

TAKING THE LEAD AS ELDERS AND RESPONSIBLE ONES

(Saturday—Second Morning Session)

Message Five

Taking the Lead to Be a Man of Prayer

Scripture Reading: Matt. 6:9-13; 14:19, 22-23; 6:6

- I. The example of prayer given as a pattern by the Lord increases our seeking of the kingdom of the heavens as the Father's heart's desire and affords us our need of the divine supply of grace to fulfill all the supreme and strict requirements of the kingdom of the heavens for the Father's good pleasure—Matt. 6:9-13:**

- A. We need to pray for the Father's name to be sanctified—v. 9:
 1. To be sanctified means to be separated and distinct from all that is common—cf. Eph. 1:4.
 2. For His name to be sanctified, we should express Him in our living a sanctified life, a daily life that is separated from being common and is saturated with His holy nature—1 Pet. 3:15-16; Eph. 5:26; Heb. 12:10; 2 Pet. 1:4; cf. Ezek. 36:21.
- B. We need to pray for the Father's heavenly kingdom to come—Matt. 6:10a:
 1. Before his fall, Satan as the archangel was appointed by God to be the ruler of the world (Ezek. 28:13-14); hence, he is called the ruler of this world (John 12:31) and holds all the kingdoms of this world and their glory in his hand (Luke 4:6).
 2. In order for God's kingdom to come in its manifestation, we must live in the reality of His kingdom today, allowing Christ as the life-giving Spirit to rule within us so that we may have righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit—Rom. 14:17.
- C. We need to pray for the Father's divine will to be done on earth—Matt. 6:10b:
 1. For the divine will to be done on earth is to bring the heavenly ruling, the kingdom of the heavens, to this earth—cf. 8:9a; Rom. 5:17.
 2. The will of God is to have Christ as the replacement for all the offerings in the Old Testament so that we may enjoy Him as everything in living and practicing the Body life for the building up of the Body of Christ as the organism of the Triune God—Heb. 10:5-10; Rom. 12:2, 5; Eph. 1:5, 9-11.
- D. This prayer, as a pattern, cares first for God's name, God's kingdom, and God's will, and second, for our need—Matt. 6:11:
 1. These three things—the name, the kingdom, and the will—are the attributes of the one Triune God:
 - a. The name is of the Father, because the Father is the source; the kingdom is of the Son; and the will is of the Spirit.
 - b. To pray in this way is to pray that the Triune God will be prevailing on the earth as He is prevailing in the heavens.
 2. The Lord as our King does not want His people to worry about tomorrow

- (v. 34); He wants them to pray only for today's needs, for their daily bread, which indicates a living that is by faith.
3. The kingdom people should not live on what they have stored; rather, they should live by faith on the Father's daily supply.
 - E. In this prayer as a pattern we need to take care of our failures before God and of our relationship with others, asking the Father to forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors—v. 12.
 - F. This prayer, as a pattern, cares for the kingdom people's deliverance from the evil one and from evil things—v. 13a:
 1. The kingdom people should ask the Father not to bring them into temptation but to deliver them from the evil one, the devil, and from the evil that is out of him.
 2. To ask the Lord not to bring us into temptation indicates our knowledge of our weakness—cf. 26:41; 1 Cor. 10:13.
 - G. This prayer, as a pattern, concludes with the kingdom people's recognizing and praising reverently that the kingdom, the power, and the glory belong to the Father forever—Matt. 6:13b:
 1. The kingdom is of the Son, which is the realm in which God exercises His power; the power is of the Spirit, which carries out God's intention so that the Father can express His glory—cf. 12:28.
 2. This indicates that the prayer the Lord teaches us to pray begins with the Triune God, in the sequence of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, and ends also with the Triune God, but in the sequence of the Son, the Spirit, and the Father.
 3. Thus, the prayer taught by the Lord in His supreme teaching begins with God the Father and ends also with God the Father; God the Father is both the beginning and the end, the Alpha and the Omega—cf. Eph. 4:6; 1 Cor. 15:28.

II. In the performing of the miracle of feeding five thousand people with five loaves and two fish, the Lord trained His disciples to learn from Him—Matt. 14:19; 11:29:

- A. To see the miracle of feeding five thousand with five loaves and two fish is easy, but to know the deep and great lessons of life that we have to learn from the Performer of this great miracle requires revelation—cf. v. 25.
- B. Matthew 14:19 says that He took the five loaves and two fish, and when He was going to bless them, He looked up to heaven:
 1. *Looking up to heaven* indicates that He was looking up to His source, His Father in heaven:
 - a. This indicates that He realized the source of the blessing was not Him; the Father as the sending One, not the sent One, should be the source of blessing—cf. Rom. 11:36.
 - b. Regardless of how much we can do or how much we know what to do, we must realize that we need the Sender's blessing upon our doing so that we can be channels of supply by trusting in Him, not in ourselves—cf. Matt. 14:19b; Num. 6:22-27.

