

# **2024 YOUNG ADULTS' CONFERENCE**

**Antipolo, Rizal  
First Pacific Leadership Academy  
August 24-26, 2024**

## Message 1

### Open Vessels

#### Scripture references:

**Rom. 9:21** - Or does not the potter have authority over the clay to make out of the same lump one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor?

**Rom. 9:23** - In order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He had before prepared unto glory,

**2 Cor. 4:7** - But we have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God and not out of us.

**2 Kings 4:3** - And he said, Go and borrow vessels outside, from all your neighbors, empty vessels, and not just a few.

**2 Kings 4:4** - Then go in and shut the door behind you and your sons, and pour out into all those vessels; and each one you fill set aside.

**2 Kings 4:5 - So she went away from him and shut the door behind herself and her sons; and they brought the vessels to her, and she poured out into them.**

**2 Kings 4:6 - And when she had filled the vessels, she said to her son, Bring me another vessel. But he said to her, There is no other vessel. And the oil stopped.**

### **Excerpts from the Ministry:**

Now we need to see what the Word says we are. The holy Word tells us clearly that we are vessels. Man is a vessel (Rom. 9:21, 23). Not many Christians have paid adequate attention to the fact that we are vessels of God. Christians talk about men being God's creatures or men becoming God's people. Some even go to the highest point by saying that man can be a child of God. But in Romans 9 we are told that man is a vessel of God. A vessel is a container. It is different from a utensil or an instrument. A vessel is not used to do something but to contain something.

We are not supposed to do something for God. Forget about your doing. We are destined to contain God. We were made to be containers of God. The human concept is that we have to do something for God. Even in Christianity many teachers tell people again and again that they need to do something for God, to work for God. I do not say that this is wrong, but it does not touch God's central thought. We have to realize that we are vessels unto God. God, strictly speaking, does not need us to do something for Him. God needs some containers. According to Romans 9 God desires that we be vessels unto honor, vessels unto glory, and vessels of mercy to contain Him. Brothers and sisters, you have to realize that you are vessels unto God!

In the United States the young people are enjoying and tasting all the material things. After the enjoyment of all the material things, after the experience of all the things invented in human culture, they get nothing. There is an emptiness, a vacuum, within them. This is because they were made to be vessels of God. Nothing can fill you up but God. Education, religion, science, physics, marriage, and all the things in human culture cannot

satisfy man. Nothing can fill man up and satisfy him but God Himself.

A Coca-Cola bottle is a vessel made to contain Coke. Man is not a Coca-Cola bottle. Man is a "God-bottle." No one would teach a Coca-Cola bottle to worship the Coca-Cola, serve the Coca-Cola, and do good to please the Coca-Cola. If the Coca-Cola bottle could speak, it would say that this is nonsense. It would say, "I was not made for this. I was made just to be filled up with Coca-Cola. I don't know anything else. I know just one thing: to be filled up with Coca-Cola! As long as I am empty, I am nothing! When I am filled up with Coca-Cola, that's wonderful!" In the same way, when we are filled up with God, that is wonderful. We are God-bottles who were made to be filled up with God. I do not care for being either humble or proud. I care just for one thing—I have to be filled with God! I am a container of God! To contain God is my destiny!

*(The Living and Practical Way to Enjoy Christ, Chapter 1)*

According to my experience nothing pleases the Lord so much as for us to realize that He doesn't want us to do anything. He only wants us to love Him, to open

ourselves up to Him, and to let Him live from within us. This may sound quite familiar to you, but if you look into such a sentence, you will realize it is not so common. It is not so familiar to you. From the very beginning when God created man, God had no intention to ask man to do anything for Him. God's intention was to create a vessel to contain Him and to express Him, so God only wants an opening of the vessel. If the vessel is open, God can fulfill His purpose, but if the vessel is closed, God's purpose is frustrated.

What is the real significance of man's fall and the real nature of man's fall? It is that first man wants to know, and second man wants to do. It is to know something and to do something. These two aspects are the genuine significance of man's fall. The enemy's temptation was that man must be something. For man to be something, man needs to know something and to do something. This is the real meaning of man's fall. Once man became fallen the evil nature of knowing and doing entered into man. This is the most abominable thing in the eyes of God. We would think according to our natural religious concepts that the worship of idols or witchcraft, these demonic things, are abominable. But

the most subtle and the most abominable thing is man's attempt to know things and to do things. This is the very evil thing that entered into man's nature by the enemy's temptation.

We all have to realize that in our fallen nature there is a substance so evil that likes to know and likes to do. I am sorry to say that religion mostly cares for these two things. Religion helps people to know and religion helps people to do. Even today Christianity has become such an active religion of knowing and doing. Seminaries just educate people to know and to do. They train people and stir them up to know and to do. This is altogether a kind of education against God's eternal purpose. It is no wonder that among thousands of Christians you can hardly find one who knows that God doesn't want us either to know or to do; God only wants us to love Him and to keep ourselves open to Him. "Lord, I love You. I fully realize that I am just an empty vessel, yet You treasure this earthen vessel, because this earthen vessel was created by You according to Your eternal plan to fulfill Your heart's desire. Lord, I just love You. I like to contain You. I like to be filled up with You. I like to be saturated and permeated with You. Have mercy

upon me that I may keep myself open to You all the time.”

