

WCCC 2024

Brother Godwin Sun

Those who run the heavenly race (2)

"Let us also therefore, having so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, laying aside every weight, and sin which so easily entangles us, run with endurance the race that lies before us, looking stedfastly on Jesus the leader and completer of faith"
Hebrews 12:1-2a DARBY

"By faith Abraham, being called, obeyed to go out into the place which he was to receive for an inheritance, and went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he sojourned as a stranger in the land of promise as a foreign country, having dwelt in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has foundations, of which God is the artificer and constructor."
Hebrews 11:8-10 DARBY

"All these died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them from afar off and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and sojourners on the earth. For they who say such things shew clearly that they seek their country. And if they had called to mind that from whence they went out, they had had opportunity to have returned; but now they seek a better, that is, a heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed of them, to be called their God; for he has prepared for them a city."
Hebrews 11:13-16 DARBY

"Not that I have already obtained the prize, or am already perfected; but I pursue, if also I may get possession of it, seeing that also I have been taken possession of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not count to have got possession myself; but one thing — forgetting the things behind, and stretching out to the things before, I pursue, looking towards the goal, for the prize of the calling on high of God in Christ Jesus."
Philippians 3:12-14 DARBY

"And now, behold, bound in my spirit I go to Jerusalem, not knowing what things shall happen to me in it; only that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city, saying that bonds and tribulations await me. But I make no account of my life as dear to myself, so that I finish my course, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the glad tidings of the grace of God."
Acts 20:22-24 DARBY

Lord, indeed we live in perilous times. How dark and chaotic this world is! We do indeed need your mercy. The schemes of the enemy have blinded many eyes, and many have become blind and deaf. You have gathered us here. We look to your salvation. Do deliver us from such a terrible generation, and such dreadful times, for the time of your return draws nigh. We must be alert. Lord, help us not to slumber. May your word be a shining light in the darkness and illuminate your own

countenance. In our time together, may we each see you clearly. We commit this evening respectfully unto you. You know that we are weak, and man's words is not profitable. May you use us weak vessels to deliver your own word, that each brother and sisters may hear your voice in this time. Especially the calling from on high that may strengthen us to rise up and follow after you; to run after you. Lord, bless this meeting. Glorify your own holy name. Hear our prayer, in the precious name of our Lord Jesus, Amen.

The theme of this conference is to run the race that lies before us. Even though last evening I explained the word "run", it continues to be a heavy burden in my heart because of the urgent times in which we live. So this word "run" is an important reminder to all of us. This is not the running we do in our physical body. This is not an outward running.

When Paul wrote the letter to the Philippians, he was also older in age and could not run. Why would he use the word "run"? The word "run" represents their spirit within, their deep ambition, their deep desire. They had this attitude before God, because they feel the urgency of the generation they are in.

I believe that we need the same urgency in our spirit today. Therefore in Philippians 3 Paul tells us how we ought to run. To forget all that lies behind, and press on forward. This WCCC has gone on for 38 years. Perhaps you have forgotten many of the messages. You may not remember much. The Lord calls us to press on forward, forgetting what lies behind, keeping our eyes focused forward. The day of the Lord's return draws nigh and the kingdom of heaven will descend quickly. We must prepare our lives and service in order to press on.

Brothers and sisters, we forget everything else. We must be willing to pay the cost to follow the Lord. We have mentioned that as we run we are fleeing, running for our lives and forgetting everything else. May the Lord give us grace to run as Paul did unto the end.

We know that this attitude that Paul has, he has because his eyes have been opened to see the preciousness of Christ. This was to Paul an encouragement, and the longing deep within his spirit. Therefore he says, "I press on towards the goal. I have only this one thing."

Brothers and sisters, today we are at an important juncture in time. May our eyes not look upon other things. The blessing which the Lord has given is to each and every one of his children. It is not only for any special group. Throughout history, those in the previous generations have obtained this. We too can obtain this. As we shared last evening, they are ordinary people. This tells us we all have the same opportunity. May we have this strong desire. Oh Lord, when your kingdom comes, may we all enter into your kingdom and apprehend that glorious day that You have ordained for all Your children. Deep within our spirit we need to cry out to the Lord "Do not pass me by! When you bless others, may I also enter into your blessing!"