2. His looking up to the Father in heaven indicates that as the Son on earth sent by the Father in heaven, He was one with the Father, trusting in the Father—John 10:30:
 - a. What we know and what we can do mean nothing; being one with the Lord and trusting in Him mean everything in our ministry—cf. 1 Cor. 2:3-4.
 - b. The blessing comes only by our being one with the Lord and trusting in Him—cf. 2 Cor. 1:8-9.
 3. The Lord did not do anything from Himself—John 5:19; cf. Matt. 16:24:
 - a. We should deny ourselves and not have the intention of doing anything from ourselves but have the intention of doing everything from Him.
 - b. We need to continually exercise our spirit to reject the self and live by another life, by the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ—Phil. 1:19-21a.
 4. The Lord did not seek His own will but the will of Him who sent Him—John 5:30b; 6:38; Matt. 26:39, 42:
 - a. The Lord rejected His idea, His intention, and His purpose.
 - b. All of us should be on the alert for this one thing—when we are sent to do some work, we should not take that chance to seek our own goal; we should go only seeking the idea, purpose, aim, goal, and intention of our sending Lord.
 5. The Lord did not seek His own glory but the glory of the Father who sent Him—John 7:18; 5:41; cf. 12:43:
 - a. To be ambitious is to seek our own glory—cf. 3 John 9.
 - b. We need to see that our self, our purpose, and our ambition are three big destroying “worms” in our work; we must learn to hate them.
 - c. If we are always going to be used for the Lord in His recovery, our self has to be denied, our purpose has to be rejected, and our ambition must be given up—Matt. 16:24.
- C. After performing the miracle, the Lord went up to the mountain privately to pray—14:23; cf. Luke 6:12:
1. The Lord did not remain in the issue of the miracle with the crowds but went away from them privately to be with the Father on the mountain in prayer:
 - a. The word *privately* is very meaningful; this means that He did not let people know He was going to pray.
 - b. The Lord compelled the disciples to leave Him in order that He might have more time to pray privately to the Father—Matt. 14:22-23.
 - c. He needed to pray privately to His Father who was in the heavens, that He might be one with the Father and have the Father with Him in whatever He did on earth for the establishing of the kingdom of the heavens.
 2. The Lord told us, “When you pray, enter into your private room, and shut your door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you”—6:6:
 - a. When we pray with others, we cannot enjoy the Lord as deeply as when we pray to the Lord privately; the kingdom people must have some experience of prayer in their private room, contacting their heavenly Father

- in secret, experiencing some secret enjoyment of Him, and receiving some secret answer from Him.
- b. The self enjoys doing things in a public way, in the presence of man; the self loves to be glorified, and the flesh loves to be gazed upon.
 - c. If we pray every day without telling others or letting them know about it, this means that we are healthy and that we are growing; if we always tell others how much we pray, we will not only lose our reward but also not grow in life or be healthy—cf. 13:6.
3. We have to learn to leave the crowds, our family, our friends, and the saints in the church to go to a higher level on a “high mountain,” separated from the crowds, to be with the Father privately and secretly to have intimate fellowship with Him.
 4. The Lord’s going up to the mountain privately to pray indicates His asking the Father to bless all those who had participated in the enjoyment of the issue of the miracle so that they would not be satisfied with the food which perishes but that they should seek for the food which abides unto eternal life—John 6:27.
 5. His going up to the mountain privately to pray also indicates that He wanted to receive of the Father some instruction concerning how to take care of the five thousand people who were fed by His miracle.
 6. These lessons are intrinsic, deeper, and of life; we need to learn these living lessons from the Lord so that we can enter into the God-man living.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

**TRAINING HIS DISCIPLES TO LEARN FROM HIM
IN THE MIRACLE OF FEEDING FIVE THOUSAND PEOPLE**

**Taking the Five Loaves and Two Fish,
Looking Up to Heaven, and Blessing Them**

In the performing of the miracle of feeding five thousand people with five loaves and two fish, He trained His disciples to learn from Him. In Matthew 11:29 the Lord told the disciples that they needed to learn from Him, indicating that He was their pattern.

Matthew 14:19 says that He took the five loaves and two fish and when He was going to bless them, He looked up to heaven. In other words, He blessed the food by looking up to heaven. *Looking up to heaven* indicates that He was looking up to His Father in heaven. This indicates that He realized the source of the blessing was not Him. He was the sent One. The sent One should not be the source of blessing. The sending One, the Father, should be the source of blessing.

