

2025 Metro Manila Chinese/English-speaking Year-end Conference

*December 29-31
DAP, Tagaytay City*

Name: _____
Locality: _____
Room No.: _____

GENERAL SUBJECT:

**GO FORTH
AND
BEAR MUCH FRUIT**

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Message 1

Fruit-bearing: The Preaching of the Gospel on the Highest Plane

Scripture Reading: John 15:1-8, 16

I. Our preaching of the gospel must be on the highest level, which is to minister life, even Christ, to people—John 10:10b; 14:6; *Hymns*, #922:

- A. Fruit-bearing is the central thought of John 15:
 1. Many Christians consider that John 15:1-8 and 16 is a teaching concerning abiding in the Lord; this is right, but it is not completely right.
 2. If we read these verses carefully, we will see that the stress, the central thought, is not mainly on abiding but on fruit-bearing; abiding is secondary, while fruit-bearing is primary.
- B. Fruit in the gospel of John refers to new believers—v. 16:
 1. Galatians 5:22 speaks of the fruit of the Spirit, which is the expression of the life of Christ within us, a kind of living as the expression of the inner life.
 2. However, the fruit in John 15 refers to new believers, new converts:
 - a. This is proven by verse 16, which says that we should “go forth” and bear fruit.
 - b. In order to bear the fruit of the Spirit mentioned in Galatians 5, there is no need to go, but to bear fruit as mentioned in John 15, there is the need to go.
 3. In John 15:8 we see that glorification is in fruit-bearing:
 - a. The branches of the vine bear fruit, and this fruit-bearing is the Father’s glorification; the more fruit we bear, the more God is glorified in our Christian work.
 - b. The Father does not want us just to do good

things or just to express Him in Christian ethical duties; He wants us to express Him in bearing fruit for the vine tree's increase and enlargement.

- C. Bearing fruit is not merely a matter of preaching or teaching; it is a matter of imparting life to others:
 - 1. There is a difference between going to preach the gospel and going to bear fruit:
 - a. At the end of the first three Gospels, there is a word concerning going to preach the gospel; to go to preach is a work—Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47.
 - b. However, there is no such word at the end of the Gospel of John; this is not because John did not have the concept of preaching the gospel, but because in John preaching is not merely a work but the outflow of life, the out-working of the inner life—John 15:1-8, 16; cf. 7:37-39; *Hymns*, #910.
 - 2. To have the proper genuine spreading of the gospel, we must have the overflow of the inner life—15:4-5; *Hymns*, #925.
 - 3. If we abide properly in the vine, then the life of the vine will fill us up; the life that has filled us up will overflow into others; this is fruit-bearing, and this is the genuine and proper preaching of the gospel—John 15:4-6:
 - a. To abide in the Lord means that there is no insulation or distance between us and Him; there is nothing between us and the Lord—vv. 4-5; *Hymns*, #372, #373.
 - b. It is possible to preach and still be insulated from Christ; but to have the overflow of the inner life, we must abide in the Lord; even a negative thought can insulate us from the flow of life.
 - c. As we contact people we must have the deep sense and the full realization that we are

abiding in the Lord, and when we talk to people, we must talk to them by abiding in Him.

- d. When we abide in the Lord, He speaks in our speaking and our speaking is His speaking; this is the imparting of life, the overflow of life from within.
- e. We all must go to reach people; whether we have the overflow of life or not, we must still contact people; if we do not reach people, we will have no way of knowing where we are.

II. The most important thing we need concerning fruit-bearing is a change of concept;¹⁰ we need to change our concept from preaching to fruit-bearing—vv. 1-8, 16:

- A. We need to drop our old concept—to expect to have great power, a great movement, a great campaign, and a great speaker:
 - 1. The normal way is for a grain of wheat to fall into the ground to die and grow up to bear fruit and for branches to abide in the vine to produce fruit—12:24; 15:4-5.
 - 2. We should not be tempted by the old way; rather, we expect that everyone among us will be a fruit-bearing branch.
 - 3. We should not put our trust in the preaching work; rather, we must stress fruit-bearing.¹³
- B. Fruit-bearing is not a mushrooming development but the slow process of life:
 - 1. If we are not concerned about the preaching of the gospel, we simply do not care for it at all; but when we are stirred up and burning, we take the thought that after a short time we shall bring many to the Lord; if, after a period of time, we have not brought anyone to the Lord, then we are disappointed; however, fruit is not brought forth overnight; it takes time.

2. Gospel preaching, which is fruit-bearing through the overflow of life, cannot be a mushrooming development; rather, it must be the result of the slow process of life.
3. Most fruit-bearing trees bear fruit once a year according to the natural law; we all must make a deal with the Lord, saying, “Lord, I don’t want to dream any more. Grant me the overflow of life that I may bear fruit once a year.”

III. We need to live a fruitful life—John 15:1-2, 4-5:

- A. We may be “spiritual,” “holy,” and “victorious” and yet not be fruitful; there are problems with that kind of spirituality, holiness, and victory; according to the Bible, being spiritual is for the purpose of being fruitful—cf. Phil. 1:19-21a, 24-25.
- B. In the Gospel of John the Lord does not tell us to be spiritual, holy, and victorious; rather, He charges us to bear fruit, even to bear much fruit, abiding fruit; this is to live a ministering life—John 15:2, 4-5, 16.

IV. “In our service in the church, the main thing we should do is bear fruit. We are here simply for fruit-bearing; that is, we are here for the release of life, the outflow of the inner life, and the impartation of life into others. This is the purpose of the church’s existence on the earth”—*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1966*, vol. 1, p. 263.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

**FRUIT-BEARING:
THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL
ON THE HIGHEST PLANE**

In the first three Gospels the Lord Jesus charged His disciples to preach the gospel, to teach the nations, and to baptize them into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit (Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47). In the Gospel of John, however, the Lord Jesus did not charge His

disciples in this way. Rather, in John 15 He revealed to His disciples the secret of life. This secret of life is so mysterious and abstract that no human words can adequately utter it. Thus, the Lord Jesus used the vine and its branches as a symbol of this mystery of life.

BEARING FRUIT BY THE OVERFLOW OF THE INNER LIFE

It seems that the vine with its branches is simple to understand. Everybody knows what a vine is. But in this symbol something mysterious and secret regarding life is indicated. The branches abide in the vine, and as they abide, they bear fruit. This fruit comes from the overflow of the inner life. My burden in this chapter is to point out that to have the proper and genuine spreading of the gospel, we must have the overflow of the inner life. This one, unique life is in three sections: in the vine, in the branches, and in the fruit. The fruit is on the branches, and the branches are on the vine. Although there are three sections, these sections are not different in life or in nature. In life and in nature they are absolutely one. The vine, the branches, and the fruit are different only in form. The vine has one form, the branches have another form, and the fruit has still a different form.

Why did not the Lord Jesus in the Gospel of John charge His disciples to preach the gospel or to teach the nations? It is because the Gospel of John is the Gospel of life, and life does not require preaching or teaching. No one can produce fruit by preaching to a tree. How foolish it would be to go into an orchard and preach to the trees regarding fruit-bearing. No one would be foolish enough to do this, exhorting the trees to be diligent to bring forth fruit. When some read this, they may say, "Does not Matthew 28 tell us to teach the nations? Is there not preaching mentioned in Mark 16 and in Luke 24?" Do not twist my words. I have not said that there is no preaching or teaching in the other Gospels. But do not neglect the final Gospel, the Gospel of John. Everyone realizes that the final word is the decisive word. Although we may speak a great deal, our final word gives our decision. Among the four Gospels, John, the Gospel of life, is the final one. Life is

final. You may have many things, but if you do not have life, it all amounts to nothing. In John 15 there is no teaching or preaching.

GOD'S DISPENSATION

We need to see the things of God's mystery in His dispensation. We do not use the word *dispensation* in the sense of an age but with the meaning of *economy*, referring to God's dispensing administration. God's economy is to dispense Himself into His chosen and predestinated people. Our work must not be on the low level of today's Christianity. Our preaching of the gospel must be on the highest level, which is to minister life, even Christ, to people. This is the preaching of the gospel on the highest plane....

PREACHING THE GOSPEL BY IMPARTING LIFE TO OTHERS

What does it mean to preach the gospel? It is to bring forth fruit. Bearing fruit is not merely a matter of preaching or teaching; it is a matter of imparting life to others. The proper and genuine gospel preaching is not merely a type of preaching or teaching; it is the imparting of the very life that is within you to others. This is a matter of life. Suppose you are a dried-up branch. To be dried up is to lack life. As a branch, you should share the abundant life of the vine. But to be dried up means that you lack the life of the vine and are unable to bear fruit. Because you do not have life, there is no overflow of the life of the vine within you. But if you abide properly in the vine, then the life of the vine will fill you up. The life that has filled you up will then overflow into others. This is fruit-bearing, and this is the genuine and proper gospel preaching. I look to the Lord that we all might see this.

OUR NEED TO ABIDE IN THE LORD

We need to abide in the Lord. To abide in the Lord means that there is no insulation or distance between us and Him. There must be nothing between us and the Lord. When we abide in Him, He as life will flow into our whole being and

will fill us up. As a result, life will overflow from within us.

In this chapter the Lord Jesus is serious, saying, "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes it away," and, "If one does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is dried up" (vv. 2, 6). If a branch does not bear fruit, the Father will cut it off. Does this mean that we shall perish? Do not apply this thought to this chapter. In John 15 there is no thought of being saved or lost. Many Christians emphasize only one thing—being saved to go to heaven. According to some of them, if a saved person does not do well, he will lose his salvation and perish in hell. John 15, however, is in another realm, having absolutely nothing to do with going either to heaven or hell. To be dried up and cut off first means to be cut off from the enjoyment of the riches of Christ. When a branch is cut off, it loses the enjoyment of the riches of life. Second, to be cut off means to be severed from the fellowship with all the other branches. When you are on the vine, you not only abide in the vine but also in the fellowship with the other branches. However, if you are cut off from the vine, you will lose this fellowship. Third, to be cut off means to be cut off from your function. When a branch is cut off, it loses its function. Finally, to be cut off means to miss God's eternal purpose. A branch that has been cut off from the vine cannot possibly fulfill God's eternal purpose.

It is possible to preach and still be insulated from Christ. I knew of a brother who beat his wife at home and then stood up to tell people that Jesus loved them. It seemed that Jesus loved everyone except his wife. For years, I sat under a great teacher of the Bible. He was a good talker. But when people went to visit him, after speaking with them for a while, he excused himself, picked up his pipe, and smoked. Do you think that as he was smoking his pipe he was abiding in the Lord? His pipe smoking must have been an insulation. Although I sat under his teaching for years, I never received any life supply from him. While some may preach and still be able to smoke or attend the movies, genuine gospel preaching is the overflow of the inner life. In order to have this overflow, we must abide in the Lord. Even a negative thought can insulate

us from the flow of life. We know this from our experience. You may preach and teach, but if you do not abide in the Lord, you will never bear fruit by the overflow of the inner life.

When we abide in the Lord, we become a part of the Triune God. Are not the branches a part of the vine? If we, as branches, abide in the Lord, then we are a part of the Triune God. When some of the critics hear this, they will accuse me of teaching evolution into God. What slander this is, and what blasphemy to the Lord! We do not teach any kind of evolution.

As you contact people on the campuses, you must have the deep sense and the full realization that you are abiding in the Lord. When you talk to people, you must talk to them by abiding in Him. In the previous chapter I said that we must talk from our spirit. Now I am saying that we must talk by abiding in Him. We need to practice this. Tell the Lord, "Lord Jesus, I am going to the campus. Help me to abide in You right now. Lord, You promised that if I abide in You, You would abide in me. My abiding is Your abiding. Lord, I will go abiding in You." If you abide in the Lord, in your speaking will be the Lord's speaking. Never contact people without abiding in the Lord. Do not speak a word to anyone without abiding in Him. If, as I am speaking, I do not have the assurance that I am abiding in Him, I should stop speaking, for whatever I would say would not be the truth, the reality, but a falsehood. All human words, even if they are true, are falsehoods because there is no reality in them. But when I abide in the Lord, He speaks in my speaking, and my speaking is His speaking. This is the imparting of life, the overflow of life from within.

NOT A MUSHROOMING DEVELOPMENT BUT THE SLOW PROCESS OF LIFE

With this as a basic concept, let us consider some other matters. We all have some peculiar concepts. If we are not concerned about the preaching of the gospel, we simply do not care for it at all. But when we are stirred up and burning, we take the thought that after a short time we shall bring many to the Lord. If, after a period of time, we have not brought

anyone to the Lord, then we are disappointed. Many of us have known this disappointment in the past. But consider the fruit-bearing of a fruit tree. The fruit is not brought forth overnight; it takes time. It takes at least several months for fruit to be borne. Gospel preaching is fruit-bearing through the overflow of life. It cannot be a mushrooming development. Rather, it must be the result of the slow process of life. Do not expect that if you contact people for a short while, you will catch many of them. This is a mistaken concept. Do not suppose that after reading these chapters of the young people's training, you will know the secret and that you will bring many to the Lord. There will be no mushrooming development. Instead, you will bear fruit in due time.

Most fruit-bearing trees bear fruit once a year. For example, peach trees and apple trees bear fruit once a year. This is according to the natural law. Do not expect that you will be able to bear fruit any faster than this. We all must make a deal with the Lord, saying, "Lord, I don't want to dream anymore. Grant me the overflow of life that I may bear fruit once a year." It takes time to bear fruit, but it should not take more than a year. I look to the Lord that next year at this time we shall come together with some produce to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles, the feast that comes after the harvest. (CWWL, 1975-1976, vol. 3, "Young People's Training," ch. 4, pp. 343-349)

HAVING A CHANGE OF CONCEPT

Today the most important thing we need concerning fruit-bearing is a change of concept. We need to drop our old concept. The old concept among Christians is to expect to have great power, a big movement, a big campaign, and a big speaker. Christians have always expected these things and today are still expecting them. They expect to have great power poured down from heaven, followed by a big movement and a big campaign with some big speakers. This is not the normal way. The normal way is for a grain of wheat to fall into the ground to die and grow up to bear fruit. The normal way is for branches to abide in the vine to produce fruit. Therefore, we need to change our concept.

Physically speaking, people do not increase by a movement; instead, they grow to maturity, marry, and have babies. They then make a home, learn how to be parents, and take care of their children; eventually, their children grow. This seems very slow, but it is not slow. In actuality, because the way of having babies is fast, some people try to slow it down by using birth control. We need to learn the way of spiritual birth.