I deeply feel that as we have this opportunity to gather before His presence, it is a precious opportunity for us to encourage each other. There is not much time remaining. The Lord will come quickly. May the Lord allow us to have this single ambition to run diligently forward.

We shared last evening how Paul tells us in Philippians that there are 2 aspects to the running of the race before us. One is to apprehend that which we are apprehended for. Each one of us only has this one life. The Lord created us and redeemed us, and He has blessed us with His

grace. May this not be in vain. We must obtain that which the Lord means for us to obtain. Therefore brothers and sisters, we have to responsible for ourselves. We must have this deep prayer: "Lord you have placed me on this earth and you have your will upon me. I beseech you that your will be done upon me." So we cannot run and live casually. We do all these things to obtain that which the Lord desires for us to obtain.

No one can look lightly upon ourselves. Of course we cannot be proud, nor do we need to abase ourselves. We have this heart before the Lord to consecrate ourselves in His hand. Lord, may You do Your work upon me. However You desire to gain me, gain me today!

The first thing that Paul reminds us is to obtain what Christ has obtained us for.

The second thing is that we will be apprehended because He has apprehended us. He takes possession of us for His will. The Lord has saved us and placed us in His glorious plan. We have been chosen in His glorious will. It is not merely that we are saved and will enter into heaven, and that is it. But God has a glorious purpose for us. God desires to do to us all that the Lord Jesus Christ has completed in this world. So we live in this world for His purpose. If we do not live for the purpose of God, then our race is without meaning.

So brothers and sisters, we thank God that the apostle Paul has given us an important reminder: as we run before the Lord there are 2 aspects:

1. To gain that which the Lord desires us to gain
2. That He may gain that which He is after in each one of us

This is one thing but with two sides. It is the same goal.

We thank the Lord. In Hebrews, the author uses many saints in the Old Testament in chapter 11 to show how they press on towards the same goal. In their day and how they live, they entrusted and committed themselves to God. So we know we are all saved by grace. He has entrusted His glorious will upon each one of us.

As we read the stories of these individuals, we see every aspect of their life is filled with the meaning of Christ. They deeply understood why they lived on this earth; what the purpose of their lives are. They have a unique likeness: it is all by faith. We shared about how faith is a spiritual seeing. Or we could turn it around to say that God has given them this spiritual vision and produced faith in them. This is why the author used the term "by faith" multiple times. This faith comes by seeing. So today we need the Lord to open our eyes that we may see.

In this materialistic world, there is behind an unseen world. We know that the unseen directs that which is seen. So Paul reminds us not to be mindful of the visible, but to be mindful of the visible; for the visible in temporal but the unseen eternal. May the Lord open our eyes that we can clearly see this point. As we enter into the reality of our lives, we see how the things we see and touch impacts us. Not only the material things we enjoy, even the work in the church today. The things we can see and touch impact us a lot.

Not for these individuals. They were directed by the things which were unseen. They were captured by the unseen. They live in a visible world, but receive this unseen direction from the

Lord. This is indeed important. So the Lord sent the Holy Spirit within us, so that He can help us see that which is unseen. Without the Holy Spirit, none of us would be able to see these things.

In Hebrews we read that without faith it is impossible to please God, for he who draws near and comes to God must believe that He is. Those who have their eyes opened, we know that only God is. Only God is, and none other is. We must have this discerning. All the matters of God are yes and amen in Christ. So all that in Christ is yes, and everything else is not. Regardless how grand things are outwardly, may we not be deceived. We should not be impacted by anything else. They will cause us to go astray, taking us outside of the blessing of the Lord. Not only is God is, He is also our all. Therefore Christ is all.

My dear brothers and sisters, because these individuals have had their eyes opened, the unseen will of God directs their lives. Each of them know that they have been entrusted with the glorious will of God. They are directed by heaven. They are heavenly citizens. History has confirmed that they are right, and all others in their generation were wrong. In God's own recording, only these individuals had value in the eyes of God.

