of God, that is, at Christ and the church as God's interests on earth, for the fulfilling of God's economy—Eph. 5:32; 6:17-18.

**Eph. 5:32** This mystery is great, but I speak with regard to Christ and the church.

**Eph. 6:17-18** And receive the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which *Spirit* is the word of God, **18** By means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit and watching unto this in all perseverance and petition concerning all the saints,

3. We should not usurp God for our own prosperity, but we should pray, live, and be persons according to God's heart and for His economy—1 Sam. 4:3.

**1 Sam. 4:3** And when the people came to the camp, the elders of Israel said, Why has Jehovah struck us down today before the Philistines? Let us take for ourselves the Ark of the Covenant of Jehovah from Shiloh that it may come into our midst, and *thus* save us from the hand of our enemies.

## II. In order to pray the prayer of the age for the fulfilling of God's economy, we must be people who live in ascension:

- A. Every man who is saved is not only one whose sins are forgiven and not only one who is made alive from death and has God's life but also is one who is seated with Christ in the heavenlies, the highest place in the universe; thus, he is a man of ascension—Eph. 2:5-6.

**Eph. 2:5-6** Even when we were dead in offenses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved) **6** And raised *us* up together with *Him* and seated *us* together with *Him* in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus,

- B. The life of Christ that we have received is ascended and heavenly and is given from heaven; therefore, once we obtain this life, we have fellowship with heaven and are joined to heaven—Col. 3:1-4; John 1:51; cf. 3:13.

**Col. 3:1-4** If therefore you were raised together with Christ, seek the things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. **2** Set your mind on the things which are above, not on the things which are on the earth. **3** For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. **4** When Christ our life is manifested, then you also will be manifested with Him in glory.

**John 1:51** And He said to him, Truly, truly, I say to you, You shall see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.

**John 3:13** And no one has ascended into heaven, but He who descended out of heaven, the Son of Man, who is in heaven.

- C. Christ as our life has saved us into a position in which we are seated together with Him in the heavenlies, a position in which we are above all God's enemies; here in the heavenly atmosphere of His heavenly presence, with a heavenly nature and

characteristic, we are a heavenly people.

D. Today we realize and experience this reality in our spirit through faith in the accomplished fact—2 Cor. 4:13; cf. Heb. 4:2.

**2 Cor. 4:13** And having the same spirit of faith according to that which is written, "I believed, therefore I spoke," we also believe, therefore we also speak,

**Heb. 4:2** For indeed we have had the good news announced to us, even as they also; but the word heard did not profit them, not being mixed together with faith in those who heard.

E. We need to maintain the position of ascension in our daily living, living in the life of heaven; we need to be continually touching heaven in our inner being and living in the heavenly condition, situation, and atmosphere of the Lord's presence, which, when touched by others, will enable them to obtain the heavenly supply—Eph. 4:8; Rev. 1:20.

**Eph. 4:8** Therefore *the Scripture* says, "Having ascended to the height, He led captive those taken captive and gave gifts to men."

**Rev. 1:20** The mystery of the seven stars which you saw upon My right hand and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are the messengers of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

F. By living in ascension, we are transformed to become the Lord's bridal army, a woman "who looks forth like the dawn, / As beautiful as the moon, / As clear as the sun, / As terrible as an army with banners"—S. S. 6:10; cf. Gen. 1:16-18.

**S.S. 6:10** Who is this woman who looks forth like the dawn, / As beautiful as the moon, / As clear as the sun, / As terrible as an army with banners?

**Gen. 1:16-18** And God made the two great light-bearers, the greater light-bearer to rule the day and the lesser light-bearer to rule the night, and the stars. **17** And God set them in the expanse of heaven to give light on the earth **18** And to rule over the day and over the night and to separate the light from the darkness, and God saw that it was good.

G. We must be men of ascension with the position of ascension so that we can pray the prayer of warfare and the prayer of the age, the prayer of ascension—Eph. 2:6; 6:12; S. S. 4:6-9; cf. Gen. 3:14; 1 Cor. 15:47-48.

**Eph. 2:6** And raised *us* up together with *Him* and seated *us* together with *Him* in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus,

**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.

**S.S. 4:6-9** Until the day dawns and the shadows flee away, / I, for my part, will go to the mountain of myrrh / And to the hill of frankincense. **7** You are altogether beautiful, my love, / And there is no blemish in you. **8** *Come* with me from Lebanon, *my* bride; / With me from Lebanon come. / Look from the top of Amana, / From the top of Senir and Hermon, / From the lions' dens, / From the leopards' mountains. **9** You have ravished my heart, my sister, my bride; / You have ravished my heart with one *glance* of your eyes, / With one strand of your necklace.

**Gen. 3:14** And Jehovah God said to the serpent, Because you have done this, / You are cursed more than all the cattle / And more than all the animals of the field: / Upon your stomach you will go, / And dust you will eat / All the days of your life.

**1 Cor. 15:47-48** The first man is out of the earth, earthy; the second man *is* out of heaven. **48** As the earthy is, such are they also that are earthy; and as the heavenly is, such are they also that are heavenly.

H. If we stand in the position of ascension, we can directly command the environment, rebuke difficulties, and destroy all the works of the enemy.

I. Regrettably, the prayers of the church today contain all too few authoritative commands; therefore, they cannot deal with the enemy; this proves that our actual condition is still on earth and not in the heavenlies in the position of ascension with the reality of ascension.

**III. The prayer of the age is the prayer of the church as the Body of Christ, the prayer that exercises the authority of Christ as the ascended Lord and Head of the Body, for the fulfilling of God's economy; to enter into this kind of prayer, we need a heavenly vision to see something that is far beyond our natural concept—Eph. 1:17:**

**Eph. 1:17** That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full

knowledge of Him,

A. We need to see the meaning of the ascension of Christ:

1. The ascension of Christ indicates that the entire work of redemption has been completely accomplished—Heb. 1:3; 10:12.