As we have said, the way of increase is not the way of a movement; instead, it is by a normal life with growth to bring forth persons who can be raised up. Then the ones brought forth will learn the same way. I say again that we need to change our concept. From now on, we should never be tempted by the old way. Forget about it. If the Lord gives us that way, of course, we will take it; otherwise, we will not willingly take it. We must take the normal way. The normal way is first to pray for ourselves that the Lord would make us fruit-bearing branches; second, we must practice this way; and third, we must help everyone who meets with us to regularly bear fruit.

If you receive this word merely as a message, it will not work. Rather, I beg you to change your concept. Drop the old concept of power and a great movement, campaigns, and speakers. We do not expect these things. Rather, we expect that something particular will happen among us, namely, that all those regularly meeting with us—though small in number—will be branches prevailing in bearing fruit. We expect that everyone among us will be a fruit-bearing branch. (*CWWL*, 1966, vol. 2, “The Way to Bear Fruit,” ch. 3, pp. 177-178)

A FRUITFUL LIFE

The ministering life we see in 2 Corinthians is a fruitful life. We may be “spiritual,” “holy,” and “victorious” and yet not be fruitful. There are problems with that kind of spirituality, holiness, and victory. It is questionable whether those qualities are true and genuine. Is it not unusual that one could be “spiritual” without being fruitful? According to

the Bible, being spiritual is for the purpose of being fruitful. In the Gospel of John the Lord does not tell us to be spiritual, holy, and victorious. Rather, in John 15 He charges us to bear fruit, even to bear much fruit, abiding fruit. This is to live a ministering life.

Around my home there are a number of fruit trees—peach, lemon, and orange. For quite a long period of time, certain trees did not bear any fruit. Because of the lack of fruit, we were considering whether we should remove them. Although these trees did not bear fruit, they continued to grow quite well. In fact, they were green and flourishing, full of leaves. Nevertheless, the more they grew in that way, the more bothered I was concerning them. Sometimes when I looked at those trees I said, “What are you trees doing here? You are full of green leaves, and your branches are spreading forth, but you are not bearing any fruit.” We may take this as an illustration of believers who may be “spiritual,” “holy,” and “victorious,” but are fruitless. They do not bear fruit because they do not have a ministering life. It is very important to see that we all must have a ministering life. (*CWWL*, 1988, vol. 3, “Our Urgent Need—Spirit and Life,” ch. 3, pp. 114-116)

References and Further Reading:

1. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1975-1976*, vol. 3, “Young People’s Training,” ch. 4.
2. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1966*, vol. 2, “The Way to Bear Fruit,” chs. 1, 3-4.
3. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1988*, vol. 3, “Our Urgent Need—Spirit and Life,” ch. 3.
4. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1989*, vol. 3, “The Exercise and Practice of the God-ordained Way,” ch. 6.
5. *Life-Study of 2 Corinthians*, msg. 44.

Message 2

Bearing Fruit by the Enjoyment of the Riches of Christ's Life

Scripture Reading: John 15:1-2, 5-6, 16

I. We need to enjoy Christ to bear fruit in order to please the Lord—John 15:5:

- A. John 15 is an outstanding chapter in the Bible; this chapter reveals that Christ is the true vine, that we are His branches, that we should bear fruit, and that our fruit should remain—vv. 1, 5, 16:
 - 1. Remaining fruit are ones who are saved and remain in the church.
 - 2. Although we may do many things for the Lord in order to please Him, what pleases Him most is for us to bear fruit.
- B. We may claim that we have enjoyed Christ for a number of years; however, if we have not borne fruit, we may be deceiving ourselves; we need to realize that if we are faithful and sincere with the Lord concerning the enjoyment of Christ, this enjoyment will produce fruit.
- C. After many years of study, we have learned that the best way to bear fruit is to visit others in their homes for the purpose of preaching the gospel in order to bring them to the Lord; this is to beget new believers as spiritual children.

II. We need to see that enjoying the riches of Christ is for producing fruit—John 15:2, 6:²

- A. In the Bible there is the principle that in order to receive, we have to give; if we stop giving, our receiving is cut off; our giving is a way to receive—Prov. 11:25; cf. Luke 6:38.
- B. In John 15 the Lord speaks some sober words; in verse 2 He says, “Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes it away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it that it may bear more

fruit":

1. That the Father takes away every branch in Him that does not bear fruit does not mean that He throws that branch into hell to perish; this is not the thought here.
2. The thought in John 15 is that, on the one hand, we have the right to enjoy all the riches of Christ as the vine, while on the other hand, we have the obligation to bring forth fruit, converts, as new members of the vine; this is producing fruit by enjoying:
 - a. If we enjoy the riches of Christ, we must produce something; if we do not take care of this responsibility and duty, we will lose our right to enjoy.
 - b. The more we produce new converts in a proper way, the more we enjoy Christ.
3. To not bear fruit will cause us to be cut off from the enjoyment of the life of the vine—John 15:2:
 - a. We may feel that whether we bear fruit does not matter, as long as we are not wrong in other things; however, a branch that does not bear fruit for a long time is seriously wrong.
 - b. According to John 15:2 the Father takes away the branches that do not bear fruit:
 - 1.) To be taken away from the vine is to be set aside from the enjoyment of the riches of the vine; this is not to be cut off from the salvation of Christ; it is to be cut off from the enjoyment of the riches of the life of Christ.
 - 2.) This is the reason that many brothers and sisters do not have much enjoyment of the riches of Christ; they are in the church life, and they come to the meetings, but they have little enjoyment of the riches of Christ's life simply because they do not bear fruit.

- c. The way for us to enjoy the riches of the life of Christ is to bear fruit; the more we bear fruit, the more we need the life supply, and the more the life supply will come into us to meet all our needs:
 - 1.) We may compare this to a water hose on a faucet; we do not wait until the water flows to turn on the faucet; rather, as soon as we turn it on, the water comes; if the vine tree does not afford us a supply, it is because we have “turned off the faucet.”
 - 2.) We need to absorb the life-juice of the vine tree so that we may have the rich flow of life; however, in order to have the rich flow of life, we need to open our being, let the life flow out of us, and bear fruit.
- C. In John 15:6 it is not only that one may be cut off from the enjoyment of Christ as the rich supply of the vine; it is also that he may dry up, because there is no more supply of the life-juice; moreover, verse 6 also speaks of being burned:
 - 1. This is similar to 1 Corinthians 3:14-15 which says, “If anyone’s work which he has built upon the foundation remains, he will receive a reward; if anyone’s work is consumed, he will suffer loss, but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.”
 - 2. To suffer loss is not to perish, for the one who suffers loss will be saved; to suffer loss is one matter, while to be saved or perish is another.
 - 3. We should not say that as long as we are saved everything is all right; yes, we will be saved, but we may be saved so as through fire—v. 15.
- D. Although we are saved forever, we may still suffer a chastisement:
 - 1. According to John 10:28-29, once we are saved by receiving eternal life, we are saved forever; we can never be lost.

2. From 1 Corinthians 5:4-5 we can see that even though the destruction of the sinful brother's flesh was a chastisement to him, his spirit will be saved, because once someone is saved, he is saved forever.
- E. Barrenness is the biggest enemy that annuls the church life:
 1. Barrenness is a subtle enemy; this is not an enemy to worldly Christians but mainly to good Christians, the brothers and sisters who are regularly attending the meetings.
 2. Without fruit-bearing, there is no practical church life.

III. As branches we must bear fruit; we must have such a breakthrough; we need to go to the Lord to have a thorough dealing with Him:

- A. If anyone has not borne fruit for several years, there is the danger that such a one may be cut off from the life supply—vv. 2, 6.
- B. We must endeavor and be desperate; we must say, "Lord, I am one of Your branches. Why do I not bear fruit? I must bear some. I cannot go on like this anymore. Lord, have mercy on me that by Your grace I may bear at least one fruit."
- C. If we will bear even one fruit, the life supply will flood in; the life-juice will stream in, and we will bear more fruit; to bear the first fruit is a breakthrough.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

**GENUINE GOSPEL PREACHING BEING FRUIT-BEARING
AS THE OVERFLOW OF THE RICHES OF THE INNER LIFE**

The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke all speak in plain words concerning gospel preaching. Matthew 28:19 says, "Go therefore and disciple all the nations," Mark 16:15

says, “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel,” and Luke 24:47 says, “That repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations.” In the Gospel of John, however, there are no such plain words concerning the preaching of the gospel. Instead, chapter 15 speaks of fruit-bearing. According to John, the Gospel of life, preaching the gospel is a matter not of mere speaking or teaching but of bearing fruit. Life is not a matter of preaching. It is a matter of growing and bearing fruit.

Although we are in the Lord’s recovery, even now we are not fully recovered. To some extent we are still abnormal. Not only in our meetings but in every aspect of the Christian life and church life, we are still under the influence of old, traditional, degraded Christianity, and our gospel preaching is no exception. Deep within us is a subconscious misunderstanding and wrong influence. We consider that to preach the gospel is simply to speak a certain doctrine to people and that those who were born with eloquence can be the good, effective preachers. This is a poor concept caused by a wrong influence. Genuine gospel preaching is fruit-bearing.

In John 15 the Lord used the illustration of the vine tree to show that we, the branches of the vine, must bear fruit. If we do not understand what fruit-bearing is, we can learn of the vine tree. Branches are not good speakers, but they are good fruit-bearers. Bearing fruit does not depend upon our speaking or eloquence. It depends upon the riches of the life within us. Fruit-bearing is the overflow of the riches of the inner life. If we are short of life within, we will have nothing with which to bear fruit. Fruit-bearing is a matter not of speaking or eloquence; it is a matter of the rich flow of the inner life.

TO NOT BEAR FRUIT CAUSING US TO BE CUT OFF FROM THE ENJOYMENT OF THE LIFE OF THE VINE

Many of us do not have the sense that if we do not bring people to the Lord, we are wrong. We eat in peace and sleep in peace, imagining that we are normal. This is according to the wrong concept that we received from our background. If

we lose our temper with our spouse, we immediately feel that we are wrong and are under condemnation, but if we have not borne fruit for many years, we may have no condemnation. We may feel that whether we bear fruit does not matter, as long as we are not wrong in other things. However, a branch that does not bear fruit for a long time is seriously wrong. In John 15:2 the Lord Jesus said, "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes it away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it that it may bear more fruit." The Father takes away the branches that do not bear fruit. This does not mean that the branches are lost. Being saved or lost is not the thought of John 15. Rather, this chapter shows that when we enjoy the riches of the vine tree, we bear fruit as the overflow of the inner life. Therefore, to be taken away from the vine is to be set aside from the enjoyment of the riches of the vine. This is not to be cut off from the salvation of Christ; it is to be cut off from the enjoyment of the riches of the life of Christ. This is the reason that many brothers and sisters do not have much enjoyment of the riches of Christ. They are in the church life, and they come to the meetings, but they have little enjoyment of the riches of Christ's life simply because they do not bear fruit.

The way for us to enjoy the riches of the life of Christ is to bear fruit. The more we bear fruit, the more we need the life supply, and the more the life supply will come into us to meet all our needs. If you would tell me, "I do not feel that I enjoy the Lord very much," I would reply, "Go and bear fruit! Then the riches of Christ will rise up within you." Regardless of how much we seek the Lord, the spiritual principle is that if we do not bear fruit, we are cut off from the enjoyment of Christ, the supply and riches of the vine. How much we enjoy the riches of the vine depends on how much fruit we bear. We may compare this to a water hose on a faucet. We do not wait until the water flows to turn on the faucet. Rather, as soon as we turn it on, the water comes. If the vine tree does not afford us a supply, it is because we have "turned off the faucet." To turn off the supply in this way is the Father's cutting off of the branches. The Father does not cut the branches off of the

vine in order to condemn them to hell, as some teach. Again I say, John 15 is not about being saved or being lost. Instead, it shows that we are all branches of the vine with the supply of the vine. Therefore, we need to absorb the life-juice of the vine tree so that we may have the rich flow of life. However, in order to have the rich flow of life, we need to open our being, let the life flow out of us, and bear fruit...

GOING TO THE LORD TO DEAL WITH HIM CONCERNING FRUIT-BEARING

We should not try to apply any methods when caring for others. We have learned that mere methods do not work. Even to make regulations for ourselves and to make up our mind do not work. Paul says, “To will is present with me, but to work out the good is not” (Rom. 7:18). Therefore, we should not merely use our natural will. We should simply go to the Lord and say, “Lord, I can do nothing, and I am not normal. O Lord, have mercy upon me.” The Lord is the heavenly radiance. When we go to Him, He will radiate His love and His burden into us. If nothing else forces us to go to the Lord, at least our need for fruit-bearing will cause us to go to Him. Many of us are abnormal because we have been fruitless. Therefore, we must go to the Lord to confess our fruitlessness to Him and stay in His presence and radiance for some time. Then something will be radiated into us. What we receive will be not a mere word or training from man but a heavenly “radiation.” Then we will be enlightened. We will see the things that we must deal with, and we will see in what matters we must pay a price. We should not say, “Do not speak to me of paying a price. I want something for free.” Rather, we must go to the Lord to deal with Him.

May the Lord impress us that we are abnormal in the matter of fruit-bearing. We must go to Him to receive a heavenly radiation. Then as we become normal, we will be the church in our locality composed of sound Christians who live a proper Christian life, not bothering people but impressing them that we in the church have something shining. This shining will spontaneously attract people and convince them. Even without our speaking to them, our relatives will

be gradually convinced and attracted, and whomever we contact will be under our shining all year round. We may not speak to others about Jesus all the time, but we will have a shining, attracting power and a convincing element among our relatives, neighbors, and schoolmates. Even if they do not like us, they will have to admit that we are a higher kind of person. Then we can follow the inner "radiation" to take care of them. In this way, it will be easy to bring one person to the Lord and into the church life yearly. Eventually, everyone in our locality will know that the church is a wonderful group of people, and the church will double in size by the end of the year. At that time, every new one will be the same as we are. Just as children are the same as their parents, all the new ones will be fruit-bearing persons, and by the end of the following year, the church will double again. This will build up a good reputation and credit with people. Even the unbelievers will say, "If you want to normal Christian life and church life with a proper preaching and believe in Jesus, the best place to go is that church." that we will all bear fruit according to the principle of life.

If we go to the Lord and remain with Him, the living Spirit will burden us to pray for certain ones among all those whom we know. To go to the street to find people is good, but this is not the best. It is better to work on people whom we know and who know us. Therefore, we need to build ourselves up among the ones we know, not in a natural way but according to Christ. Then they will all know the kind of life we live and the kind of persons we are, and they will be impressed, influenced, and convinced by us. Even if at first they do not care for us or for the gospel, they will not be able to deny that in our living there is something high, weighty, and bright. Then we can pray for them, not in a general way but in a specific way according to the inward leading. We may be burdened to pray for a certain relative for a whole month. The Lord knows how to gain that one. If we pray for him, then at a certain time he will come to us, or we will go to him. Of course, we should also have meetings for preaching the gospel, but the basic factor for the preaching of the gospel in a local church is the living of all the members. Without the

daily living of all the members, the church has no ground for preaching the gospel. The gospel preaching of a local church is fully based upon the preaching daily life of all the members.