This point is clear in the New Testament, especially in the Epistles of the Apostle Paul. Paul’s fourteen Epistles may be divided into two groups of seven each. The first set of seven is from Romans to Colossians. The second is from Thessalonians through Hebrews. If you look into these two groups you may say that the summary of these fourteen Epistles may be expressed in just two words: open vessel. God wants an open vessel. In Romans 9:23 Paul told us that God created us vessels of mercy unto glory. Then in 2 Corinthians 4:7 he said that “we have this treasure in earthen vessels.” These two verses may be considered as a basic secret to our experience of Christ and the church.

*(Perfecting Training, Chapter 22)*

We also have to learn how to enjoy Him. He is life, food, water, and air to us, but how can we enjoy Him? If we are going to enjoy the Lord, we have to open ourselves, not superficially but in a deep way. We should not only open our mind, or even our heart, but we also have to open our spirit. You may say that you are so



open to the Lord. But how open are you, and how deeply do you open to the Lord? A brother may seem to be open to everybody, but he may only be open superficially. He is not open deeply. Many times when we come to the Lord, we just open our mind but not our whole heart. Sometimes we may open our heart, but some deep part within us may still be closed. We have to open ourselves from the depths of our being. If we would learn to enjoy the Lord, we have to learn this one lesson—how to open ourselves. We have to open ourselves by opening our mind, our heart, and eventually by opening our spirit. We have to open the depths of our entire being to the Lord.

Open yourself to the Lord and learn to stay with Him for some time. During this time, forget about your needs, your business, your family, your home affairs, your work, and everything else. Just open yourself to the Lord and enjoy Him for a length of time. Feed on Him, drink of Him, and breathe Him in. Regardless of how busy we are, we have to spend three times a day to sit down to eat something. The most healthy practice is to pay full attention to what you are eating and not to anything else. If you try to take care of other things

while you are eating, your enjoyment of the food will be limited and you may not digest it so well. Sometimes I do not like to receive phone calls while I am eating. Likewise, while I am praying and having a time with the Lord, I do not like to receive phone calls. We all need to set apart a time, free from all outside disturbances, in which we open our entire being to the Lord just to enjoy Him.

*(The Tree of Life, Chapter 1)*

The story in 2 Kings 4 shows us an important spiritual principle.

What did the woman and her sons have? They only had a pot of oil. This same pot of oil was later poured into many empty vessels. The little bit of oil that she had at the beginning was crucial. In the Bible oil represents the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit works only on those who already have the Spirit abiding in them.

The widow's problem was that she had too few vessels. Elisha told her, "Go, borrow thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbors, even empty vessels; borrow not a few.

And when thou art come in, thou shalt shut the door upon thee and upon thy sons, and shalt pour out into all those vessels, and thou shalt set aside that which is full" (2 Kings 4:3-4). What did the woman do? "So she went from him, and shut the door upon her and upon her sons, who brought the vessels to her; and she poured out. And it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said unto her son, Bring me yet a vessel. And he said unto her, There is not a vessel more. And the oil stayed" (vv. 5-6). She had to borrow empty vessels—this speaks of the need for empty room within us for the Holy Spirit. She was to borrow not a few—this means the more the better. There should not be only one empty room but many empty rooms. One empty space is not enough; there needs to be many empty spaces. The more empty spaces there are, the more fullness there will be. This is a principle which the Lord has shown us: spiritual progress is a matter of being continually emptied out and continually filled up. The work of the Holy Spirit is not "once empty then forever full" but "always empty and always full." Therefore, brothers and sisters, do not think that as long as we have been emptied once, we will not need any more emptying. The

work of the cross in us is ever-increasing and ever-deepening.

We should consider another very precious thing: "And he [the son] said unto her, There is not a vessel more. And the oil stayed." The Holy Spirit will fill every empty vessel, even the very last one. If there had been more empty vessels, there would have been more oil. We must bear in mind that the reason the oil stayed was because there were no more vessels. It was not the oil that first stayed, but the empty vessels that were first exhausted. When there were no more empty vessels, the oil stayed. The oil did not exhaust itself; it was the empty vessels that were exhausted. Brothers and sisters, God is waiting for us to empty ourselves. If there is an infinite emptiness in us, the Holy Spirit will grant us an infinite filling. Whether or not we will receive the blessing of the Holy Spirit depends on whether we have empty vessels. It depends on whether or not we have reserved room for the Holy Spirit and whether or not we have provided Him a place to work in us.

*(CWWN, Vol. 37: General Messages (1), Chapter 22)*

*References:*

*The Living and Practical Way to Enjoy Christ, Chapter 1: Man as the Container*

*Perfecting Training, Chapter 22: Vessels Open to the Lord*

*The Tree of Life, Chapter 1: The Way to Fulfill God's Purpose*

*CWWN, Vol. 37: General Messages (1), Chapter 22: He Has Filled the Hungry with Good Things*

*The Purpose of God's Salvation, Chapter 8: Three Important Practices in the Christian Life*

## Message 2 The Potter and the Vessels

### Scripture references:

**Rom. 9:21** - Or does not the potter have authority over the clay to make out of the same lump one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor?

**2 Tim. 2:20** - But in a great house there are not only gold and silver vessels but also wooden and earthen; and some are unto honor, and some unto dishonor.

**2 Tim. 2:21** - If therefore anyone cleanses himself from these, he will be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, useful to the master, prepared unto every good work.

**2 Pet. 1:10** - Therefore, brothers, be the more diligent to make your calling and selection firm, for doing these things you shall by no means ever stumble.

## Excerpts from the Ministry:

Sovereignty denotes absolute right, authority, and power. As the sovereign One, God has the right to do anything and to make any decision. Sovereignty is one of God's attributes.