**Heb. 1:3** Who, being the effulgence of His glory and the impress of His substance and upholding and bearing all things by the word of His power, having made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

**Heb. 10:12** But this One, having offered one sacrifice for sins, sat down forever on the right hand of God,

2. The ascension of Christ indicates that the lordship of Christ has been established—Acts 2:36:

**Acts 2:36** Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you have crucified.

- a. Everything that the Lord has obtained and attained is being transmitted “to the church”—Eph. 1:19-23; 3:20.

**Eph. 1:19-23** And what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the operation of the might of His strength, **20** Which He caused to operate in Christ in raising Him from the dead and seating Him at His right hand in the heavenlies, **21** Far above all rule and authority and power and lordship and every name that is named not only in this age but also in that which is to come; **22** And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him *to be* Head over all things to the church, **23** Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.

**Eph. 3:20** But to Him who is able to do superabundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power which operates in us,

- b. We need to see the heavenly fact that Christ has been exalted by God, established as the Lord of the universe, and made Head over all things to the church; all things are under His feet, and everything He has obtained and attained is being transmitted to the church, which is His Body—1:22-23.

**Eph. 1:22-23** And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him *to be* Head over all things to the church, **23** Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.

B. We need to see the church’s position as the Body of Christ; because the church is the Body of Christ, the position of the church is exactly the same as that of Christ; since the Body is one with the Head, the position of the Body is exactly the same as that of the Head—1 Cor. 12:12, 27; Eph. 5:30.

**1 Cor. 12:12** For even as the body is one and has many members, yet all the members of the body, being many, are one body, so also is the Christ.

**1 Cor. 12:27** Now you are the Body of Christ, and members individually.

**Eph. 5:30** Because we are members of His Body.

C. We need to see the authority of the church as the Body of Christ:

1. The authority of the Body is the authority of the Head exercised by the Body; thus, the authority of the Body is the authority of the Head.
2. As the church, the Body of Christ, we need to assume the authority of Christ—Matt. 28:18b-19a; Luke 10:19.

**Matt. 28:18-19** And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. **19** Go therefore and disciple all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

**Luke 10:19** Behold, I have given you the authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

D. We need to see the prayer of the church as the Body of Christ:

1. This kind of prayer is not the prayer of individual believers but the prayer of the church as the Body of Christ; physically,

we may even be praying in our room by ourselves, but spiritually, we are one with the Body.

2. In this kind of prayer we do not beg the Lord to do something for us; instead, we claim what the Lord has obtained and attained:
  - a. Christ has obtained the lordship and the headship; He is the Lord and the Head over all things to the church.
  - b. Christ has attained the highest place in the universe; He has been raised from the dead and is seated at God's right hand in the heavenlies, far above all rule, authority, power, and lordship in the universe—Eph. 1:20-21.

**Eph. 1:20-21** Which He caused to operate in Christ in raising Him from the dead and seating Him at His right hand in the heavenlies, **21** Far above all rule and authority and power and lordship and every name that is named not only in this age but also in that which is to come;

3. When we pray according to what the Lord has obtained in ascension, we may pray, "Lord, we do not go along with the present situation. As Your Body, we take the ground of Your ascension and claim Your lordship over the present situation."
4. When we pray according to what the Lord has attained in ascension, we should simply declare who we are and where we are; we are in the Body, the Body is in the Head, and the Head is transcendent; if we have the vision that we are the Body of the Head and that the Head is now transcendent, we will take the ground to claim what the Lord has attained and tell all the negative things, "Do not bother me. Go to the lake of fire! I am transcendent. You cannot touch me. You are under my feet."
5. Because the Body is one with the Head in the heavens, the Body has the authority to bind or loose what has already been bound or loosed in the heavens—Matt. 16:19; 18:18.

**Matt. 16:19** 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.

**Matt. 18:18** Truly I say to you, Whatever you bind on the earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on the earth shall have been loosed in heaven.

6. The church is built upon a rock, and this rock is the ascended Christ; as a result, the gates of Hades cannot prevail against the church—16:18.

**Matt. 16:18** 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.

- E. To fully enter into this kind of prayer and be able to exercise the authority given by the Head to the Body, there are two things that we must realize:
  1. We must realize that we are members of the Body, and we must live, act, and move in the Body.
  2. In our daily life we must always put off the old man and put on the new man by being renewed in the spirit of our mind; the new man is composed of the Head with the Body, Christ with the church—Eph. 4:22-24; 2:15-16.

**Eph. 4:22-24** That you put off, as regards your former manner of life, the old man, which is being corrupted according to the lusts of the deceit, **23** And *that* you be renewed in the spirit of your mind **24** And put on the new man, which was created according to God in righteousness and holiness of the reality.

**Eph. 2:15-16** Abolishing in His flesh the law of the commandments in ordinances, that He might create the two in Himself into one new man, *so* making peace, **16** And might reconcile both in one Body to God through the cross, having slain the enmity by it.

- F. "We need to see the vision of the ascended Christ and learn to pray the prayer of authority. For two thousand years these matters have been neglected, but we believe that in these last days the Lord is going to recover them. Too often we do not take the ground of Christ's ascension and claim what He has obtained and attained. Nevertheless, we believe that the Lord will recover this lost ground. This is the highest peak, the highest mountain of the good land. In these last days the Lord will recover this highest peak, this highest mountain. We must realize the facts, take the ground, and claim what the Head has obtained and attained. This is the prevailing prayer of the church. This is the prayer of the age"—The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1963, vol. 1, p. 165.