If a Christian means business with the Lord, it will be easy for him to bring one person to the Lord and into the church life. It is fair to expect this. To not do this is to go against the natural law of the life of the vine. Every fruit-bearing tree bears fruit annually. This is according to the natural law, the natural principle. The Lord does not require anything of us that is beyond the proper principle. According to the law of life, we should bear one fruit yearly. We must admit that this is true. This is the requirement according to the law of life. We should not place blame or make excuses. We must all admit that we have not lived in a normal way. If we had been normal, we would have fulfilled the requirement of fruit-bearing. From this time on, we must all go to the Lord and say, "Lord, this year I want to live a normal Christian life and a normal church life. I want to be fruitful." We must go to the Lord to deal with Him thoroughly. We should pray, not in a miraculous way but in a very normal, constant way that all the members in all the churches will be brought into the normal Christian life and church life with a proper preaching and that we will all bear fruit according to the principle of life. (CWWL, 1973-1974, vol. 2, "The Normal Way of Fruit-bearing and Shepherding," ch. 4, pp. 557-567)

BEARING FRUIT AS BRANCHES OF THE VINE

Every member of the church should be a branch that bears fruit. The word of the Lord in John 15 is emphatic and definite. He said, "I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes it away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it that it may bear more fruit" (vv. 1-2). If we are saved, we are a branch in the vine. We cannot deny this. Therefore, we must realize that every branch in the vine must abide in the Lord to bear fruit. This is not a small matter. The Lord said, "If one does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is dried up; and they gather them and cast them into

the fire, and they are burned" (v. 6). Some Bible scholars have misunderstood this verse. If we take this as a word concerning salvation, we will not be able to understand it. This word is not about salvation; it is about the enjoyment of the life supply of the vine tree in order to bear fruit. To be cast out is not to be lost. Some Pentecostals use this chapter to deny that our salvation is eternal. They say that someone may be saved one day, lost the next day, and saved again the next morning. This kind of salvation can be compared to an elevator that goes up and down. However, in chapter 10 of the same Gospel the Lord Jesus said, "I give to them eternal life, and they shall by no means perish forever, and no one shall snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all, and no one can snatch them out of My Father's hand" (vv. 28-29). The Lord's salvation is eternal and once for all.

However, this does not mean that we will never suffer any dealing, discipline, or punishment from the Lord. In actuality, we may suffer all these. After someone is born, he cannot be unborn by behaving wrongly. Rather, a genuine child is disciplined when he makes mistakes. What the Lord said in John 15 is that the branches that do not bear fruit are first cut off from the supply of the vine tree, then dried up, and eventually burned in the fire. In my Christian life I have seen many withered ones and even some who were "burned," unable to come back to the life supply. The withered ones are through with regard to the enjoyment of the life-juice of the vine tree. We must be careful not to play games with the Lord and the church. About twenty years ago, certain ones opposed, criticized, and condemned Brother Watchman Nee. Eventually, all those critics became withered. They did not lose their salvation, but they were finished regarding the enjoyment of the life supply.

As branches we must bear fruit. If anyone has not borne fruit for several years, I am very concerned for him. There is the danger that such a one may be cut off from the life supply. We must endeavor and be desperate. We must say, "Lord, I am one of Your branches. Why do I not bear fruit? I

must bear some. I cannot go on like this anymore. Lord, have mercy on me that by Your grace I may bear at least one fruit." If we will bear even one fruit, the life supply will flood in. The life-juice will stream in, and we will bear more fruit. To bear the first fruit is a breakthrough. We must have such a breakthrough. We need to go to the Lord to have a thorough dealing with Him. (*CWWL, 1973-1974*, vol. 2, "The Normal Way of Fruit-bearing and Shepherding," ch. 3, pp. 549-551)

References and Further Reading:

1. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1990*, vol. 1, "Bearing Remaining Fruit for the Lord's Pleasure," ch. 1.
2. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1966*, vol. 2, "The Way to Bear Fruit," ch. 2.
3. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1973-1974*, vol. 2, "The Normal Way of Fruit-bearing and Shepherding for the Building Up of the Church," chs. 3-4.
4. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1993*, vol. 2, "The Training and the Practice of the Vital Groups," ch. 3.

Message 3

Bearing Fruit by Being Pruned by the Father and by Being Built Up with Vital Companions

Scripture Reading: John 15:2, 4-5, 7, 12-17; Mark 6:7;
Luke 10:1; Acts 13:2; 15:40

I. “Every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it that it may bear more fruit”—John 15:2b:

- A. We need to deal with the Lord to be new, fresh, and tender branches—v. 2:
 1. For a branch to bear fruit, it must be new, fresh, and tender; the way to be new, fresh, and tender is to be pruned.
 2. We must all go to the Lord to deal with Him; this is the meaning of being pruned:
 - a. Whether we are old or new in the presence of the Lord depends upon our thorough dealing with Him.
 - b. We must go to the Lord to have a thorough dealing with Him, opening ourselves and presenting ourselves to Him without any covering for the self; we should say, “Lord, here I am. Come to enlighten me. Shine upon me”—*Hymns*, #426.
 - c. All our worldly, fleshly, and natural desires, likes, attractions, and addictions need to be pruned; then we will become fresh, new, and tender.
- B. We need to deal with all the hindrances to have a living of bearing fruit:
 1. We do not need to make up our mind to endeavor to bring someone to the Lord each year; rather, we should all have a proper Christian life, a life with no distractions, frustrations, or addictions.
 2. We should pray, “O Lord Jesus! By Your mercy and through Your grace I am here absolutely

for You. I have no desires, likes, dislikes, addictions, or frustrations. I have nothing but You, Lord.”

3. To make our preaching a work is poor; we are not carrying out a job in our preaching; we are living a life; therefore, if anything hinders us in our fellowship with the Lord, we should say, “Lord, prune this. I give You the freedom to cut it.”
4. We do not wish to encourage, charge, or stir up anyone to have a mere gospel preaching work; instead, what we need in the Lord’s recovery is for many dear saints who love the Lord and mean business with Him to constantly be one with Him—vv. 4-5.
5. There are many items which are not sinful that we still hold on to; these matters deaden us even though we still endeavor to preach the gospel and bring people to the Lord.
6. This is why we all need to go to the Lord, not to will or to make up our mind but to have a thorough dealing; then if we go along with the Lord’s exposing and enlightening, and we have a thorough dealing with Him, we will be fruitful.

C. We need to deal with our natural disposition to become flexible in caring for people—cf. 1 Cor. 9:19-23:

1. We must all be tested by the church life, by fruit-bearing, and by lamb-feeding because these are the three matters that kill our natural disposition; as persons who have been dealt with in our natural disposition we will be flexible.
2. We should not speak of inconvenience or say that we do not have time; whether we have time depends on our desire; we should always have time to talk to people.

D. Fruit-bearing requires us to pay a price and to be dealt with; it forces us not only to sacrifice but also to learn the lessons and be broken.

II. **“Trying to bear fruit individually is not effective; if we would bear fruit, we must do so corporately, and the first step in bearing fruit corporately is to form a nucleus”—*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1967, vol. 2, p. 389*:**

- A. We need to realize that fruit-bearing depends on both the growth in life and the building, that is, the proper relatedness between the saints:
 1. We have seen that we need the growth in life in order to be built up together; now we must see that in order to bear fruit, we need both the growth in life and the building—Eph. 4:15-16; 1 Pet. 2:2-5; John 15:5, 12, 16-17; 17:21-23.
 2. On the one hand, fruit-bearing depends on the building; on the other hand, the genuine building depends on fruit-bearing.
- B. We need to get some companions, at least two or three, with whom we can labor in the gospel; we should never work by ourselves—Mark 6:7; Luke 10:1; *Hymns*, #909:
 1. When the Lord sent out His disciples, He sent them out two by two—Mark 6:7; Luke 10:1.⁷
 2. Reproduction always requires cooperation between two entities; likewise, in order to bear spiritual fruit, we need to be paired with someone else; we cannot bear fruit individually or in an individualistic way.
 3. If we try to bear fruit individualistically, the fruit we bear will be peculiar; those whom we bear as fruit will be like us, bearing our characteristic of individualism—*Hymns*, #840, stanza 1.
 4. The proper way to bear fruit is to get a companion so that we may learn how to coordinate; if we are willing to coordinate

with others and be restricted, balanced, and adjusted, we will be strengthened to take care of others—cf. Acts 11:22-26; 15:40.

5. The best way to select a companion is to pray and to open ourselves to the Lord and to others; we should not choose a companion according to our natural taste.
6. The main reason we lack fruit is that we are individualistic.

C. A vital group that is up to the standard revealed in the Bible has a purpose, a nature, and a condition—John 15:17, footnote 1:

1. The purpose of the vital groups is the increase, perfecting, and building up of the Body of Christ; the vital groups are to gain the increase, finish the perfecting, and complete the building—Acts 2:46-47; Eph. 4:12.
2. The nature of the vital groups is spiritual; to be spiritual means to be filled with the Holy Spirit, within and without—Acts 13:52; 4:31b.
3. The condition of the vital groups is that of loving one another in oneness and with one accord; we need to love one another, meeting together in mutual love—John 13:34-35; 17:21, 23; Phil. 2:2.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

DEALING WITH THE LORD TO BE NEW, FRESH, AND TENDER BRANCHES

As we said in the previous chapter, the three tests of whether we are proper are the church life, fruit-bearing, and caring for younger ones. If we do not bear fruit or take care of younger ones, we are wrong. John 15:2 says, “Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes it away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it that it may bear more fruit.” No one should say he is too old to be a fruit-bearing branch. For someone to say this indicates that he needs to

be pruned. For a branch to bear fruit, it must be new, fresh, and tender. The way to be new, fresh, and tender is to be pruned. To understand the Bible in a proper way is not easy. We may think that we should wait until the Father prunes us before we bear fruit. If we wait, however, the Father may not do His work. Instead, we must all go to the Lord to deal with Him. This is the meaning of being pruned.

Our physical age means nothing. Whether we are old or new in the presence of the Lord depends upon our thorough dealing with Him. To deal with the Lord properly is not to say, "Lord, I was wrong in the past because I did not bear fruit. From now on I will endeavor and do whatever You demand me to do to bear fruit." This is a poor way to deal with the Lord; it is not a dealing but a willing. Paul says, "To will is present with me, but to work out the good is not" (Rom. 7:18). What we will to do is a work, not a living. We should not make up our mind and will to do something. Rather, we must go to the Lord to deal with Him by opening ourselves to Him. Whenever we go to the Lord in this way, we receive light. At first we may not have much light, but if we obey the light we receive and deal with what the light condemns, we will receive more light.

We must go to the Lord to have a thorough dealing with Him, opening ourselves and presenting ourselves to Him without any covering for the self. We must strip off our cover as much as possible and present ourselves fully on the altar. We should say, "Lord, here I am. Come to enlighten me. Shine upon me. Investigate, examine, test, and expose me. Do everything You can to bring me fully into the light so that I may see my real situation." If we do this, we will immediately see several items that we must deal with. Perhaps the first item we need to deal with concerns our wife. We may need to say, "Lord, forgive me. I am constantly wrong in my attitude toward my wife." Then the Lord will demand that we go to her to make a thorough confession and ask her forgiveness. It seems that this has nothing to do with the preaching of the gospel. However, we are not speaking of a mere work of gospel preaching; we are speaking of fruit-bearing as the issue of a proper Christian life...

DEALING WITH ALL THE HINDRANCES TO HAVE A LIVING OF BEARING FRUIT

We do not need to make up our mind to endeavor to bring someone to the Lord each year. This is not what we are saying. Rather, we should all have a proper Christian life, a life with no distractions, frustrations, or addictions. We should pray, “O Lord Jesus! By Your mercy and through Your grace I am here absolutely for You. I have no desires, likes, dislikes, addictions, or frustrations. I have nothing but You, Lord. If You give me something, I will take it, but if You do not give it to me, I do not desire it. I do not care for long hair or short hair. Because I am a human, I need something to cover me, and I do not desire to give people the impression that I am sloppy. However, I do not love my coat and tie. Likewise, I shave every morning because I wish to be a right person and not give people a wrong impression, but I do not love shaving or not shaving. I do not love anything, Lord. I love only You, and if I love something else, prune it off.” If we pray in this way, we will be refreshed, and we will have a life that produces fruit. It is not by our endeavoring, doing, willing, or making up our mind to bring people to the Lord. That will not work, and even if it did work, we would bring forth fruit only according to what we are in ourselves. We need to be pruned by the Lord. This is a serious matter. We are not a “holiness” people, like the Amish who are allowed to wear only certain colors. We simply desire to have a proper Christian life...

More than forty years ago, when I was in Shanghai, a group of young missionaries went to China with the China Inland Mission, many of whom were sisters. Certain older sisters who had been in Shanghai for a while had learned what a Western missionary needed to do to convince the conservative Chinese people. The newer, younger sisters, however, arrived from England wearing their skirts only a little below the knee. In those days that was considered a very modern style, and some even considered it to be sinful. There was a certain older sister who loved the Lord and had been working in China for many years. She realized that all these young British missionaries with short skirts could never

be fruitful. The stubborn, conservative Chinese people would say, "What is this? You are immoral. Why should we listen to you?" However, she dared not say anything to them. Instead, she served tea to them every afternoon. Then while the young sisters sat around her, enjoying their tea, she would adjust her own longer skirt. The young sisters watched her do this, and then they looked at their own bare legs. This caused them to be bothered within. Since all those young missionaries loved the Lord, they were convinced. The Lord touched them, and they dealt with Him about their dress. If they had not done this, they may not have had the peace to pray. If they had said, "Lord, save the Chinese people," the Lord might have said, "Let Me save you first. Then I will answer your prayer for China." This was not simply a matter of an outward change; it was an inward touching by the Lord. In this way their preaching of the gospel to the Chinese people became a living, not merely a work.