*(Life-study of Exodus, Message 22)*

In John 9 is the case of a man blind from birth. The disciples had learned a certain amount of theology among the Jews. According to their theology they reckoned that if a man is born blind, there must have been someone who sinned. They asked the Lord, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind?" (v. 2). Jesus answered, "Neither has this man sinned nor his parents, but that the works of God might be manifested in him" (v. 3). This case is a small one, but its principle is very great.

When we encounter a situation of blindness, we like to determine the reason for it. We consider whether it was due to our sin or due to others' mistakes. Quite often we cannot find out whose mistake it was. We do not

know whether it was due to ourselves, our parents, or our wife. We must realize that God is sovereign. God allowed a man to be born blind. This was not due to his parents' sin or his own, but that God would use this blindness to show His mighty work. God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to come into the world. One needed to be born blind so that Christ might do something for him. If no one had been blind, there would have been no opportunity for the Lord Jesus to be manifested by healing such blindness. This was God's sovereignty.

Many things happen to us which are not so good. To our realization and analysis there is no reason for these things. However, these things did not happen spontaneously. They happened according to God's sovereignty. Sometimes young people who get married repent of their decision after three days. Some have come to me saying they made a big mistake. They were told that they should be very careful in this matter, but they did not take the word of advice. Eventually, they repented. It is good that they repented, but what shall they do now? They have to suffer for the rest of their life. Some may ask in a theological way, "Whose mistake was this?" We cannot say whose mistake it was. Yet, there



was a mistake. It seems that there was no cause for this mistake. However, deep within I have realized that the cause was the sovereignty of God. God is sovereign that you seem to have married the wrong person. In a certain sense, there are not many right marriages. After being married for a certain period of time, whose marriage is still so right? However, we have to admit that God is sovereign. Every marriage is under God's sovereignty. It is neither your mistake nor your spouse's. It is God's sovereignty that you were married. By reading history and biographies we can learn that thousands of Christians received the greatest help through their marriage. No one can help you so much in seeking after God as your wife. Thank God for your dear wife. Many wives also would thank God for their husbands. Along with all the suffering they may have received from their husbands, there has been something so profitable for them; by no other means could they have been so benefited. Our marriage is not up to our choice. Regardless of how much we exercise in choosing our spouse, we may make a mistake. The more careful we would be, the more serious a mistake we might make.

Every parent wants to have good children. However, experienced parents do not dare to say that their children will be the best. In the matter of raising children, the experienced parents have been subdued. It is not up to us whether our children will be good or bad. That is altogether up to the sovereignty of God. If you have good children, you have to worship God. If you have some bad children, you have to worship God more because you will be much more benefited. We might prefer that our first child obtain a Ph.D., that the second be a medical doctor, and that the third be the state governor. We want a wonderful family with wonderful children. We would say, “Look at this. Isn't this the blessing of God?” In actuality, however, our first child may have a very low IQ, the second one may be crippled, and the third one may be rebellious. Not one of them may be good. Quite often it happens this way. We believe in God's sovereignty. Regardless of what kind of circumstance or situation we are in, it is sovereign of God that He might show His mercy upon us and give us more grace.

The man in John 9 was blind from birth apparently without cause. But this afforded Jesus Christ the best

opportunity to manifest the works of God, to show that God can make a man who was blind from birth receive his sight. This was something of God for His glory. We should not talk about things according to our theology or knowledge, analyzing the cause. This will not work. We must admit that God's sovereignty prevails. Whether you will get a better job or lose your current job is altogether up to God's sovereignty. I do hope that many will have a pleasant church life, but only God knows whether or not our life will be pleasant. However, we can be assured that whatever turns out, we are under God's sovereignty. God's sovereignty always results in His kindness, grace, peace, and security to us. We all must learn not to analyze any situation according to “yes” or “no,” but according to the very sovereign God.

*(Our Urgent Need – Spirit and Life, Chapter 2)*

I know of a recent situation where one brother suggested to another that he could overcome his feeling about being mistreated when he was an elder if he would recognize that this whole experience came to him according to the Lord's sovereignty. Apparently

this is good advice, a sound teaching according to Romans 8:28. There seems to be nothing wrong with advising a brother to overcome his feelings about being mistreated by recognizing that everything is according to God's sovereignty. Such advice, however, may encourage others to be religious and may not help them in life. If the brother who has been mistreated takes this advice from one who seems so knowledgeable and who seems to know God's sovereignty, he may become a religious hero instead of one who receives the Spirit. He may be able to boast that even though he had been mistreated, he recognized that this mistreatment came to him under the Lord's sovereignty, and therefore he does not blame anyone. In such a case the brother is helped in a doctrinal way to become religious, but he is not helped to receive the Spirit. Actually, in applying the doctrine of God's sovereignty in such a way, this brother practices asceticism. The proper way to help one who has been suffering from mistreatment is to encourage him to open to the Lord and contact Him. He should not pay attention to the mistreatment, but should concentrate on the Lord Himself. Not even the teaching about the sovereignty of God should distract him from the Lord. As he opens to the Lord and

contacts Him, he will receive more of the Spirit. As a result, his problem concerning any past mistreatment will be solved. We do not need doctrine to build us up as religious heroes. We need the life-giving Spirit to flow into us to kill the negative things, the “germs,” and to supply us with life. Only the life-giving Spirit can kill the germs within us and make us healthy spiritually. Through the supply of the Spirit, our spiritual sicknesses are healed. Therefore, day by day we need to receive more of the Spirit.