Today as we live in this world, we are heavenly citizens and we must run on the heavenly way. Only then will our lives be acknowledged by God. Hebrews 11 describes them as a great cloud of witnesses. In church history there have been many interpretations of this. Some have said this cloud is beautiful. When I was young I also accepted this interpretation. But as I continue to serve the Lord more, I realize that this description of a beautiful cloud is not enough.

We know that clouds in the sky change their form quickly. Even with modern science we cannot predict all the changes in the clouds. We may see the clouds as sometimes beautiful, but sometimes the clouds are terrifying. So sometimes beautiful, and sometimes terrifying.

In my own experience the clouds show us how unstable we are in our human nature. These people in history are like us, with a corrupt human nature. We also see in their lives that they had their ups and downs. Some good and some bad. But in them they had this desire to follow the Lord, whether through good or bad. Even though many things have changed that cannot be fully grasped, in them there is a steadfastness that they live for the Lord. Just as Paul says, "whether in death or in life, it is for the Lord."

Brothers and sisters, this is our encouragement for today. When I was young, many brothers often said, "we fail more often than we succeed". Thank the Lord, that nevertheless, we continue to fight on. We fall and get up again. We will never be discouraged. Even if we are weak, we are weak in the Lord's hands. Just like David who chose to place himself in the Lord's hand for judgment. We thank the Lord that this great cloud of witnesses surround us today, encouraging us to lay aside every weight and to depart from the sin that so easily entangles us, and to run the race set before us.

With our own weak human nature it is difficult to follow the Lord. It, too, wasn't easy for them. How then did they attain to the requirement of God? Brothers and sisters, we need this before the Lord today. We are filled with thanksgiving to our Lord. These individuals, in their own lives, ran the race before them. They ran for the purpose of God because their spiritual eyes have been opened to the spiritual purpose of God.

We have shared how throughout church history, numerous saints have had their eyes opened, and in their generation they have followed the Lord at all costs and left behind their beautiful testimonies. Generation after generation.

Especially in these times, I have a deep impression of how many older saints we know have passed on. It is like the generation before us has ended. In their generation they have fought the good fight for the Lord, and followed Him diligently. In their generation they have manifested many beautiful experiences. Now in our generation, may we look to the Lord for mercy to follow in their footsteps so that we may not shame the name of the Lord. May the Lord encourage our hearts to press onward.

The Word of the Lord encourages us that the latter glory shall be greater than the former. The Lord desires that each generation will be better than previous ones. We dare not trust in ourselves, but we believe in the Word of God, because it is His own work. He will complete His own will. May the Lord open all of our eyes today, that we may rise up and press onward towards the goal of God and live out His testimony on this earth.

In the experiences of the past saints, they followed the Lord despite much hardship. Our human nature is so weak, yet in the rough path that lay before them, they allowed themselves to be directed by heaven and bore a beautiful testimony for the Lord.

When we read Hebrews 11, the author of Hebrews records the lives of so many people. The author even says if we were to go through each individual, we would not have the time. We would definitely not be able to do this tonight. So as I place the book of Hebrews before me and consider, I may not be able to go through each story, but I see 8 principles which we can encourage each other with today.

1. In their weakness they testified to the Lord's strength. They were all weak. Abel, the first one, was very weak. He was a shepherd but he was weak. "Abel" means emptiness. Perhaps he saw the vanity of the world, he chose to be a shepherd. As a result he was slain by his older brother. This was a tragedy. Abel was slain. He was weak. But we thank the Lord that the Lord accepted him and his testimony. So as we follow the Lord, we may face difficulties as well. We will feel how weak we are. But we thank the Lord that He is strong. From their lives they testify to the strength of the Lord.
2. In their foolishness they testified to the Lord's wisdom. We confess that we are all foolish. They, too, were foolish. Just like the children of Israel. They were told not to worship idols, but they worshiped idols. They were told not to commit adultery, but they committed adultery. They were told not to intermarry with those in the land, but they intermarried. Not only were they like that in the old times, the children of God today are often like this.

But in their foolishness, they magnified the wisdom of God.