To make our preaching a work is poor. We are not carrying out a job in our preaching; we are living a life. Therefore, if anything hinders us in our fellowship with the Lord, we should say, "Lord, prune this. I give You the freedom to cut it." This is what is meant by the Lord's word, "Every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it that it may bear more fruit." In the Lord's recovery we do not practice to have regulations. According to my own conscience, I could not smoke a cigarette and then partake of the Lord's table. However, we have never passed a regulation against smoking. We do not believe in regulations, but neither do we believe that those who smoke are able to have the best remembrance of the Lord at His table. Likewise, we cannot believe that those who love shopping can have the overflow of the inner life to bring forth fruit. Therefore, we do not wish to encourage, charge, or stir up anyone to have a mere gospel preaching work. Instead, what we need in the Lord's recovery is for many dear saints who love the Lord and mean business with Him to constantly be one with Him. We should pray, "Lord, I am one with You in my shopping. Whatever You do not want to buy, I also do not want to buy it. If You want to buy something, I will buy it only because You are buying

it.” We may also say, “Lord, I do not care for short hair, long hair, a beard, or no beard. I care only for You and for what You want. In my whole life, as one saved by You and under Your transformation, I like nothing and I dislike nothing. I have no love for anything else. My love is only for You. I want You to prune everything that is not Yourself.” If we always remain in this condition, we will be the pruned branches.

A pruned branch always has fresh, new, tender shoots that bring forth fruit. Those who keep vineyards know that the branches of the vines bring forth fruit only at the fresh shoots. We all need to have “fresh shoots.” If the sisters who love to have many pairs of shoes would say, “Lord, prune me in this matter,” and they allow the Lord to do it, they will have a new “shoot” full of freshness, newness, and tenderness, and a good cluster of grapes will be brought forth. There is no need to say that we must deal with sinful matters. In the Lord’s recovery we all hate anything sinful. However, there are many other items which are not sinful that we still hold on to. These matters deaden us even though we still endeavor to preach the gospel and bring people to the Lord. The Lord will not honor this kind of endeavoring very much. This is why we all need to go to the Lord, not to will or to make up our mind but to have a thorough dealing. We must lay ourselves on the altar and say, “Lord, strip off my covering, cut me, and shine upon me. Expose me, and show me the true situation with my likes and dislikes.” Then if we go along with the Lord’s exposing and enlightening, and we have a thorough dealing with Him, we will be fruitful. (CWWL, 1973-1974, vol. 2, “The Normal Way of Fruit-bearing and Shepherding for the Building Up of the Church,” ch. 5, pp. 569-574)

BEARING FRUIT BY THE OUTFLOW AND IMPARTATION OF LIFE

In previous chapters we saw the relationship between the two matters of life and building. In this chapter we will see a third matter that is related to life and building—fruit-bearing. We all know that fruit-bearing requires the growth in life and is an issue of the growth in life. This is easy to understand. A branch of a tree cannot bear fruit without

growing. However, it is easy to neglect another matter that is vital and necessary for fruit-bearing—building. We need to realize that fruit-bearing depends on both the growth in life and the building, that is, the proper relatedness between the saints. We have seen that we need the growth in life in order to be built up together. Now we must see that in order to bear fruit, we need both the growth in life and the building. Moreover, the genuine building depends on fruit-bearing. On the one hand, fruit-bearing depends on the building; on the other hand, the building depends on fruit-bearing...

FRUIT-BEARING REQUIRING US TO ABIDE IN THE LORD AND BE BUILT UP WITH OTHERS

Fruit-bearing depends on two kinds of fellowship. The first kind of fellowship necessary for fruit-bearing is our abiding in the vine, that is, our fellowship with Christ (vv. 4-5). The second kind is our loving the other branches, that is, our fellowship with other believers (v. 12; 13:35). The vine tree in John 15 is not a tree with only one branch; rather, this tree has many branches. Therefore, we should consider ourselves not as the unique branch but as only one of many branches.

If we examine a tree, we will see that some of the branches are joined directly to the tree trunk. We may say that these branches have a direct relationship with the tree. On the other hand, many other branches are not directly joined to the trunk of the tree; rather they are joined to another branch, showing that there is a fellowship between the branches. This illustrates the point that we, the branches of the Lord as the vine, must maintain a proper fellowship with the Lord and simultaneously keep a proper fellowship with all our fellow believers. It is impossible to be right with the tree yet wrong with one of the branches. Our being wrong with any of the believers is a strong proof that we are wrong with the Lord.

To be cut off from the vine in John 15:6 is not to lose our salvation but to be cut off from the fellowship of life. When we are cut off from the fellowship, we lose the supply of life and become withered. According to our experience, whenever

there is something wrong in our relationship or fellowship with the saints, we have the sense of being withered. Instead of being watered, we have a sense of dryness. In contrast, when we are bearing fruit, this proves that we are right with the Lord and right with the members of His Body.

When we are abiding in the Lord and our fellowship with Him is proper, we grow in life, and by this growth we are able to bear fruit. However, our fruit-bearing is limited by the extent to which we are built up with others. If we have some growth in life but are not built up with others, it will be impossible for us to bear fruit. In order to bear fruit, we need to be built up with others. (CWWL, 1966, vol. 1, “Fellowship on Life, Building, and Fruit-bearing,” ch. 4, pp. 255-257)

[W]e need to get some companions, at least two or three, with whom we can labor in the gospel. We should never work by ourselves. Instead, we should work by fellowshipping with our companions. The trouble is that we do not like to have fellowship with others. We are self-contented, and some of us may think that we are omnipotent and all-capable. But according to my over sixty years of experience, none of us is omnipotent. Each of us is very limited in his capacity and ability. You need the help, and I need the help. My helpers in the work know how much I need them. I purposely fellowship with them and ask them questions in order that I may learn. I want to be taught by them. If there is no fellowship among us in our work, there cannot be the real one accord. We need to labor in oneness through thorough fellowship. Because of our unwillingness to have thorough fellowship, we are dead, lukewarm, and barren. We must get some companions and open up ourselves to fellowship with them to the uttermost. (CWWL, 1993, vol. 2, “The Training and the Practice of the Vital Groups,” ch. 2, p. 280)

References and Further Reading:

1. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1973-1974*, vol. 2, “The Normal Way of Fruit-bearing and Shepherding for the Building Up of the Church,” chs. 4-5.

BY BEING PRUNED BY THE FATHER AND BY BEING BUILT-UP

2. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1966*, vol. 1, “Fellowship on Life, Building, and Fruit-bearing,” chs. 4-5.
3. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1993*, vol. 2, “The Training and the Practice of the Vital Groups,” ch. 2.
4. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1991-1992*, vol. 3, “Fellowship Concerning the Urgent Need of the Vital Groups,” chs. 7, 10, 12, 22-23, 25.
5. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1989*, vol. 3, “The Exercise and Practice of the God-ordained Way,” ch. 25.

Message 4
Bearing Fruit
by Having a Normal Living of the Gospel

Scripture Reading: John 2:23—3:6, 16; 4:3-38; 15:4-5, 11; 2 Tim. 4:2

I. With the Lord Jesus there was no difference between His life, His work, and His move—Mark. 1:14-45:

- A. The Lord's work was His living, and His move was His being—vv. 14-45.
- B. We cannot say how much the Lord Jesus worked; He worked everywhere and all the time because His work was His life, His life was His move, and His move was His work.
- C. “The overflow of life is work, / The work should be our living! / What we experience e'er should be / The message we are giving. / When living and the work are one, / The work will be effectual; / When message and the life are one, / The word will be successful”—*Hymns*, #910, stanza 1.

II. We need to learn the example of the Lord Jesus in preaching the gospel in a spontaneous way:

- A. The Lord Jesus spoke to Nicodemus not about miracles but about regeneration in life—John 3:3-16:
 1. Although the Lord Jesus performed many miracles, He did not entrust Himself to those who were interested only in miracles—2:23-25.
 2. He did, however, give His time to Nicodemus; because Nicodemus was not for miracles, Jesus could speak to him about regeneration, a matter of life—3:2-3.
 3. The principle is the same today; the Lord is willing to spend time even late at night to speak to only one person about life.
- B. Jesus spoke to the woman at the well about drinking the living water—John 4:3-26:

1. This example and that of Nicodemus show that it is worthwhile to spend time to talk to just one person.
2. When Jesus asked her for water, saying, “Give Me something to drink,” she rebuked Him, saying, “How is it that You, being a Jew, ask for a drink from me, who am a Samaritan woman?”—vv. 7, 9.
3. To say “give Me something to drink” does not seem like a gospel message, but one sentence later the Lord Jesus was able to turn to the gospel, saying, “If you knew the gift of God and who it is who says to you, Give Me a drink, you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water”—v. 10.
4. The Lord Jesus preached the gospel in a very spontaneous way; immediately, that woman was inspired—v. 15.
5. Since the Lord Jesus was wise, He did not preach concerning her sin; rather, when she asked for the living water, He said to her, “Go, call your husband and come here”—vv. 16-17a.
6. The Lord helped the Samaritan woman to agree with Him, confess her sins, and repent; she may have said, “You are right. I have had five husbands, and the one I now have is not mine. This is my history, my life, and my living. What is it that I need?”
7. What she needed was to exercise her spirit to contact God the Spirit; if she would do this, she would receive the living water—v. 24.

C. We need to learn of the Lord Jesus how to contact people:

1. The Lord’s way of speaking was a marvelous preaching; He performed no miracle, used no eloquence, and exercised no special skill in preaching; rather, He spoke with the Samaritan woman in a simple way; we must

all learn to speak in this way.

2. The Lord spoke in a normal way with the abundance of life; while He spoke with that woman, He was shining over her, radiating His element into her; because of this, she left her waterpot—v. 28.

III. We need to take the Lord as our example to live the life of the gospel:

- A. We must all be burdened to go to the Lord and be built up in this kind of life.
- B. The proper, normal gospel is that which the Lord Jesus carried out; He reaped not in large numbers but one by one; He simply lived the life of the gospel; wherever He went, the gospel was His living.
- C. We should take the Lord Jesus as our example to be interested in imparting life and in helping others to be reborn and to drink the living water; this is the normal, daily preaching according to life.
- D. Wherever we are, the gospel is with us, because it is our life; without the living of the gospel, the church life is empty.

IV. We need to proclaim the word, being ready in season and out of season—2 Tim. 4:2:

- A. “In season” is when we have the opportunity, and “out of season” is when we do not have an opportunity—v. 2.
- B. Whether or not we have the opportunity, we need to be ready; to “be ready,” that is, urgent, attentive, and on the alert.
- C. We need to be “instant” preachers, ready without need of further preparation; we should be ready at any time and in any place.
- D. We should not say that this is not the right place, the right time, or the right person for the gospel; every place is the right place, every time is the right time, and every person is the right person.

V. We should not expect a great revival but bear fruit in a normal way:

- A. The Lord's daily living was His gospel preaching; because He was living in this way, God sent the right people to Him, and He brought people to God.
- B. If we would all live in this way, God will send His chosen ones to us; then every year we will reap fruit.
- C. By living this way and being such persons, we will constantly enjoy the Lord's presence, supply, and all the riches of the life of Christ—Matt. 28:19-20; John 15:5.
- D. We will have much to minister to the saints and much with which to function; this will enrich and uplift our meetings, and it will make us living and joyful; to bear fruit in this way is the normal living of the church life—v. 11.

VI. We can keep gospel tracts handy and pass them out at every opportunity:

- A. Gospel tracts are not limited by time or space, for they can be distributed everywhere, and they are a very convenient means of helping people to be saved.
- B. “The printed page never flinches, never shows cowardice; it is never tempted to compromise; it never tires; never grows disheartened; it travels cheaply, and requires no hired hall; it works while we sleep; it never loses its temper; and it works long after we are dead...The printed page is deathless: you can destroy one, but the press can produce millions: as often as it is martyred, it is raised: the ripple started by a given tract can widen down the centuries until it beats upon the great White Throne”—D.M. Panton.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

THE EXAMPLE OF THE LORD JESUS IN PREACHING THE GOSPEL IN A SPONTANEOUS WAY Speaking to Nicodemus Not about Miracles but about Regeneration in Life

In John 2:1-11 Jesus performed a genuine miracle in changing water into wine. Following this, though, verses 23 through 3:3 say, “Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed into His name when they saw the signs which He did. But Jesus Himself did not entrust Himself to them, for He knew all men, and because He did not need anyone to testify concerning man, for He Himself knew what was in man. But there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This one came to Him by night and said to Him, Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher, for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him. Jesus answered and said to him, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Although the Lord Jesus performed many miracles, He did not entrust Himself to those who were interested only in miracles. He did, however, give His time to Nicodemus. Because Nicodemus was not for miracles, Jesus could speak to him about regeneration, a matter of life. The principle is the same today. The Lord is willing to spend time even late at night to speak to only one person, not about miracles and revival but about life.

Speaking to the Woman at the Well about Drinking the Living Water

Verses 3 and 4 of chapter 4 say, “He left Judea and went away again into Galilee. And He had to pass through Samaria.” Jesus had to pass this way because of one person who was chosen and predestinated by God. This example and that of Nicodemus show that it is worthwhile to spend time to talk to just one person. It was not convenient for the Lord to pass through that city in Samaria. Nevertheless, Jesus “had to pass” that way because the Samaritan woman had

been chosen by God the Father in eternity past, and it was time for the Lord Jesus to come to her. This woman believed in Jesus, not by seeing His miracles but according to the proper way of life.

Jesus was able to come to her in a wise way. If we could have been there at that time, we would have observed a thirsty Savior and a thirsty sinner. The sinner was thirsty, and so was the Savior. When the Savior asked the sinner for water, saying, “Give Me something to drink,” she rebuked Him, saying, “How is it that You, being a Jew, ask for a drink from me, who am a Samaritan woman?” (vv. 7, 9). To say “give Me something to drink” does not seem like a gospel message, but one sentence later the Lord Jesus was able to turn to the gospel, saying, “If you knew the gift of God and who it is who says to you, Give Me a drink, you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water” (v. 10). The Lord Jesus preached the gospel not in the way of traditional Christianity but in a very spontaneous way. Immediately, that woman was inspired.

Since the Lord Jesus was wise, He did not preach concerning her sin. Rather, when she asked for the living water, He said to her, “Go, call your husband and come here.” Because this word concerning her husband touched her conscience, she told the Lord a lie by speaking a partial truth: “I do not have a husband” (vv. 16-17a). She did not expect that this Jewish man would know all her secrets. The Lord Jesus was kind to her and did not rebuke her, but He said to her, “You have well said, I do not have a husband, for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband; this you have said truly” (vv. 17b-18). This was truly an unveiling to her. She may have thought, “Who told this man all my secrets? He even knows how many husbands I have had and that the one I now have is not my husband.”

Although she was a simple person, she was clever and turned the problem about husbands to the subject of worshipping God. It is as if she said, “To speak of husbands is not nice. Let us speak concerning spiritual things, such as the right way to worship God.” Nevertheless, no matter how wise and skillful we are, when we are caught by the Lord Jesus, we cannot get away. Regardless of how much we do, we are still in His hand.