*(Life-study of Galatians, Message 33)*

*References:*

*Life-study of Exodus, Message 21: The Hardening of Pharaoh's Heart*

*Life-study of Exodus, Message 22: God's Demand and Pharaoh's Resistance (6)*

*Life-study of 1 & 2 Samuel, Message 15: God's Sovereignty and David's Taking the Lessons of the Cross*

*Life-study of Genesis, Message 71: Being Dealt With (5)*

*Our Urgent Need – Spirit and Life, Chapter 2: Not Good or Evil but Life*

*Messages Given During the Resumption of Watchman Nee's Ministry, Chapter 1: The Mercy of God*

## Message 3

### Vessels of Mercy, Unto Honor, and Unto Glory

#### Scripture references:

**Rom. 9:21** - Or does not the potter have authority over the clay to make out of the same lump one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor?

**Rom. 9:23** - In order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He had before prepared unto glory,

**2 Tim. 2:21** - If therefore anyone cleanses himself from these, he will be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, useful to the master, prepared unto every good work.

**2 Tim. 2:22** - But flee youthful lusts, and pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

**1 Pet. 3:7** - Husbands, in like manner dwell together with them according to knowledge, as with the weaker, female vessel, assigning honor to them as also to fellow heirs of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered

## Excerpts from the Ministry:

Our being vessels to contain God is not because we are so good and preferable to God; it is altogether a matter of God's mercy. God had mercy upon us, and He wanted us to be His vessels, so we are the vessels of mercy. We are vessels of honor because we contain the God of honor. Eventually, we all will be filled with God's glory and glorified in the glory of God to become the vessels unto glory.

*(Basic Lessons on Life, Chapter 1: The Creation of Man)*

The purpose of a vessel is to contain things. A vessel may have fallen into the garbage can due to carelessness, but that does not mean that it is no longer a vessel and does not need to contain things. It is true that because we had fallen into the garbage can of sin and had become dirty, we needed God to wash us clean. But God's purpose in cleansing us is that we may contain Him. In this respect, even if we had not fallen into the garbage can of sin and we had been clean, yet without

God being put inside of us, we would still be empty. We need to be filled with God.

*(The Revelation and Vision of God, Chapter 6: The Realization and Experience of God's Economy)*

First Corinthians mentions wood, grass, stubble. These are cheap and worthless materials. The works of some people are cheap—their service is cheap, their meeting is cheap, the testimony they bear and the truth they speak are all cheap. With these people everything is worthless and dishonorable. With others everything is honorable. They are willing to pay the price. They have been dealt with by the Lord for three, five, or ten years, and their testimony is something that is from the heart and the result of God's work in them. What they speak and testify are honorable. Those who are naturally wise may speak eloquently and give wonderful stories and excellent speeches, but what they say comes from their mind and not from their heart; therefore, it is cheap.

The question today is not whether you can preach, but whether your preaching comes from having paid a price. The question today is whether the things you say are honorable. If they are not things of honor, what you



Speak and what you have will not be honorable in the sight of God or man. If what you have has not yet passed through the blood, the tears, the divine discipline, and the dealings of God, it is impossible for it to be honorable. Words that are copied and imitated from others can never be honorable. Both Balaam and Isaiah spoke about the kingdom and both prophesied. But the worth of the two men's words cannot be compared. Many people are satisfied as long as they can speak the same thing as others do. In reality speaking the same thing does not mean much. The words may be the same, but it makes a great deal of difference whose mouth the words come from. The only words that are noble and honorable are the words that have been paid for with a price.

After I was saved, I became interested in the subject of the Lord's coming. In the beginning I studied Daniel. Later, I studied Revelation. I studied them day and night, even at bedtime and mealtime. Later, I met Miss Barber, and in the course of our conversation, I found out that her attitude towards the Lord's coming was different from mine. One day while we were fellowshiping, she showed me some verses about the Lord's

coming and the end time. After she finished reading those verses to me, she asked whether I understood them. At that time I did not appreciate what she was doing. I felt that I knew more than she did. Within me there were two thoughts. I felt that I was more familiar with the Scriptures concerning the Lord's coming than she was. She took a long time to find the verses, but I could memorize the verses. However, I also felt that the Lord's coming did not produce the same effect on me that it did on Miss Barber. Her whole living was filled with the thought of the Lord's second coming. The difference between these two realizations of the truth concerning the Lord's second coming was that one was honorable and the other was dishonorable.

*(CWWN, Vol. 44: Conferences, Messages, and Fellowship (4), Chapter 121)*

**References:**

*The Conclusion of the New Testament, Volume 7: The Believers: Message 110: The Believers – Their Symbols (4)*

*Basic Lessons on Life, Chapter 1: The Creation of Man*

*The Revelation and Vision of God, Chapter 6: The Realization and Experience of God's Economy*

*Vessels Useful to the Lord, Chapter 12: The Truth concerning the Filling of the Holy Spirit and the Practical Exercise to Build Up Our Character*

*CWWN, Vol. 44: Conferences, Messages, and Fellowship (4), Chapter 121: God's Two Firm Foundations*

*CWWN, Vol. 46: Conferences, Messages, and Fellowship (6), Chapter 182: Separation from the Wooden and Earthen Vessels*

*Messages Given During the Resumption of Watchman Nee's Ministry, Chapter 3: God's Vessel*

*Messages Given During the Resumption of Watchman Nee's Ministry, Chapter 4: Allowing God to Live Himself Out of Us*

## Message 4

### Useful Vessels (1) – Cleansing and Filling

#### Scripture references:

**2 Tim. 2:21** - If therefore anyone cleanses himself from these, he will be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, useful to the master, prepared unto every good work.