Here is a great lesson for us to learn. Most readers of the Bible would pay attention to the miracle of creating something from nothing performed by the Lord Jesus in Matthew 14. But we need to see the pattern which the Lord set up for us here. We need to remember that He looked up to the Father in heaven and blessed the five loaves and two fish in front of His disciples. After His blessing in this way, He told the disciples what to do. No doubt, what He did was a pattern for the disciples to learn from Him. According to this pattern, we have to realize that we are not the Sender, but the ones sent by the Sender. Regardless of how much we can do, we should realize that we still need the blessing from the source, from our Sender, that we can pass on to the benefited ones. This is a big lesson which I want to stress.

A co-worker who is invited to speak somewhere may think that since he has been speaking for the Lord for many years, he knows how to speak. All of us need to drop this kind of attitude and realize that we are not the source. No blessing is of us. Regardless of how much we can do or how much we know what to do, we must realize that we need the Sender's blessing upon our doing by trusting in Him, not in ourselves. Even when we take our meals, we should learn of the Lord to look up to the Father as the source. When we bless our food, we should bless it by looking up to the source of blessing.

Being One with the Father

His looking up to the Father in heaven indicated that as the Son on earth sent by the Father in heaven, He was one with the Father, trusting in the Father (John 10:30). This is a very important principle. Whenever I speak for the Lord, I must have the sensation that I am one with the Lord, trusting in Him. What I know and what I can do mean nothing. Being one with the Lord and trusting in Him mean everything in our ministry. We should never go to minister the word by remaining in ourselves and by trusting in what we can do. If we trust in what we can do, we are finished. The blessing comes only by our being one with the Lord and trusting in Him.

Not Doing Anything from Himself

The Lord did not do anything from Himself (John 5:19). This was also a pattern to the disciples. He was the One through whom the entire universe was created, but He would not do anything from Himself. This is the denying of our self, which He taught so much. He said that anyone who follows Him must take up his cross and deny himself (Matt. 16:24). He lived a life of denying Himself.

The learned professors in the universities do many things in order to attract people's attention, displaying what they know and can do. But we are not today's professors; we are today's God-men, the duplication of Jesus. We should deny ourselves and not have the intention of doing anything from ourselves but have the intention of doing everything from Him. This is to practice the teaching of denying the self by doing things with the Lord.

Not Seeking His Own Will

The Lord did not seek His own will but the will of Him who sent Him (John 5:30b). First, He denied Himself; second, He rejected His idea, His intention, and His purpose. He would only seek the will of the One who sent Him. All of us should be on the alert for this one thing—when we are sent to do some work, we should not take that chance to seek our own goal. When we go to perform God's work, do we go by seeking our purpose or God's purpose? Brother Watchman Nee was always concerned that when he sent a brother out for the Lord's work, that brother would take the chance to perform his own purpose.

One day I was preparing to go from Shanghai to Hangchow. Then Brother Nee asked me, "Witness, for what purpose are you going to Hangchow?" I responded that I was going to visit the brothers there. He said that this was a wrong answer. Instead, I should say that I am going to perform the Lord's purpose. If you merely go to visit the brothers, you can do many things for yourself. You may take your visit to them as a chance for you to accomplish your purpose instead of seeking the Lord's will. It is not easy to have a pure heart, without having our purpose, our goal, and our idea. We should just go seeking the idea, purpose, goal, and intention of the sending Lord. This requires much learning on our part.

At times certain brothers may ask me how I feel about their accepting the invitation to a certain place. My basic consideration is, "Are you going just to fulfill the Lord's purpose, the Lord's aim, the Lord's goal, the Lord's idea, the Lord's intention, that is, the Lord's will, or

would you take the chance to accomplish your intention, your will?" To seek our intention is absolutely impure. We need to be purified by the cross. We should pray, "Lord, save me from going out to accomplish something according to my intention and idea." The Lord Jesus never sought His own idea, His own purpose, His own concept, or His own intention. He purely sought only the Father's will.

Not Seeking His Own Glory

The first God-man did not seek His own glory but the glory of the Father who sent Him (John 7:18). I was with Brother Nee for about twenty years. What bothered him the most about the co-workers was that it was hard to see one who was not ambitious. To be ambitious is to seek your own glory. In the service we render to the Lord in the church life, there is always our ambition. A brother may have the ambition to be an elder. In order to become an elder, he feels that he must first become a deacon. To him being a deacon is a step toward being uplifted to the eldership. We should not think that we are absolutely not ambitious in this way. We are all fallen descendants of Adam and sick of the same disease, the same sin. The rebellion that occurred among us seven years ago was altogether due to ambition. Through the years I have seen a number of co-workers among us spoiled by ambition. By the Lord's mercy, I have learned the secret of dealing with my self and my intention, and this has helped me to deal with my self-glorification.

In John 7:18 the Lord told the Pharisees, "He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of Him who sent Him, this One is true, and unrighteousness is not in Him." The Pharisees were seeking their own glory. According to the context of this verse, the Lord indicated to them that if they were not seeking their own glory, they would know that He was sent by His Father.