She said, “Our fathers worshipped in this mountain, yet you say that in Jerusalem is the place where men must worship” (v. 20). Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship that which you do not know; we worship that which we know, for salvation is of the Jews. But an hour is coming, and it is now, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truthfulness, for the Father also seeks such to worship Him” (vv. 21-23).

This shows that in order to drink the living water we must first make a thorough confession of our sins and then exercise our spirit to worship God. Whenever we come to the Lord, He touches our conscience concerning our past. We can cover the things in the past from the eyes of man, but we can never cover them from God’s observation. Therefore, we need to confess, and if we do not confess, the Lord will confess for us. If we do not say, “Lord, I have had five husbands, and the one I now have is not my husband,” He will be gracious to confess this for us. He may say, “If you are not bold and have too much shame to confess, let Me do it for you.” By doing this, the Lord helped the Samaritan woman to agree with Him, confess her sins, and repent. She may have said, “You are right. I have had five husbands, and the one I now have is not mine. This is my history, my life, and my living. What is it that I need?” What she needed was to exercise her spirit to contact God the Spirit. If she would do this, she would receive the living water.

LEARNING OF THE LORD JESUS HOW TO CONTACT PEOPLE

The Lord’s way of speaking was a marvelous preaching. He performed no miracle, used no eloquence, and exercised no special skill in preaching. Rather, He spoke with her in a simple way. We must all learn to speak in this way. We do not need to attend a seminary to learn doctrinal teachings. We may simply read the Gospels and learn of the Lord Jesus how to contact people. The Lord spoke in a normal way with the abundance of life. While He spoke with that woman, He was shining over her, radiating His element into her. Because

of this, she left her waterpot (v. 28). She forgot about drawing the physical water because she had received the real water. She herself became a “waterpot” to contain the living water. She went away into the city and said to the people, “Come, see a man who told me all that I have done” (v. 29). She also performed no miracle and had no eloquence but was simply a living testimony, testifying to the people.

While she was gone, Jesus’ disciples returned and urged Him to eat. The Lord responded, “I have food to eat that you do not know about” (v. 32). This means that the Savior was the living water to the thirsty sinner, and the sinner satisfied the hungry and thirsty Savior. The Samaritan woman drank of Jesus, and Jesus was fed by her. After speaking with one another, they became a mutual satisfaction to each other.

The proper gospel preaching is not a matter of revival or Pentecostal miracles. Rather, it is something normal. The Lord set up an example in John 3 by speaking at night to one man and in chapter 4 by caring for one immoral woman. This was Jesus’ proper preaching of the gospel. Many today are more spiritual than the Lord Jesus was. These two chapters of John do not speak about praying, but many today tell us that we must first pray and fast for a revival to suddenly come. The Lord Jesus did not do this. It is true that Acts mentions the prayer of the church, but as we have pointed out, Acts is a book of beginnings, not of completion. John, on the contrary, is the final book among the Gospels. A final word means more than a beginning word, and in the Bible the final word is not in the first books but in the last books, such as John. According to the Gospel of John, the final word is that the Lord has no confidence in miracles. His interest is in life, regeneration, and the living water. In John 3 and 4 there are no miracles, but there are strength, power, and the riches of the inner life. We must all be impressed by the Lord as the example of the proper preaching of the gospel and not of performing miracles. In chapter 2 He performed a miracle, but He would not entrust Himself to those who were interested in miracles. After this, He immediately set forth the example of how to minister life to others by opening the

door to a high-class man to be regenerated with the divine, eternal life and by helping a low-class woman to drink the living water. These are the Lord's examples for us. Today we should all take care of the gospel in such a way...

TAKING THE LORD JESUS AS OUR EXAMPLE TO LIVE THE LIFE OF THE GOSPEL

We must all be burdened to go to the Lord and be built up in this kind of life. We do not need to pray and fast for a revival. Rather, we all need to see what the proper, normal gospel is. It is that which the Lord Jesus carried out. He spent time to gain one man and spent some more time to gain one woman. He reaped not in large numbers but one by one. Moreover, He did not promote His preaching of the gospel and ask people to pray for a special activity. Rather, He simply lived the life of the gospel. Wherever He went, the gospel was His living. May we have the genuine recovery of the preaching of the gospel in the proper church life. After reading church history, I have no confidence in so-called "revivals." We should take the Lord Jesus as our example to be interested in imparting life and in helping others to be reborn and to drink the living water. This is the normal, daily preaching according to life, not according to miracles. This is what we need.

The Lord Jesus sovereignly and wisely used the illustration of a harvest to portray the proper preaching of the gospel. A harvest cannot be prepared overnight. A harvest comes about through tilling the ground, sowing, watering, and caring for the crop for a certain amount of time. First, the ground should be tilled and the seed sown. After this, it should be watered and cared for, and finally the harvest will come. This is a matter not of miracles but of a process in life. It is not right to expect a great revival that suddenly brings in a thousand people. We should awake from this kind of dream, realize what the proper gospel life is, and live it out in the church. Wherever we are, the gospel is with us, because it is our life. Without the living of the gospel, the church life is empty. We must all learn the example of the Lord Jesus.

**PROCLAIMING THE WORD,
BEING READY IN SEASON AND OUT OF SEASON**

Paul told Timothy, “Proclaim the word; be ready in season and out of season; convict, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and teaching” (2 Tim. 4:2). We should not say that it is winter and that we need to wait for spring to sow the seed. Rather, we are peculiar farmers; to us every day is for sowing the seed and for reaping the harvest. “In season” is when we have the opportunity, and “out of season” is when we do not have an opportunity. Whether or not we have the opportunity, we need to be ready. To “be ready” means being urgent, attentive, and on the alert. We can compare this kind of readiness to instant tea or coffee. Whenever we need some tea or coffee, it can be ready instantly. We need to be “instant” preachers, ready without need of further preparation. We should be ready at any time and in any place. We are ready at the supermarket, the bus station, the office, and the classroom. We must not say that we are not ready or that there are no opportunities. Every occasion—spring, summer, fall, and winter—is the time for us to be ready. This is not the religious way of preaching. This is the proper Christian living. There is no other way to take. We need to have this kind of gospel living. We should not say that this is not the right place, the right time, or the right person for the gospel. Every place is the right place, every time is the right time, and every person is the right person. We must be instant, ready, urgent, and attentive in season and out of season.

**NOT EXPECTING A GREAT REVIVAL
BUT BEARING FRUIT IN A NORMAL WAY**

In the two Epistles to Timothy there are no miracles. If we have miracles, then we do not need to be ready in season and out of season. We can simply pray for three nights, and something will come down from heaven. However, the gospel is not that way. Many Christians have prayed in a superstitious way, expecting a great revival to come, but the result has been poor. If, on the contrary, Christians will have a normal living of the gospel, it will be sufficient for each one to bring only one person to the Lord each year. Then within

twenty-five years the whole world will be evangelized. Even in our own locality, if we all bear one fruit in a year, our numbers will double until the whole city will be evangelized. This is much greater than the biggest revival.

The subtlety of the enemy causes us to be too farsighted, looking to the future while neglecting the present. We do not need to look to tomorrow, and there is no need to pray for three years for a great revival to come. We should simply live for today and take care of one "Nicodemus." Many of us have been in Christianity for many years, and until today we are still under the influence of its traditional concepts, understanding, and teaching. We must be rid of all these concepts. We should care only for today, not for tomorrow. Perhaps this evening we will meet one of our relatives. Then we should spend some time to take care of him. This is a normal, daily gospel living, not a movement or special activity. The Lord Jesus went to Samaria in a very normal way and waited at Jacob's well for someone to draw water. Then He asked her for water, not in the way of preaching or of a movement but as part of His normal daily living. This daily living was His gospel preaching. Because He was living in this way, God sent the right people to Him, and He brought people to God. If we would all live in this way, God will send His chosen ones to us. Then every year we will reap fruit. However, because we have been influenced by the wrong concept, we have not borne fruit in a normal way. Our time has been wasted in vain expectations, and we have not lived out our duty. If we have the proper living, day by day and one by one people will be brought to the Lord and into the church life. This is the proper preaching of the gospel.

FEEDING THE LORD'S LAMBS ACCORDING TO THE NORMAL PROCESS OF LIFE

John 4 speaks concerning reaping the harvest, John 15 concerning bearing fruit, and John 21 concerning feeding the lambs (vv. 15-17). No one can feed a lamb once for all in a miraculous way. If we try to do this, we will kill the lambs. Rather, we need to feed them daily, several times a day, just as mothers feed their children meal after meal. We need to

turn from the miraculous concept to the life concept. The Gospel of John is a book on life. Reaping a harvest, bearing fruit, and feeding lambs are all processes of life. These are all related to a daily living in the way of life, not a mere work, activity, or movement in a miraculous, religious way. If we receive the Lord's mercy and enjoy His grace, we will all be built up in this life, and we will bear fruit and even double each year in a normal way. Then in less than ten years the entire city we live in can be converted. This instant and constant way is solid, rich, and prevailing. This must be our living day and night. By living this way and being such persons, we will constantly enjoy the Lord's presence, supply, and all the riches of the life of Christ. We will have much to minister to the saints and much with which to function. This will enrich and uplift our meetings, and it will make us living and joyful.

A family that has only the older generation with no children is not a joyful one. There is no doubt that to care for children is a bother. Because my grandchildren are much trouble, they can stay with me for only short periods of time. Nevertheless, I love them all. How poor it would be if at my age I had no children or grandchildren! My highest joy, however, is all the dear saints. We are a big family with all ages. Even a few new ones added to the church will make the meetings new, fresh, uplifted, and enriched. If the "older generation" of saints are the only ones who meet all year round, we will all be disappointed, but if every Lord's Day we have several new ones, our spirit will be uplifted. To bear fruit in this way is the normal living of the church life. We must all be built up in the living of the gospel. (*CWWL, 1973-1974, vol. 2, "The Normal Way of Fruit-bearing and Shepherding for the Building Up of the Church," ch. 6, pp. 579-589*)

References and Further Reading:

1. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1973-1974*, vol. 2, "The Normal Way of Fruit-bearing and Shepherding for the Building Up of the Church," ch. 6.
2. *Life-Study of Mark*, msg. 56.

Message 5

Bearing Fruit by Starting from Our “Jerusalem,” Making a List, and Praying for People

Scripture Reading: Acts 1:8; Luke 5:27-29; John 15:16;
1 Tim. 2:1, 4; 1 Cor. 15:58

I. In Acts 1:8 the Lord Jesus said to His disciples, “You shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth”:

- A. Here *Jerusalem* may refer to our close relatives; *all Judea*, our distant relatives; *Samaria*, our neighbors; and *the uttermost part of the earth*, our friends.
- B. To be the Lord’s witnesses in this context is to preach the gospel from the center through the middle to the circumference.

II. In preaching the gospel, we should keep the principle of beginning from our center, our “Jerusalem”—v. 8; *Hymns*, #922, stanzas 2-4:

- A. Our Jerusalem is our family and our relatives; every one of us has our close relatives, distant relatives, colleagues, schoolmates, friends, and neighbors.
- B. These are people who are more intimate and acquainted with us; actually, when we go out to preach the gospel, there is no need to knock on new doors; it is enough to just knock on familiar doors.
 1. It is not the best thing to knock on “cold” doors, the doors of people we do not know.
 2. We must find a way to get “warm” doors, doors of people whom we know or who have been recommended to us by others.
- C. Our acquaintances—our family members, close relatives, distant relatives, friends, neighbors, colleagues, and schoolmates are more than enough persons to whom we can go to preach the gospel—

John 1:40-48.

D. When we save one person or one family, that person or that family in turn has his or their acquaintances; then the gospel can spread out little by little—Luke 5:27-29.

III. In order to contact people with the gospel to bear remaining fruit we first need to make a list of the names:

A. We need to ask the Lord to remind us of the people whom we know, including our relatives, neighbors, classmates, friends, and colleagues:

1. Actually, it is profitable to make a list of all these names in a little notebook and classify them according to our relationship with them.
2. Before writing down the names, we may feel that we do not know many people; however, once we make a list of names, we will realize that we know many people.

B. After we have composed a list of all the names of our contacts, we need to look through the list and consider whether each contact has received salvation:

1. If we have the assurance that a contact is saved, we can place a mark next to the name to indicate that we do not need to preach the gospel to such a contact.
2. However, if we have no assurance that a contact is truly saved, we need to leave that name on the list as one on whom we need to labor.

IV. After making a list of names, we need to pray for all the names on our list:

A. We need to pray and seek the Lord’s mind concerning the names on our list as to whether, when, and how we should contact them.

B. If we take the way of spending some time to make a list of the names of all the people whom we know, we may discover that they have at least forty names:

1. Then, as we pray for each name, the Holy Spirit will burden us for certain persons; we may begin with forty or more names, but when they pray for these persons, the Holy Spirit will burden us for two or three at a certain time.
2. Then we need to pray, “Lord, among these, who are the ones that I should take first as my candidates for Your gospel?” The Lord will lead us.

C. We may pray, “Lord, how can I help all these people? Should I write them letters, send them tracts or booklets, invite them to my home for a meal, visit them in their homes, or call them on the phone?”

D. According to the New Testament principle, not one person is saved directly; a person is saved through someone else or through someone else’s prayer for him:

1. God may have chosen your cousin and decided to save him; but if you do not pray for him, no one will pray for him; thus, God will have no way unless you pray.
2. Your prayer will pave the way and lay the tracks on which God’s “train” can move.
3. Prayer means a lot, so we have to pray for about two months; then we will go out.
4. Every day we must spend some time to get ourselves equipped, qualified, and prepared to do our duty in gaining sinners for the increase of the church.

E. We need to tell the Lord that we would like to have a new beginning so that we may bear two or three new believers as fruit every year in order to please Him—cf. 2 Cor.5:9:

1. We should spend at least half an hour every week to pray for our acquaintances, including our relatives, neighbors, friends, classmates, and colleagues—1 Tim. 2:1.

2. As we pray for them, we will receive a burden from the Lord concerning whom we should contact; then we should coordinate with other saints to visit them.
- F. This kind of selection and prayer for those whom we select will give us the impact with them.

V. If we pray in a proper way, especially for our acquaintances, we will have the deep sense that the Lord is sending us to contact them in order to bear them as fruit:

- A. The more we pray to the Lord, the more deeply we are grafted into Him—John 15:16, footnote 1.
- B. The result of being set, grafted, into the Lord is that we are sent to others; the Lord grafted us into Himself so that we would go forth and bear fruit and that our fruit would remain—v. 16.