**Acts 9:15** - But the Lord said to him, Go, for this man is a chosen vessel to Me, to bear My name before both the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel;

**Philem. 11** - Who formerly was useless to you but now is useful both to you and to me.

#### Excerpts from the Ministry:

"But in a great house there are not only gold and silver vessels but also wooden and earthen; and some are unto honor, and some unto dishonor" (v. 20). What are vessels "unto honor, and...unto dishonor"? It is a separation between what is of God and what is of man. "Gold" stands for what is of and from God. "Silver" signifies redemption through the cross. Gold is everything that is from God, and silver is that which has gone through the cross of His Son. "Wooden" represents the

humanity of man, and earth, his natural life. "Earthen" refers to those who are living a life according to man and according to the natural life. It refers to those whose nature is the animating power within them. God is seeking to have everything out of Himself, not out of man. We have to refuse all that is out from man. In order to be a vessel unto honor there are certain conditions, and there are things that have to be done.

Verse 21 says, "If therefore anyone cleanses himself from these." One has to separate himself from the earthen vessels. This is not only a matter of whether we are made of gold and silver ourselves; it is not a matter of our personal life alone. In this verse we are told to purify ourselves from those earthen vessels by separating ourselves from them. God is after two aspects: our personal cleansing and our association with others. I, myself, must stand for nothing earthly or of man, and I must refuse to do anything from myself. This is the personal cleansing. Yet at the same time I must separate myself from anyone who is a wooden or earthen vessel. This is the aspect of association. This does not mean we are to separate ourselves from them as Christians, but from whatever they have been doing that is of wood,

grass, and stubble. We have to separate ourselves from a fellow Christian whose work is wooden in nature, and we cannot associate our work with his.

*(CWWN, Vol. 46: Conferences, Messages, and Fellowship (6), Chapter 182)*

It is crucial for anyone who is truly saved, loves the Lord, and desires to serve the Lord all his life to know how to become a useful vessel in the Lord's hand. There are a few things that such a one should pay attention to and practice every day for his entire life.

First of all, we have to pursue the growth in life. Both our salvation and our growth hinge on life. Similarly, being useful in the Lord's hand also hinges on life. Being able to render help to others depends on life, and being fruitful in gospel preaching also depends on life.

Second, according to the Bible, truth goes together with life. Truth is the word of God. It is not our words but the word of the Bible. In John 17 the Lord Jesus prayed to the Father, saying, “Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth” (v. 17). The Bible is an extraordinary book. The Four Books and Five Classics, written by the ancient Chinese sages, may be considered the highest

books aside from the Bible in terms of human ethics and morality. According to my evaluation, the philosophies of other countries, such as Egypt, Babylon, and ancient Greece are inferior when compared with the classical writings of Chinese Confucianism. Even so, the Four Books and Five Classics are not the truth. In this universe only the word of God is truth. For this reason, we should never stop pursuing God's word. Our pursuit should be a daily matter. I dare not say that it is moment-by-moment pursuit, but at least it must be a day-by-day pursuit. You need to pursue the truth every day in order to gain the knowledge of the truth.

As those who serve the Lord we must be equipped in these two matters: the growth in life and the familiarity with the truth. Therefore, we should be diligent not only in reading the Bible, but also in reading the spiritual books. We have to spend time to study every page of every book that has been published from the time of Brother Nee until this day. We have to try our best to make good use of our time, reading a little bit even after every meal. We have to practice this to the extent that we have a book in hand all the time. Even before bedtime, we should study a little more.

Third, we must develop a habit and build up a life of praying every day, fellowshiping with the Lord all the time, confessing our sins to the Lord constantly, and enjoying the infilling of the Holy Spirit at every moment. We must build up these things in our Christian life. Prayer is a daily necessity; it should not be skipped even for one day. This refers not to prayers in the meetings but to prayers in private. Every day we must pray, fellowship with the Lord, and confess our sins, not allowing any barrier to remain between us and the Lord. If we have a negative feeling toward someone who coordinates or serves with us, we do not need to disclose it to him lest we give the devil an opportunity to damage the work. We should, however, still go to the Lord to deal with this matter, saying, “Lord, I have a bad feeling toward him. I am tired of him and do not approve of what he says. Please forgive me and transform me.”

In hospitals, doctors and nurses contact all kinds of patients every day and are contaminated by different kinds of germs. The best way for them to be protected is by continually washing their hands. Every time after they contact a patient, they wash their hands so that no germs remain on them. Our confession and repentance

must also be like this. In addition, we also need to fellowship with the Lord and receive the infilling of the Holy Spirit constantly. We should not analyze too much in our mind, but we should just practice this every day.

Fourth, a person who serves the Lord should not be light in speech or loose in behavior. We need to cultivate our human character and disposition in order to build up our Christian character. Do not be frivolous or loose but instead be grave and dignified. This is not simply to give ourselves an air of solemnity but to be sober as is fitting for Christians. The sisters, in particular, should conduct themselves with gravity. It is an unchanging principle that there should be a distinction between males and females. Women should not have any casual physical contact with men, talk with them in a frivolous way, or be so loose as to hold hands with them or put their arm around their shoulders. Sisters, if you do any of these things, you depreciate yourselves. Of course, you may not have any intention to do anything evil, but others will despise your behavior. Similarly, the brothers should not be playful or light. Instead, you should be grave and proper. This is to build up your character. Do not open your mouth if there is no need



for you to say anything. If you do say something, however, you should mean what you say. If you say something wrong, confess it right away. Moreover, whenever you say something, you should keep your word. Do everything properly and seriously. If you have an appointment with someone, you should be on time. You should also do whatever you have promised others that you will do, even if it causes you to suffer a loss. If we build up this kind of character, surely we will be weighty.