We need to see that our self, our purpose, and our ambition are three big destroying "worms" in our work. If we are going to be used for the Lord always in His recovery, our self has to be denied, our purpose has to be rejected, and our ambition must be given up. We should not have our own purpose; instead, we should have only the Lord's will. We all have to learn of these three things: no self, no purpose, and no ambition. We should only know to labor, to work for Him, by denying our self, rejecting our purpose, and giving up our ambition. Self, purpose, and ambition are like three snakes or scorpions in us. We must learn to hate them.

Going Up to the Mountain Privately to Pray

After performing the miracle, the Lord went up to the mountain privately to pray (Matt. 14:23; cf. Luke 6:12).

Not Remaining in the Issue of the Miracle with the Crowds

The Lord did not remain in the issue of the miracle with the crowds but went away from them privately to be with the Father on the mountain in prayer. If we go to a certain place and have a great success, would we leave right away or would we remain in this big success to enjoy it? We need to see and follow the pattern of the Lord Jesus. He did not remain in the issue of the great miracle which He performed. Instead, He went up to the mountain privately to pray. The word *privately* is very meaningful. This means He did not let the people know He was going to pray. Otherwise, they would have followed Him. He went away from them privately to be with the Father in prayer. I like these three phrases: *to be with the Father, on the mountain, and in prayer*. We should learn from the Lord's pattern here by exercising to be with Him on the mountain in prayer. His looking up to heaven means that He

had no trust in Himself. His going up to the mountain means that He wanted to be with the Father in prayer.

To pray with others is good, but often we need to pray by ourselves. When we pray with others, we cannot enjoy the Lord as deeply as when we pray to the Lord privately. Even the Lord Jesus told us that when we pray we should shut our door privately and pray secretly to the Father who sees in secret (Matt. 6:6). Then we have the sensation of how intimate He is to us and how close we are to Him. We have to learn to leave the crowds, our family, our friends, and the saints in the church to go to a higher level on a “high mountain.” We have to go higher, far away from the earthly things on a lower level. We need to get to a higher level, separated from the crowd, to be with the Father privately and secretly to have intimate fellowship with Him. This is the significance of being *on the mountain in prayer*.

Asking the Father to Bless All Those Who Participated in the Enjoyment of the Issue of the Miracle

We need to consider why the Lord Jesus went to the mountain right after this miracle. John 6:27 gives us the reason. This verse says that after performing the miracle, the Lord said: “Work not for the food which perishes, but for the food which abides unto eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you; for Him has the Father, even God, sealed.” The Lord told the ones whom He fed not to seek the food that perishes, but to seek the food that abides unto eternal life. I believe the Lord Jesus went to the mountain to pray in this way: “Father, I pray to You under Your blessing. Through Your blessing You fed the five thousand, but Father, they are just seeking for the food that perishes. I do look unto You that You would bless them that they would seek the food that abides unto eternal life. Father, You know that I am Your sent One. Only I can give them the food that abides unto eternal life, but they do not know Me in this way. They know only that I can perform a miracle to feed them with physical food. But they do not know that it is only I who can give them food that is of the eternal life.” I believe that the Lord prayed to bless them further in this way.

His going up to the mountain privately to pray indicated His asking the Father to bless all those who had participated in the enjoyment of the issue of the miracle that they would not be satisfied with the food which perishes, but that they should seek for the food which abides unto eternal life and recognize that He was not only the Son of Man but also the Son of God who was sent and sealed by the Father and who could give them eternal life. When the five thousand were being fed by Him, they recognized that He was the capable Son of Man, but they did not realize that He was actually the Son of God who was not only sent but also sealed by the Father. He was the One who could give them the very bread that is related to the eternal life. For this reason, He had another teaching in John 6. In John 6 the Lord revealed that He is the bread out of heaven, the bread of life. Eventually, He told us that this bread is just His word. “The words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life” (v. 63). John 3:34 says that He is the One who speaks the word and gives the Spirit not by measure. To know Him in this way requires a revelation, so He prayed for them privately on the mountain.

Receiving Some Instruction from the Father

His going up to the mountain privately to pray also indicated that He wanted to receive of the Father some instruction concerning how to take care of the five thousand people fed by His miracle.

In this crystallization-study of Matthew 14, we can see how much we need revelation from the Lord to see the intrinsic significance of His word. To see the miracle of feeding five thousand with five loaves and two fish is easy, but to know the deeper lessons which we have

to learn from the Performer of this big miracle requires revelation. These lessons are intrinsic, deeper, and of life. To know the great miracle the Lord performed does not give us any life. We can only admire the Lord's outward doing. But to see all the detailed points concerning the lessons of life to learn from the Lord in His way of performing the miracle imparts life to us. We need to learn these living lessons from the Lord so that we can enter into the God-man living. (*The God-man Living*, pp. 123-129)