VI. We need to consider two or three in a particular way for the Lord’s guidance in contacting them:

- A. As we pray for the people on our list, we need to pray that the Lord will guide us to consider two or three in a particular way to care for at that time.
- B. Then we need to take care of these two or three by praying much for them and doing whatever we can according to the Lord’s leading to contact them.
- C. After the first two or three have been brought to the Lord, we need to look to the Lord again to focus on another two or three and continue in the same way to labor on them.
- D. As we continue to labor in this way and pray, the Holy Spirit may burden us for some others continually; when we are burdened for two or three, we must find a way to contact them either by a phone call, a personal visit, inviting them to our home, or sending them some literature.
- E. Presently, all those whom we choose as our candidates may not be available; but after three years they all will be available due to our prayer; we do not know when the Lord will fulfill our

prayer; we should just labor.

F. The apostle Paul promised us that our labor in Christ is not in vain (1 Cor. 15:58); we must believe that every minute we spend for laboring in the Lord's service is recorded by the Lord.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

**LEARNING TO VISIT PEOPLE WITH THE GOSPEL
IN A PROPER WAY**

In Acts 1:8 the Lord Jesus said to His disciples, “You shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” Here *Jerusalem* may refer to our close relatives; *all Judea*, our distant relatives; *Samaria*, our neighbors; and *the uttermost part of the earth*, our friends. To be the Lord’s witnesses in this context is to preach the gospel from the center through the middle to the circumference. We should endeavor to contact first our relatives and then our neighbors and friends.

Before we go out to preach the gospel, we need to consider before the Lord whom to visit. We should make a list of our acquaintances, including our relatives, neighbors, colleagues, and friends, and we should spend adequate time to study their situation and pray for them. In principle, it is more profitable to visit those whom we know than to visit those whom we do not know, and it is better to visit our acquaintances with a few saints than to visit them by ourselves. (*CWWL, 1990*, vol. 1, “Bearing Remaining Fruit for the Lord’s Pleasure,” ch. 3, p. 97)

**BEGINNING THE PREACHING FROM OUR
“JERUSALEM”**

In preaching the gospel, we should keep the principle of beginning from our center, our “Jerusalem.” Our Jerusalem is our family and our relatives. Every one of us has our close relatives, distant relatives, colleagues, schoolmates, friends, and neighbors. These are people who are more intimate and acquainted with us. Many of them are not yet saved but

may not even have heard the name of Jesus. Actually, when we go out to preach the gospel, there is no need to knock on new doors; it is enough to just knock on familiar doors. Our acquaintances-our family members, close relatives, distant relatives, friends, neighbors, colleagues, and schoolmates are more than enough persons to whom we can go to preach the gospel. When we save one person or one family, that person or that family in turn has his or their acquaintances; then the gospel can spread out little by little. Whoever is saved through us will be also perfected to be like us. Those who are saved through us will go and save others by the same way they were saved. This is the proper way for us to preach the gospel. If we are willing to be faithful to this practice, we will surely bear fruit.

After hearing these messages, every one of us should get a notebook and write in a list the names of all the candidates for our gospel. Then we should pray for them before the Lord one by one and look to the Lord’s leading to go and preach the gospel to them. If we all are willing to do this, it is not difficult; to be sure, we can have one person saved in three to four months. This requires us to knock on these doors, not of strangers but of our close or distant relatives, our older or younger schoolmates, our neighbors, our friends, and our colleagues. These doors are more than enough for us to knock on. (CWWL, 1989, vol. 2, “The Church Life in the Lord’s Recovery Today,” ch. 2, pp. 283-285)

CONTACTING PEOPLE WITH THE GOSPEL TO BEAR REMAINING FRUIT

Making a List of Names

According to my observation and experience, the best way to contact people with the gospel and to bear remaining fruit is to regulate yourself. Generally speaking, only those who are regulated can bear the best fruit. We should begin to prepare for the gospel by making a list of the names of all the people whom we know, including our relatives, neighbors, classmates, friends, and colleagues. Although we may think that we do not know many people, if we make a list of names

of the people whom we know, we will discover that we know a good number of people.

Praying for the Names on Our List

After making a list of names, we need to pray for all the names on our list. We may pray, "Lord, how can I help all these people? Should I write them letters, send them tracts or booklets, invite them to my home for a meal, visit them in their homes, or call them on the phone?" We need to pray and seek the Lord's mind concerning the names on our list as to whether, when, and how we should contact them.

Considering Two or Three in a Particular Way for the Lord's Guidance in Contacting Them

As we pray for the people on our list, we need to pray that the Lord will guide us to consider two or three in a particular way to care for at that time. Then we need to take care of these two or three by praying much for them and doing whatever we can according to the Lord's leading to contact them. We should not expect to carry out a quick work on the ones whom the Lord leads us to care for. If they can be saved and gained by the Lord within a period of half a year to a year, this will not be too slow. After the first two or three have been brought to the Lord, we need to look to the Lord again to focus on another two or three and continue in the same way to labor on them.

Laboring Together with Others

Sometimes we may need other brothers or sisters to help us care for our gospel contacts. We may visit our contacts with one or two other brothers or sisters, or we may invite some brothers and sisters along with our contacts to our home for a meal. In this way we will cooperate together with the saints to bear fruit, and our fruit-bearing will be much easier.

Caring First for the People Whom We Know

Some may ask whether we should go to the parks, the streets, and the beaches to proclaim the gospel to others. In the matter of bearing fruit, proclaiming the gospel to people whom we do not know is good, but it is secondary.

START FROM OUR “JERUSALEM”, MAKE A LIST, AND PRAY

The primary matter in preaching the gospel is first to care for the people whom we know. If we have more time, or the church makes a decision to have a corporate time for gospel preaching, we should go along with the church to carry out this kind of preaching. However, under normal, regular, and ordinary circumstances, the best way to bear fruit is to care for the people whom we know and work on them in the way of making a list, praying, selecting two or three to care for according to the Lord’s leading, and visiting or inviting them to meet together with the saints. I want to encourage the young brothers and sisters who are students to practice this way of fruit-bearing for a period of time. If they are not sloppy or loose, I have the assurance that there will be a positive outcome. (*CWWL, 1971, vol. 3, “Gaining People and Building Them Up for the Body of Christ,” ch. 6, pp. 139-140*)

SPENDING TIME WITH THE LORD CONCERNING THE GOSPEL AND MAKING A LIST OF THE NAMES OF OUR CONTACTS

First, we need to spend some time with the Lord concerning our preaching of the gospel. We need to ask the Lord to remind us of the people whom we know, including our relatives, neighbors, classmates, friends, and colleagues. Actually, it is profitable to make a list of all these names in a little notebook and classify them according to our relationship with them. Before writing down the names, we may feel that we do not know many people. However, once we make a list of names, we will realize that we know many people.

IDENTIFYING THOSE ON OUR LIST WHO ARE SAVED

Second, after we have composed a list of all the names of our contacts, we need to look through the list and consider whether each contact has received salvation. If we have the assurance that a contact is saved, we can place a mark next to the name to indicate that we do not need to preach the gospel to such a contact. However, if we have no assurance that a contact is truly saved, we need to leave that name on the list as one on whom we need to labor. If a contact is a Christian only in name, we should consider him an unbeliever, because

he is not saved. We need to go through our list to identify those who are saved among the people whom we know.

LABORING IN PRAYER OVER THE NAMES ON OUR LIST

Third, we need to labor in prayer concerning every name on our list. I believe that many of us have this kind of experience: Even in the smallest tasks, such as cleaning a room, until we spend the time to clean the room, we may consider that it does not require much work. However, when we begin to do the cleaning, we discover how much work is involved. Initially, we may have considered that the cleaning would take only ten minutes. Eventually, an hour later, we may still be cleaning because the more we cleaned, the more we discovered things that were in need of cleaning. If we pray for the names on our list, we will discover that each name requires much labor.

CONTACTING THE PERSONS FOR WHOM THE LORD BURDENS US IN OUR PRAYER

In the past some saints said to me that they had no one to whom they could preach the gospel. However, if they take the way of spending some time to make a list of the names of all the people whom they know, they may discover that they have at least forty names. Then, as they pray for each name, the Holy Spirit will burden them for certain persons. They may begin with forty or more names, but when they pray for these persons, the Holy Spirit will burden them for two or three at a certain time. However, this does not mean that they need to work only on these two or three; it is only a beginning. As they continue to labor in this way and pray, the Holy Spirit may burden them for some others continually. When they are burdened for two or three, they must find a way to contact them either by a phone call, a personal visit, inviting them to their home, or sending them some literature. This kind of contact is for gospel preaching. If they do this work, they will discover many things that need to be done. (CWWL, 1977, vol. 1, "Fellowship and Questions concerning the Gospel, ch. 4, pp. 101-103)

GAINING THE CANDIDATES FOR OUR GOSPEL PREACHING

We need to begin to pray to gain the candidates for our gospel preaching. We need to make a list of our close relatives and acquaintances. Then we need to pray, “Lord, among these, who are the ones that I should take first as my candidates for Your gospel?” The Lord will lead us. We should not take more than five people on our list as our initial candidates for the Lord to gain. It may be that out of these five, three would not be available. Regardless, we have to learn how to prepare ourselves and how to prepare our candidates, the objects of our work. We need to pray for them for about two months. Then we can go out to contact them.

This kind of selection and prayer for those whom we select will give us the impact with them. It is not the best thing to knock on “cold” doors, the doors of people we do not know. We must find a way to get “warm” doors, doors of people whom we know or who have been recommended to us by others.

We need to realize that what comes out of our labor can be counted rightly only in the future. Presently, all five whom we choose as our candidates may not be available. But after three years they all will be available due to our prayer. We do not know when the Lord will fulfill our prayer. We should just labor. The apostle Paul promised us that our labor in Christ is not in vain (1 Cor. 15:58). I believe that every minute we spend for laboring in the Lord’s service is recorded by the Lord.

According to the New Testament principle, not one person is saved directly. A person is saved through someone else or through someone else’s prayer for him. God may have chosen your cousin and decided to save him. But if you do not pray for him, no one will pray for him. Thus, God will have no way unless you pray. Your prayer will pave the way and lay the tracks on which God’s “train” can move. Prayer means a lot, so we have to pray for about two months. Then we will go out. Every day we must spend some time to get ourselves equipped, qualified, and prepared to do our duty in gaining sinners for the increase of the church. (*CWWL, 1991-1992*, vol. 3, “Fellowship Concerning the Urgent Need of the Vital Groups,” ch. 15, pp. 497-498)

BEING GRAFTED INTO CHRIST AS THE TRUE VINE IN ORDER TO BEAR FRUIT

John 15 is a crucial chapter in the Bible because it reveals that the relationship the believers have with the Lord Jesus is that of branches with the vine. The vine tree with its branches exists for the unique purpose of bearing fruit (vv. 2, 4-5, 8). In verse 16 the Lord said, “You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and I set you that you should go forth and bear fruit and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name, He may give you.” The Lord’s word in this verse implies grafting. To graft a branch into a tree is to set it into the tree. This indicates that the Lord as the Head of the Body set the believers, the members of the Body, by grafting them as branches into Himself so that they may abide in Him in order to go forth and bear fruit (Col. 1:18).

If we pray in a proper way, especially for our acquaintances, we will have the deep sense that the Lord is sending us to contact them in order to bear them as fruit. The more we pray to the Lord, the more deeply we are grafted into Him. The result of being set, grafted, into the Lord is that we are sent to others. The Lord grafted us into Himself so that we would go forth and bear fruit and that our fruit would remain.

I am concerned that although the Lord has revealed to us the scriptural way to meet and serve for the building up of His Body, we may not have had a definite beginning in our practice of this way. This may be due in part to a lack of realization that we as branches of Christ the true vine should go forth and bear fruit. We may seek to be spiritual and holy, yet we may not endeavor to bear fruit. To pray for fruit-bearing involves spiritual warfare against Satan (cf. Eph. 6:10-20). Hence, I often seek to pray with other brothers concerning fruit-bearing in the principle of the Body of Christ. We should pray for the saints to have the realization that they need to bear fruit. If we have not borne fruit for several years, we should have a sense of dissatisfaction and should condemn our barrenness, humble ourselves before the Lord, and ask for forgiveness. We are the branches of Christ as the true vine for the purpose of bearing fruit. We need to bear

fruit because we are indebted to the Lord, to His salvation, and to our acquaintances (Rom. 1:14). It will be a shame if we lack this realization. Just as it is beautiful to see a vine tree bearing clusters of grapes, so also it is glorious to see the saints as branches of the true vine bearing fruit.

**FULFILLING OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO BEAR FRUIT
BY PRAYING FOR OUR ACQUAINTANCES
AND VISITING THEM WITH THE SAINTS**

Through years of experience we have learned that a genuine revival is brought forth not only by the believers' experience of the outpouring of the Spirit but also by the rising up of their inner man to live a life of being revived and overcoming day by day (cf. 2 Cor. 4:16; 1 John 2:13-14; 5:4). If we are truly revived morning by morning, we will realize that we need to fulfill our responsibility to go forth, bear fruit, and labor so that our fruit may remain. Fruit-bearing is a great responsibility, and we should seek to carry out this responsibility day after day. We need to tell the Lord that we would like to have a new beginning so that we may bear two or three new believers as fruit every year in order to please Him (cf. 2 Cor. 5:9). We should spend at least half an hour every week to pray for our acquaintances, including our relatives, neighbors, friends, classmates, and colleagues (1 Tim. 2:1). As we pray for them, we will receive a burden from the Lord concerning whom we should contact. Then we should coordinate with other saints to visit them. (CWWL, 1990, vol. 1, “Bearing Remaining Fruit for the Lord’s Pleasure,” ch. 4, pp. 101-103)

References and Further Reading:

The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1971, vol. 3, “Gaining People and Building Them Up for the Body of Christ,” ch. 6.

The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1977, vol. 1, “Fellowship and Questions concerning the Gospel,” ch. 4.

The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1989, vol. 2, “The Church Life in the Lord’s Recovery Today,” ch. 2,

The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1990, vol. 1, “Bearing Remaining Fruit for the Lord’s Pleasure,” chs. 3-4.

The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1991-1992, vol. 3, “Fellowship Concerning the Urgent Need of the Vital Groups,” ch. 15.

Message 6

Having a Normal Life and Service for Fruit-bearing

Scripture Reading: Rom. 12:1-2; 1:14; 2 Cor. 5:14-15;
Eph. 5:16; John 15:11

I. A normal life is different from the world; it is one of being constrained by the Lord to live to Him and of setting up a schedule of one's daily life—Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 5:14-15:

- A. Those in the world belong to the world are for the world; the believers belong to the Lord and are for the Lord—*Hymns*, #438.
- B. The reason we are different from the others is that we have the love of the Lord in us; we are constrained by the Lord's love to live to Him—2 Cor. 5:14; *Hymns*, #436.
- C. We need to set up a schedule of our daily life, one that is suitable for living to the Lord and serving Him by having a budget in time, energy, and finances.