We may have growth in life, the infilling of the Holy Spirit, fellowship with the Lord without any barrier, a good character, and constitution with truth; however, if we do not have a good command of language, this will be a shortcoming. When I say that we must have a good command of language, I am referring not only to foreign languages but also to our mother tongue. If we intend to speak for the Lord but do not have an adequate vocabulary, even if we have a great deal of knowledge within us, we will not be able to adequately express any of it. If this is the case, then everything that we have learned will be in vain. We often hear people say, “I know a lot, but I do not know how to say it. I really understand this matter, but I do not know how to

explain it.” It is useless to say this. If you do not know how to say what you know, then whatever you say will be in vain, and even if you try to say something it will be as if you have not said anything. For this reason, we must have much learning with regard to language. The first thing we have to learn is our mother tongue. The Chinese people constitute one-fourth of the world's population, so we must have a good command of the Chinese language so that we may be able to speak for the Lord.

Second, since we have a desire to know the Bible, we must go back to the original language. Therefore, we have to study Greek, the language in which the New Testament was written. We should at least be able to recognize the Greek alphabet, learn some basic grammar, learn to use Greek dictionaries, and read the inter-linear Greek-English Bible. In this way, once we read a Greek word, we will recognize it and know how to study it. This will help us in the study of the truth. This is not very difficult, so I hope that we all can learn Greek at least to this extent.

Third, we have to learn English well, since it is today's international language. Wherever we go, it may be all right if we do not know other languages, but if we do not know English, it will be very difficult for us to get around. Even if we go to regions like India, Burma, and Africa, as long as we can speak a little English, we will be able to travel anywhere freely. Therefore, once we know English, we will be able to travel throughout the world. We can be sure that in the future many will be sent to the various parts of the world. Moreover, since Taiwan is a center and base of the Lord's recovery, many saints from different countries all over the world will come to visit. Therefore, we need to learn English all the more.

Sixth, we must learn to know the church. Everything we do should be for the church and by the church; we should never be detached from the church. Furthermore, we should be protected, restricted, and led by the church, which includes all the brothers and sisters. In other words, we must learn not to act independently but to coordinate with the brothers and sisters. Coordination is a matter of the church. Even if someone were an all-powerful “giant” who was able to do everything, he

still could not be separated from the church. I have been serving the Lord for many years, but to this day I have never been detached from the church. Instead, I always do everything with the church. I would not do anything apart from the church.

We must see that God is one, the Lord is one, Christ is one, redemption is one, salvation is one, the church is one, the work is one, and the testimony is one. Wherever we go, all of these items are one. Those who cause trouble are those who think that they are capable of doing something and who try to accomplish something. Here I want to exhort all of you solemnly that you should never do such a thing. We have to realize that there is only one recovery. If we want to do something different, we are finished. I am not here boasting of my age, but I have traveled throughout the six continents of the earth and have established numerous churches through the ministry that the Lord has given to me. My secret is that I have never been detached from the church. I am not able to accomplish so much by myself. If I were to be separated from the church, I would not be able to establish even three churches, let alone three

hundred churches. Therefore, we all have to learn to labor in the church and to work with others.

Seventh, we need to learn to live a healthy life.

I will mention a few simple points here, hoping that all of us will be sure to remember them. While I have not been strictly abiding by all these points in all these forty years, I have been practicing them most of the time, so even until today I am still very healthy. First of all, you should pay attention to your diet. Do not eat or drink carelessly. You should absolutely avoid fatty meat and red meat. Do not say, “I love pork leg with all its fat, so I eat a lot.” If you indulge in eating unhealthy food, you are committing gradual suicide. According to my experience, among the different kinds of meat, fish is the best, chicken is next, and then lamb and beef; it is better to avoid pork because it does more harm than good. The Bible can never be wrong. Leviticus prohibits the eating of pork (11:7) because it has no profit. Moreover, try your best to avoid any food that is deep-fried. If you have to eat some, try your best to remove the skin and eat only the meat. Some people especially love to eat the skin of fried chicken. By so doing, they are cutting short their life expectancy. Third, do not eat too many sweet

things. Fourth, avoid eating any heavily-seasoned food. Salted food is the worst. While you are still young, learn to eat food without grease and heavy seasoning, and over a period of time you will be accustomed to it.

Furthermore, while you should avoid overeating, you should not allow your stomach to be empty. Do not think that because you are still young, you are strong enough to hold yourself up. Eventually you will fall sick. I am really concerned for a certain brother who loves the Lord. He has been laboring for the Lord faithfully, but because he is overly fatigued, the level of his white blood cells has gone up too high. Now he is in the hospital getting emergency care. Of course, I believe that the Lord will heal him, and we should also pray for him. I mention this as a warning to all of you. Do not think that since you are still young and have inexhaustible energy, you can use it excessively all the time. We must always remember that we are limited.