II. A normal service is one of offering up our bodies and our time—Rom. 12:1; Eph. 5:16:

- A. In order to have the proper service, we must first consecrate our bodies and our time—v. 1; *Hymns*, #445.
- B. If we cannot give our time, our body cannot be presented; practically, we should consecrate our body and our time according to the way of budgeting so we do not owe the Lord—1:14.
- C. Such a normal service is one of preaching the gospel to gain new ones (Matt. 4:19), taking care of the home meetings and perfecting new ones (Acts 5:42), helping the meetings and contacting the saints (Heb. 10:24-25), attending the district meetings to build up the church (1 Cor. 14:26), and building up the Body of Christ (Eph. 4:12, 15-16).

III. We need to take a simple way to bear remaining

fruit:

- A. First, we should make a vow to the Lord to spend two to three hours per week to contact people for their salvation:
 - 1. This does not mean that we have to spend two to three hours at one time in one day.
 - 2. We may spend some time in the morning to consider how to contact and save our unsaved relatives; this time should be considered as part of our two to three hours.
 - 3. We may spend twenty-five minutes to pray and make a record of these relatives.
 - 4. In the evening we may write to one of our relatives to find out how they are doing, opening the door to have further contact with them.
 - 5. If we labored three hours a week in a concentrated way for one year, surely at least one of them would be brought to the Lord.
 - 6. We must be so definite and persistent; if no one will go out with us, we should still go out for the Lord one day a week for two or three hours.
- B. Second, in order to be fruit-bearing branches of Christ, we need to be revived by the Lord, day by day:
 - 1. *The Holy Word for Morning Revival* has been a help to the saints to be revived by the Lord every morning.
 - 2. The most effective way to live the Christian life is by having a vital, living and active morning revival with the Lord—cf. Prov. 4:18, footnote 1; Lam. 3:23 note 1; 24, footnote 1.
 - 3. We should get two verses from the Scripture to live on every day and then contact people for the Lord in a definite way.
- C. Third, we need to practice personally contacting people every week:
 - 1. We should start by ourselves and then get a

companion to labor with us.

2. We need to plan and schedule our time so that you can contact two or three individuals every week.
3. We should pray to the Lord to get a proper candidate for our labor and that He may show us the vital way to bring them to Him:
 - a. Pray that the Lord will lead you, teach you, and give you the wisdom in planning, in scheduling your time, in making appointments, and in talking to people—Eph. 5:15-16.
 - b. We should pray, “Lord, I do not want to contact them in a natural way...Lord show me the vital way, the living way, to bring them to You.”
4. As we go out to contact people one by one, we will find out the proper way from the Lord; we will also find out the proper persons to visit.
5. We should not pray and study by ourself but should study with our group as a unit; after studying together, we should go to contact people; if we take this way, it will be easy to gain the increase; the increase is assured.
6. We must make a budget to be very economical in the way that we spend our time; we need to redeem our time by praying for our acquaintances and relatives, writing them, and sending them booklets and making appointments to go to visit them.

D. Labor to bring one or two to the church life yearly; this should be the goal of our labor.

IV. We need to contact people by ourselves directly, personally, and continually to bear remaining fruit—John 15:5, 16:

- A. The Lord appointed us to go forth and bear remaining fruit (v. 16); we all should desire fruit that remains and make a decision to get one person

saved for the church life each year.

- B. The most basic, crucial, and vital thing is for us to bring forth spiritual children—1 Cor. 4:15; 1 Tim. 1:2; Titus 1:4.
- C. As believers, as members of Christ, and as branches of the vine, we must bear fruit; to not bear fruit is a serious thing before the Lord and will cause us to lose our enjoyment of Christ in the organic union with Him—John 15:2a, 6.
- D. The reason why we do not bear fruit is because we do not practice contacting people directly, personally, and faithfully—cf. John 3—4.
- E. To bring forth spiritual children you must make a serious decision to contact people directly.
- F. We all need to devote more time to contacting people; we can use every lunch for this purpose; we can make an appointment with people to have lunch or dinner with them.

V. For the New Testament priesthood of the gospel, we must redeem the time by budgeting it to make a weekly schedule for the gospel:

- A. To budget our time is to control our time and not to let it go.
- B. Some may feel that it is sufficient simply to be spiritual and that budgeting their time is not necessary; however, if we do not budget our time, we are not spiritual in a proper way.
- C. Ephesians 5:16 says, “Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.”
- D. Following this, Paul charges us to be filled in spirit; we must redeem the time in order to be filled in spirit; to redeem the time is to have a real spirituality.
- E. Every day it is a struggle to redeem our time; if we do not schedule our time, it flees away.
- F. We have no right to say that we have no time to preach the gospel; we must redeem the time.

VI. “These things I have spoken to you that My joy may

**be in you and that your joy may be made full”—
John 15:11:**

- A. Being branches of the divine vine and bearing fruit to express the divine life are matters of joy, and they also issue in a joyful life—v. 11.
- B. Many saints have had the experience of being in ecstasy when they have baptized one into the Triune God; this is because the Lord's joy had become their joy.
- C. To Paul the fruit borne by him was his glory and joy; our joy, our glory, and our crown of boasting is the fruit that we bear—1 Thes. 2:19-20.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

**A NORMAL LIFE
Different from the World**

The subject in this chapter is a normal life and service. Basically speaking, we the Christians are different in our way of life from those in the world. They belong to the world and are for the world. We belong to the Lord and are for the Lord. Every lover of the Lord is, outwardly speaking, somewhat peculiar. Every day we have the Bible in our hands. We often go to the meeting halls. All the time we say Hallelujah and Amen. In the morning we read the Bible. In the evening we read the same Bible. Sometimes we even have to read the Bible before going to bed. I advise those who have insomnia to make all necessary preparations for going to bed. Then when they are ready to go to bed, I advise them to open up the Bible and read for ten minutes. After the reading, there is no need for too long a prayer. They may simply say, “Thank the Lord! Be with me, Lord! Amen.” and then go to sleep. Many times, in this way, they will fall asleep right away. We Christians are uncommon because we belong to the Lord Jesus. We love Him and live for Him.

**Living to the Lord
by the Constraining of His Love**

The reason we are different from the others is that we

have the love of the Lord in us. We are constrained by the Lord's love (2 Cor. 5:14). The word constrain is difficult to translate. Its original meaning is to be pressed on all sides, holding to one end, forcibly limited and confined to one object within certain bounds, being shut up to one line and purpose as in a narrow, walled road. Since the day you first belonged to the Lord, it seems as if the Lord has put two walls at your two sides. These two walls become a narrow lane that compels you to go forward. You cannot turn or take another way. You are compelled to take this way. By our nature we do not want God. We only want ourselves. In our studying and working we are always the center, the goal, and the focus. But after we were saved, His love began to constrain us, and we began to love Him...

The reason the Lord is constraining us this way is to turn us to live to Him (2 Cor. 5:15). The phrase living to Him is difficult to translate. It does not mean to live for the Lord. It means to live unto Him. The meaning of living to the Lord is deeper than to live for Him. To live for Him means that He and we are still two. But to live to Him means that we and the Lord are one. It is like a wife living to her husband in the marriage life. In such a way we live a life of living to the Lord and being one with Him.

Setting Up a Proper Schedule of One's Daily Life

You need to set up a proper schedule for your life. Formerly, you were not living to the Lord, and your way of living was like that of those in the world. But now you are living to the Lord; you should set up a new pattern of life. Speaking first of the small things of life, most people like to sleep a little late in the morning. This is especially true with the young people. But now you have to get up at six-thirty in the morning. The first thing after getting up is to call "O Lord Jesus" and to pray. Speaking next of the more important things of life, most people want to seek after an academic degree and to be famous and glamorous in the world. Now that we love the Lord and live to Him, our way of living is changed. In everything we should still fulfill our duties

properly. We study properly and work properly, without any special coveting. In an ordinary way we should love the Lord and live for Him...

Having a Budget in Time, Energy, and Finances

We should have a budget for our time, our energy, and our finances. When people talk about budgeting, most of them consider only finances. But according to my experience, even our energy has to be budgeted. I know how much strength I have. Every day I can use only a certain amount of strength. Every time I have a cold, it is because I have overexerted myself. If I would control my time well, I would not have a cold. This is why I plan ahead how many messages I need to speak and how many people I need to see in a week. Although you are young, you should distribute your strength properly. In this way, you will be able to accomplish the proper tasks.

Timewise, every week and every day we should set aside some time for the Lord. If you really love the Lord, at least you have to sanctify the Lord's Day for Him. The Lord's Day is the Lord's. In addition, you should devote at least one evening out of a week for helping others for the Lord's sake. Either you should go to preach the gospel to gain people, or you should go to others' homes to have home meetings or small group meetings with them. You do not have to do too much...

A NORMAL SERVICE Consecrating Our Bodies and Our Time

In order to have the proper service, we must first consecrate our bodies and our time. Romans 12 shows us that to practice the Body life, we must first offer up our bodies. We have to say to the Lord, "Lord, my body is purchased by You. It is Your possession. I am consecrating it to You." To offer up the body, we have to offer up our time, because the body is in the time. If we cannot give our time, the body cannot be presented. Practically speaking, you should consecrate your body and your time according to the way of budgeting we described. Paul says in Romans 1:14 that he is a debtor to

everyone. This is a debt to the Lord. If we do not preach the gospel and do not help others to go on, are we not indebted to the Lord? Hence, we have to consecrate our bodies and our time to preach the gospel and to help others. Only then will we not be indebted to the Lord. (CWWL, 1988, vol. 2, "Messages Given to the Working Saints," ch. 8, pp. 388-389, 390, 393)

**CONTACTING PEOPLE BY OURSELVES
DIRECTLY, PERSONALLY, AND CONTINUALLY
TO BEAR REMAINING FRUIT**

The Lord told us in John 15 that He is the vine and we are the branches (v. 5). He appointed us to go and bring forth remaining fruit (v. 16). We all should desire fruit that remains.

In these recent years, we have stressed the truth concerning fruit bearing in John 15 again and again. We may have prayed, "Lord, we hate barrenness. We want to bear much fruit." But the bringing forth of fruit among us has not entered into the God-ordained, practical way. We are still mostly in the natural way. We may wonder what the God-ordained, practical way is. We need to realize that as believers, we must and we should bear fruit. We have to bring forth children. Then we must gain a certain amount of skill in bringing forth fruit. We have to learn how to bear fruit and to practice fruit bearing continually.

As believers, as members of Christ, and as branches of the vine, we must bear fruit. The Lord said that if any branch did not bear fruit, it would be cut off (John 15:2a, 6). To be cut off is not to suffer eternal perdition but to lose the enjoyment of Christ in the organic union with Him. It is serious not to bear fruit. Many of us, however, do not have a serious consideration about our barrenness.

Some brothers and sisters have been faithful in the recovery and for the recovery for many years, but I have observed that they have not borne fruit. They love the church, they are for the church, and they support the church financially, but they are not bearing fruit. They should realize that not to bear fruit is a serious thing before the Lord. The

Lord wants us to have a spiritual life in the church, to go to the meetings, to worship Him, and to live Him. But what is all this for? If all the saints in the church were like this, yet no one bore any fruit, the church would eventually die out. If the people of a nation did not bear children, the nation would eventually become extinct. The most basic, crucial, and vital thing is for us to bring forth children ...

A SIMPLE WAY TO BEAR REMAINING FRUIT

I would like to present a simple way to bear fruit. First, you should make a vow to the Lord. You can pray, "Lord, as one of Your branches, I realize that I must bear fruit according to Your charge in John 15. If I cannot get one sinner saved within a year, this is a shame. Lord, every week I will spend two or three hours to contact people for their salvation." This is the principle. This does not mean that you have to spend two or three hours at one time in one day. You may spend some time in the morning to consider how to contact and save your unsaved relatives. You may spend twenty-five minutes to pray and make a record of these relatives. These twenty-five minutes should be reckoned as part of your two to three hours of labor in the gospel every week. In the evening you may write a letter to one of your relatives to find out how he is doing, opening the door for you to have further contact with him. The time spent in writing this letter is also a part of your gospel labor. Let us suppose that you have five unsaved cousins. If you labored three hours a week on these cousins in a concentrated way for one year, surely at least one of them would be brought to the Lord.

In order to be fruit-bearing branches of Christ, we need to be revived by the Lord day by day. Our publication called The Holy Word for Morning Revival has been a help to the saints to be revived by the Lord every morning. The most effective way to live the Christian life is by having a vital, living, active morning watch with the Lord. We should get two verses from the Scripture to live on every day and then contact people for the Lord in a definite way. In addition to this, we need to bear fruit. The reason why we do not bear fruit is because we do not practice contacting people directly,

personally, and faithfully...

Practice personally contacting people every week. Contact them individually. You can contact your relatives, friends, neighbors, colleagues, classmates, etc. You need to plan and schedule your time so that you contact two or three individuals every week. You should pray, "Lord, I do not want to contact them in a natural way. I do not want to have natural talk when I meet with them. Lord, show me the vital way, the living way, to bring them to You." If you pray such a prayer, the Lord will show you. Today there is the need of some faithful doers in the practice of fruit bearing.

We need to practice contacting people. We may contact someone without any success or result. Then we can go to the Lord to repent and open to Him for His adjustment. He will impress us to go back to them in a certain way. When we follow the Lord to contact people according to His way, they will be saved. As we go out to contact people one by one, we will find out the proper way from the Lord. We will also find out the right persons to visit. We will learn not to waste our time. We have found that just to knock on doors in a general way can be a waste of time. We must look to the Lord to get a proper candidate for our labor. Then we need to work on him in a proper way. This is the successful way to labor in the gospel. The ones on whom we labor should be those with whom we are acquainted, either directly or indirectly. In this way the time we spend will be worthwhile.

Whether or not this can be worked out depends upon our endeavoring. We cannot just make an announcement in the meeting, encouraging others to go. We ourselves have to go. We should start by ourselves and then get a companion to labor with us. After half a year, we can bring forth four new ones who will labor in the same way that we are. For the destiny of the church in our locality, this is needed. We have wasted too much of our time. We must make a budget to be very economical in the way that we spend our time. We need to redeem our time by praying for our acquaintances and relatives, writing them letters, and sending them booklets. Then we can make appointments to go see them. As we labor, we need to learn with an honest and sincere heart. We need to learn how to talk to people and how to gain them within a short period of time. If we endeavor like this, we can bring

at least two persons to the Lord yearly as remaining fruit. We may baptize more than five, but out of the five, two will remain in the church...

Just practice visiting people one by one personally and directly. Then after a short time, maybe two or three weeks, other saints will follow you to be your companions. Then you will have a start of the practice of fruit bearing in your locality. You must spend your time on the right persons in the right way. In order to gain a valuable result, you must labor.

Do not trust in preachers with large preaching meetings. That will waste your time and delay others. You yourself must have a start in the practice of fruit bearing in such a strict way. Every week you should spend two to three hours to contact individuals. You should carry this out as a business. Then you will see the results. I hope and pray for this. I believe that the Lord will eventually work this out, making each one of His lovers a winner of sinners.

You must go to contact people one by one by yourself directly through planning. You do not necessarily need to go out to knock on doors. We have found that going out to knock on doors is good, but it does not work that definitely. We must take a way so that we can bear fruit in a definite way. Just plan how to contact your acquaintances. Every week you should spend two to three hours on the gospel in this way. Do not send others. You must make a vow with the Lord that you would plan, schedule your time, and find a way to contact your acquaintances directly, at least once a week. If you take any other way, the result will not be that definite. The definite result only comes out of your plan and out of your schedule. Otherwise, you will waste your time...

We should be able to point to some who are our spiritual children. We have to study how to contact people ourselves. We still have much to learn in contacting people. Just to copy what others do does not work. The Lord will show us. If we are definite and desperate to gain people, we will find a way.

You need to contact people directly and individually, laboring in the gospel two to three hours every week. You should find out who is available for you to contact and then contact them directly and continually over a long period of time. You will gain one of them. If you take this way of directly

contacting people one by one, I can assure you that you will bring two people into the church every year. You should make a decision and tell the Lord that you will spend two to three hours every week in the gospel. Then ask the Lord to lead you to contact people one by one. You should not stop going to the church meetings. You should still live your regular church life. You do not need to promote what you are doing. You just need to go and do it. Then gradually some will see what you are doing, and they will join you...

As branches of the Lord, we should give Him three hours a week for the gospel. Then we can pray, "Lord, lead me, teach me, and give me the wisdom in planning, in scheduling my time, in making appointments, and in talking to people." Then we should practice this directly and definitely. Surely we will gain people for the Lord's kingdom...

We must have a plan for reaching people. We should make a list of all our acquaintances and study their situation. Then we can work on them according to our study. This is the way to gain the proper persons. We should not leave our bearing of fruit to fortune. It is not a matter of fortune but a matter of labor. We all have acquaintances for whom we can pray. We need to consider them and pray for them. We need to study their situation and decide when the best time would be for us to visit them. Farmers do not labor in a loose way. They study the situation of their land, their crops, and the weather, and they labor accordingly so that they can reap a proper harvest. We need to be the same way in our labor to gain people. We must have a plan and a schedule to labor on people two to three hours every week. We need to learn how to gain people. (CWWL, 1989, vol. 4, "Elders' Training, Book 10," ch. 9, pp. 455-461)

Redeeming the Time by Budgeting It to Make a Weekly Schedule for the Gospel

For the New Testament priesthood of the gospel, the elders must redeem the time by budgeting it to make a weekly schedule for the gospel. To budget our time is to control our time and not to let it go. Some may feel that it is sufficient simply to be spiritual and that budgeting their time is not

necessary. However, if we do not budget our time, we are not spiritual in a proper way. Ephesians 5:16 says, “Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.” Following this, Paul charges us to be filled in spirit. We must redeem the time in order to be filled in spirit. To redeem the time is to have a real spirituality. Every day it is a struggle to redeem our time. If we do not schedule our time, it flees away. We have no right to say that we have no time to preach the gospel. We must redeem the time. (CWWL, 1991-1992, vol. 1, “Elders’ Training, Book 11,” ch. 7, pp. 192)

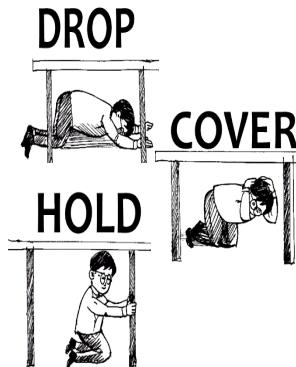
References and Further Reading:

1. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1988*, vol. 2, “Messages Given to the Working Saints,” ch. 8.
2. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1989*, vol. 2, “The Church Life in the Lord’s Recovery Today,” ch. 2.
3. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1989*, vol. 3, “The Exercise and the Practice of the God-ordained Way,” ch. 9.
4. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1989*, vol. 4, “Elders’ Training, Book 10,” ch. 9.
5. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1991-1992*, vol. 1, “Elders’ Training, Book 11,” ch. 7.
6. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1991-1992*, vol. 3, “Fellowship Concerning the Urgent Need of the Vital Groups,” ch. 4.

WHAT TO DO IN CASE OF AN EARHQUAKE?

If you feel the shaking and you are inside a building...

1. Stay away from glass windows, shelves, cabinets and other heavy objects;
2. Protect your body from falling debris by bracing yourself in the doorway; or
3. Duck under a sturdy table and hold on to it until the shaking is over;
4. If there is a need to leave the building after the shaking stops leave in an orderly manner.



If you are outside, move to an open area...

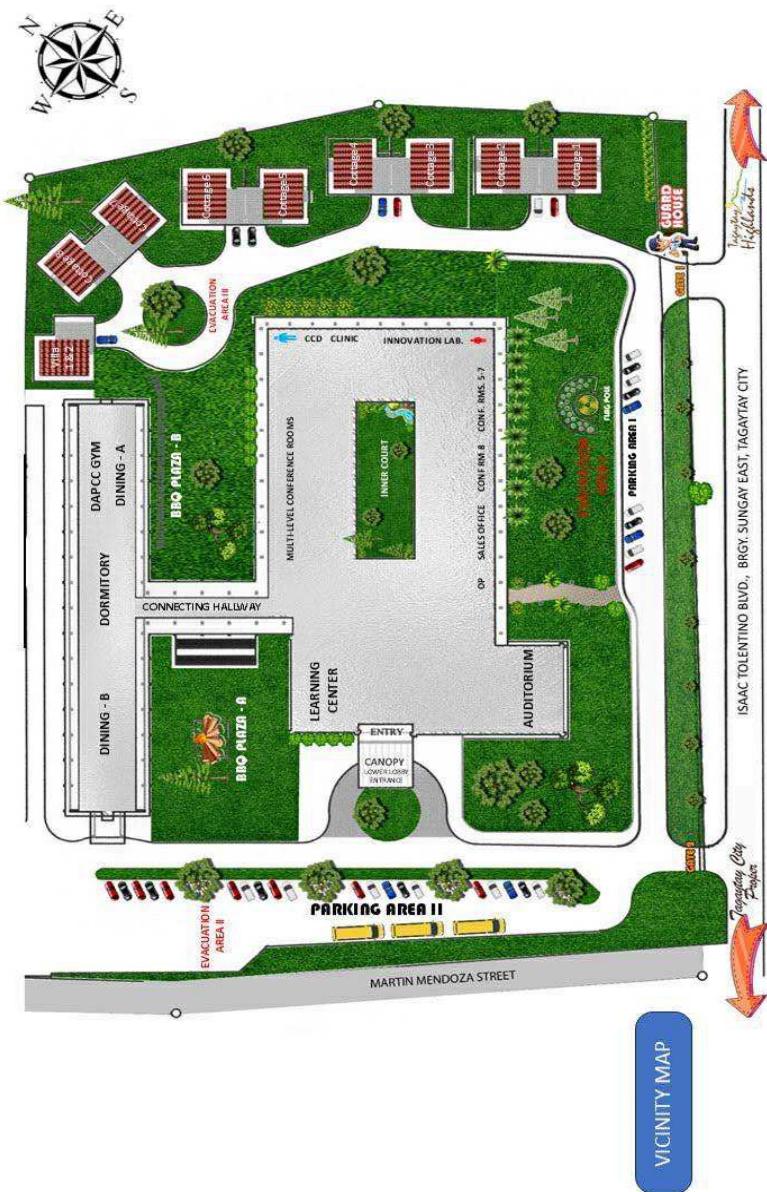
1. Stay away from trees, power lines, posts and concrete structures that may fall or collapse;
2. Move away from steep slopes which may be affected by landslides.

WHAT TO DO IN CASE OF AN ASHFALL?

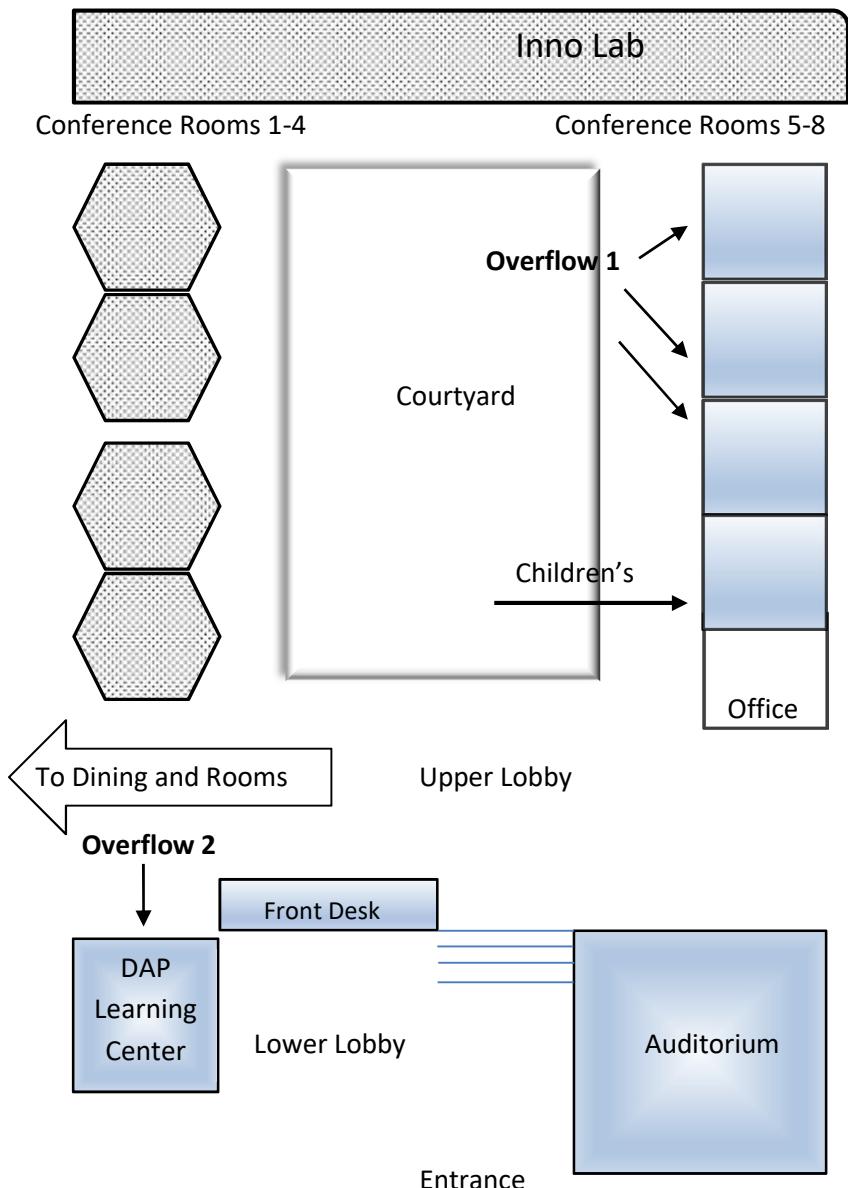
In case of ash fall...

1. If indoors, close all windows and doors to keep volcanic ash from entering;
2. If outdoors, take shelter indoors;
3. Cover your nose and mouth with dust mask or damp cloth to help filter ash. This will protect you against lung irritation from small particles;
4. Protect your eyes by wearing goggles. Wear eyeglasses, not contact lenses; and
5. Keep as much of your skin covered as possible. Wear long pants, long sleeved shirt and hat.

| Important Telephone Numbers in Case of Emergency | |
|---|------------------------|
| DAPCC Emergency Hotline | ‘0’, ‘258’ or ‘259’ |
| DAP Conference Center, Tagaytay City | (046) 4831290 - 92 |
| Tagaytay Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) | (046) 4831193 |
| Tagaytay Rescue Team | (046) 4830446 |
| Tagaytay Police Department | (046) 4131282; 4835263 |



Map



Service Group

| | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Overall: | Lawrence Sy Mark Ong | Enos Lim Michael Lu |
| Registration: | Edlyn Julianne Hokia | Edelyn Joy Hokia |
| Meeting hall: | Jeremy Co | Lance Chua |
| Ushers: | Karl Manabat | Michael Lee |
| Sound System/ Electrical: | Erwin Balacuit | Johannson Ong |
| Hymn-leading: | Cedric Leong | Jonathan Loro |
| Pianists: | Jennifer Cokee | Fegene Rosas |
| Child-care: | Sonia Ciano | Johanna Go |

| | <i>DAP & View Park</i> | <i>Amadeo</i> |
|-----------------|---|--|
| Lodging: | Bryce Miranda Micah Sy Lato Mayen Ong Sally Chan | Rolando Miranda Mark James Castro Shaira Castro Lyka Trinidad |
| Meals: | Janin Lim | Jeanelyn Jemmy Ang |
| Timekeeper: | John Lee | Flora Mae Openiano |
| Medical: | Anthony So | Nikki Deang |
| Transportation: | Danilo Santos Jonas Sinogbuhan | |

DAILY LIVING SCHEDULE

| Dec. 29 | Monday |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 3:00 – 6:00 pm | Check-in |
| 6:00 – 7:00 pm | Dinner |
| 7:30 – 9:00 pm | First Session |

| Dec. 30 | Tuesday |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| 6:00 am | Wake up/ Preparation |
| 7:00 – 8:00 am | Breakfast |
| 8:30 – 10:00 am | Second Session |
| 10:00 – 10:30 am | Break |
| 10:30 – 12:00 nn | Third Session |
| 12:00 – 1:00 pm | Lunch |
| 1:30 – 3:00 pm | Fourth Session |
| 6:00 – 7:00 pm | Dinner |

| Dec. 31 | Wednesday |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| 6:00 am | Wake up/ Preparation |
| 7:00 – 8:00 am | Breakfast |
| 8:30 – 10:00 am | Fifth Session |
| 10:00 – 10:30 am | Break |
| 10:30 – 12:00 nn | Sixth Session |
| 12:00 – 1:00 pm | Lunch |
| 1:00 pm | Check-out |