In addition, be sure to drink sufficient water—at least twelve big glasses every day. Water is for the cleansing of our whole system; taking plenty of fluid keeps our system cleansed all the time. A study which was done in

America on the young soldiers who were killed in the Vietnam War found that more than one-third of them had blood vessels that were blocked. This indicates that they did not eat properly and had taken in too much fat, so that even in their twenties and thirties they already had the problem of clogged blood vessels. American foods are very nutritious, yet the probability of Americans having high blood pressure, heart disease, and strokes is also quite high. We should take this as a warning. Therefore, it is good to drink some water after each meal.

In addition, you must have at least half an hour of exercise every day. Any kind of exercise will do. You may practice shadowboxing, or you may jog or walk. Furthermore, there is no need to be so regimented; just let your body move around a little bit. After a meal, spend ten minutes to walk. Walking is in fact the best exercise. I spend at least half an hour walking every day. Whenever I feel uncomfortable, I stand up and take a walk, and after fifteen minutes of walking I feel comfortable again.

Finally, for the sake of our physical health, we should not quarrel with people. More cells in your body are killed when you quarrel, argue, or get angry than when you catch a cold. Therefore, remember that you should not get angry about anything or with anybody; in particular, husbands and wives should not be angry with each other. By the Lord's grace, you should receive this kind of exhortation so that you might prolong your days on earth and be more useful in the Lord's hand.

Finally, we have to learn how to spend our money properly. When I was young, I read an article written by Benjamin Franklin of the United States in which he said that making money is easy and that spending money is hard. At first I did not agree with what he said because I believed that it is very hard to make money but not very hard to spend money. However, after reading through the article, I was deeply touched and greatly benefited. The article says that if a person does not spend his money properly, he will buy himself disaster. Very few people, however, know how to spend their money rightly.



Our living on the earth is entirely for the Lord. We should not be thinking about trying to significantly raise the quality and standard of our living. Rather, we should live a normal and proper life, being regulated in our daily activities at home, including our eating. When we need to spend, we would spend wisely; when we need to eat, we would eat properly. On the one hand, we should never sacrifice our health for the sake of saving money, for this would be an offense to the Lord. On the other hand, we should not waste even one penny. For the necessities of living, we should spend on the crucial things we need according to the rules of health, eating nutritious food and using suitable things, but we should not spend money for any unnecessary things. Using myself as an example, I still have a suit that I have had for eighteen years and a pair of shoes that I bought in England in 1958, both of which I am still wearing today. We must learn to spend within the appropriate bounds.

What I have said is not a small thing. Rather, this is for the building up of our proper living. Please remember that one day we all will stand before the judgment seat of the Lord to give an account of everything. We will

have to explain to Him concerning how we speak, how we spend our money, and how we deal with others. This should serve as a reminder to us that if we really intend to be His witnesses, we should not just speak in a vain way. Rather, we should exercise our conscience so that we will be able to testify for ourselves that we are absolutely walking according to the spirit and doing everything before the Lord.

*(The Economy of God and the Mystery of the Transmission of the Divine Trinity, Chapters 11-12)*

**References:**

*The Economy of God and the Mystery of the Transmission of the Divine Trinity, Chapters 11: Becoming a Useful Vessel in the Lord's Hand (1)*

*The Economy of God and the Mystery of the Transmission of the Divine Trinity, Chapters 12: Becoming a Useful Vessel in the Lord's Hand (2)*

*Vessels Useful to the Lord, Chapter 9: Character Training for the Lord's Service*

*The Elders' Management of the Church, Chapter 12: The Administration of the Elders (2)*

## Message 5

### Useful Vessels (2) – Breaking and Releasing

#### Scripture references:

**2 Cor. 1:8** - For we do not want you to be ignorant, brothers, of our affliction which befell us in Asia, that we were excessively burdened, beyond our power, so that we despaired even of living.

**2 Cor. 1:9** - Indeed we ourselves had the response of death in ourselves, that we should not base our confidence on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead;

**2 Cor. 4:7** - But we have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God and not out of us.

**2 Cor. 4:8** - We are pressed on every side but not constricted; unable to find a way out but not utterly without a way out;

**2 Cor. 4:9** - Persecuted but not abandoned; cast down but not destroyed;

**2 Cor. 4:10** - Always bearing about in the body the putting to death of Jesus that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.

**2 Cor. 6:8** - Through glory and dishonor, through evil report and good report; as deceivers and yet true;

**2 Cor. 6:9** - As unknown and yet well known; as dying and yet behold we live; as being disciplined and yet not being put to death;

**2 Cor. 6:10** - As made sorrowful yet always rejoicing; as poor yet enriching many; as having nothing and yet possessing all things.

**Luke 12:49** - I have come to cast fire on the earth, and how I wish that it were already kindled!

**Luke 12:50** - But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how I am pressed until it is accomplished!

**John 12:24** - Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless the

grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it abides alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.

### **Excerpts from the Ministry:**

Christ does not need whole vessels; instead, He needs broken vessels. This is because only broken vessels can be channels of living water. Whole vessels can only be cisterns of dead water. The biggest problem today is that it is hard to find any wounds or scars in most Christians. Most of us do not have any wounds, scars, marks of death, or experiences of the cross. Even though we have been saved and truly have Christ's life in us, this life has no way to come out. The reason is not that our behavior is too poor or too good but that we are too whole and too impregnable. Because we have no wounds, Christ has no way to be released from within us.

Neither our kindness, our good deeds, nor our morality can represent Christ. Only Christ Himself can represent Christ. Nothing that we have, even if it is good, can represent Christ. The progress of a Christian's spiritual life does not depend on how much he has changed; rather,

it depends on how much he has been broken and to what stature Christ has grown in him. In other words, the growth of a Christian hinges on his being broken and Christ's increasing in him.

*(The Crucified Christ, Chapter 1)*

The treasure is in the earthen vessel. Who needs to see your earthen vessel? The church lacks the treasure, not the earthen vessels. The world lacks the treasure, not the earthen vessels. If the earthen vessel is not broken, who will find the treasure within? The Lord works in us in so many different ways for the purpose of breaking the earthen vessel, the alabaster flask, the outer shell. The Lord wants to prepare a way to bring His blessing to the world through those who belong to Him. This is a way of blessing, but it is also a way stained with blood. Blood must be shed, and wounds are unavoidable. How crucial the breaking of this outer man is! Unless the outer man is broken, there cannot be any spiritual work. If we are consecrated to the Lord for His service, we have to be prepared to be broken by Him. We cannot excuse ourselves or preserve ourselves. We have to

allow the Lord to break our outer man completely so that He can have a free way through us.

We all have to find out God's intention for us. It is unfortunate that many people do not know what the Lord is doing in them or what the Lord intends for them. May every one of us know the Lord's intention for us. When the Lord opens our eyes, we will see that everything that has happened to us throughout our lives is meaningful. The Lord never does anything in vain. After we realize that the Lord's goal is to break our outer man, we will realize that everything that has happened to us is significant. The Lord is trying to achieve one goal: To break and dismantle our outer man.

The trouble with many is that before the Lord is able to move even a finger, they show signs of displeasure already. We must realize that all the experiences, difficulties, and trials from the Lord are for our highest good. We cannot ask for anything better; they are the best. If anyone goes to the Lord and says, "Lord, please let me choose the best," I believe the Lord will tell him, "I have given you the best. What you are facing every day is for your highest good." The Lord has arranged everything

for us for the purpose of breaking our outer man. We can put our spirit to full use only as our outer man is broken and our spirit is released.

Why do so many people remain unchanged after being dealt with for years? Others have a strong will, strong emotions, or a strong mind, yet the Lord can still break them. There are two main reasons that many people are not broken in spite of the passing of years.

First, these ones are living in darkness. They do not see God's hand. God is working and breaking, yet they do not know that God is doing the work. They are short of light, and they are not living in the light. They only see men, thinking that men are opposing them. Or they only see the environment, complaining that it is too harsh. They put all the blame on the environment. May the Lord grant us the revelation to see God's hand. May we kneel down and say, "This is You. This is You. I accept it." At a minimum we have to know whose hand is dealing with us. At a minimum we have to know that hand and see that it is not the world, our family, or the brothers and sisters in the church who are dealing with us. We have to see God's hand. God is the One who is



dealing with us. We have to learn from Madame Guyon, who would kiss such a hand and treasure such a hand. We must have this light. We have to accept and believe everything that the Lord has done. He can never be wrong in what He does.

Second, a person is not broken because he loves himself too much. Self-love is a great obstacle to breaking. We have to ask God to remove all self-love from us. When God plucks this self-love from us, we have to worship Him, saying, "Lord! If this is Your hand, I accept it from my heart." We have to remember that all misunderstandings, complaints, and dissatisfactions arise from only one thing—secret self-love. Because we love ourselves secretly, we try to save ourselves. This is a big problem. Many times problems arise because we try to save ourselves.

In order for our outer man to be broken, we need to consecrate ourselves to the Lord. Consecration, however, does not take care of all the problems. It is only an expression of our intention to willingly give ourselves unconditionally, unreservedly, and unequivocally to God. We can consecrate ourselves to God in just a

few minutes. This willingness to offer ourselves unreservedly to Him only constitutes the initial step in our spiritual journey. It does not mean that God has finished all of His work with this one step. Whether or not a man can be used by God does not depend on consecration alone. After consecration there is still the need of discipline from the Holy Spirit. This is very important, and whether or not we will become useful to God depends a great deal on this. The discipline of the Holy Spirit must be added to our consecration before we can become a useful vessel to the Lord. Without consecration, it often will be hard to go on with the discipline of the Holy Spirit. However, consecration alone cannot replace the Spirit's discipline. Therefore, we have to turn our attention to the matter of the Spirit's discipline.

In consecration we offer ourselves to God according to the light we have received. In disciplining us the Holy Spirit deals with us according to the light that He dispenses to us. We can only consecrate according to what we know. We can only consecrate according to what we can see with our spiritual eyes. In reality even we do not know how much is included in our consecration. The

amount of light we have received is not infinite; our light is very limited. Even when we think that we have the greatest light, God's eyes still may find us in darkness. What we consecrate to God according to our perceived light will never satisfy His demand. In other words, God's demand is always higher than what we can offer. Our consecration cannot satisfy God's heart because our knowledge is limited and our light is limited. But the discipline of the Holy Spirit is altogether different; it evaluates our need in God's own light. It is not what we see, but what God sees. He knows that we have certain needs, and He operates through His Spirit in the environment for us to experience these things, the purpose of which is to break our outer man. Therefore, the disciplining work of the Holy Spirit goes far beyond our consecration. It is many times greater than our consecration. There is a big difference here.

*(The Breaking of the Outer Man and the Release of the Spirit, Chapters 1 and 6)*

**References:**

*The Treasure in Earthen Vessels*

*The Breaking of the Outer Man and the Release of the Spirit, Chapters 1, 2, and 6*

*The Pursuit of a Christian, Chapters 5-7*

*The Crucified Christ, Chapter 1*