3. In their failure, they proved the Lord's mercy. None of these individuals were perfect. They were weak in their own way. Even Moses. We know of David's weakness. His failures were great, but we see the great mercy of God. Brothers and sisters, whenever I consider this point I am filled with thanksgiving.

"Lord, we have gone through so much failure in these days, and even shamed Your name." But the Lord did not forsake us. He still holds fast to us. Like Peter in his last days when he wrote 1 Peter, "it is by the great mercy of God that we have been saved". We know the great failures of Peter. But God did not forsake him. God had mercy.

Today we live by His mercy. So today if you go through failure, return to His presence. He is a merciful God and always has a way for us to rise from our weakness.

4. In their disappointments, they testify to His hope. Many times we follow the Lord and are discouraged, even to hopelessness. In all my years of serving the Lord, I have gone through many times of discouragement.

In 1980, I was in Seattle. I went to serve there when I was young. The zeal was great at that time. I prayed, "Lord, no matter how difficult it is, I can bear it for you. No matter the hardship I will follow you!" I was young and unknown, and I did not have great gifts. The Lord placed me there.

From 1978 to 1980, there were but a few of us. It was very joyful and we had the Lord's presence. We sang and prayed, and we were all young. But after 2 years, it was the same number of people.

One day I was overcome with disappointment. I asked, "Lord, what am I doing here? Am I just waiting for your return with these few? The work is not moving."

There were also many Chinese fellowships around us. Many came to us, and felt that it was not a strong fellowship and went elsewhere. I felt very bitter. In all my time serving the Lord, I had not felt this. I questioned whether I was wrong. I went back to my room and knelt in prayer.

As I knelt in prayer, I remember how the Lord appeared to me in 1968, That glorious light had come back, and my spirit was encouraged. I prayed, "Lord, it is you who brought me here. Even if I am the only one here, without your command I will not leave!"

So as we serve the Lord at times we will go through these situations of disappointment. As we preach we long for brothers and sisters to listen with joy, but there are times I preach and feel so dry. Once in Vancouver I felt so dry and when I stepped down I felt so bad. I had no appetite and went home and lay in bed. I was sighing and sighing. I asked the Lord, "What message did I speak this morning? Even if I didn't preach it, nothing would have changed."

I was filled with self-pity and sighing. But our Lord is our comforter of those who are discouraged. I received a phone call from a sister in Canada.

"Brother Sun, your message was a great help to me this morning."

I felt terrible about the message, but she felt she received great help. Then another sister called and shared how she was helped by the message. The Lord knows how to comfort us.

We know the story of Gideon. He prayed before the Lord for a confirmation sign. It was the fleece, that it should be wet and the ground be dry, he would know it was from the Lord. The brothers explained that sometimes as we serve the Lord, the fleece is filled with dew - the speaker is very satisfied with their message, but everyone else is dry. And there are also other times the fleece is dry but the surrounding is wet.

I felt this is a great reminder of how when we serve, we will have times when we are disappointed. We thank the Lord that He always is our hope.

Dear brothers and sisters, for Christians, there is nothing of great hope or disappointment, because Christ is our hope. We see these individuals who follow the Lord through different situations, and the Lord is their hope.

5. In temptation they have proved the Lord's keeping. Today the temptation of the enemy allures us. I say often that no one is too great beyond temptation. Before temptation, we are all little men. You can see how great men crumble under temptation. So the temptation of the enemy is great. Were it not for the Lord's keeping, we would surely fail.

We live in a world where temptations continually lure us, even entering into our personal lives. When you turn on the computer or the mobile device, there is so much temptation before us. Many brothers and sisters cannot overcome such temptation. This is a perilous time. It is a time of great testing. If it is by the Lord's keeping, it will be very difficult.

Let me share a story about Ben. When he was in high school and going to school, I went to his room and saw something that moved me. Before his computer monitor he had pasted many Bible verses. He used the Word of God to remind himself. There are so many filthy things within.

There are so many who are greatly gifted with abilities, but have fallen under the temptation of wealth. They cannot overcome the temptation of riches. The scripture speaks of the way of Balaam. God has given Balaam many gifts. The visions and prophecies given to Balaam are among the most beautiful in scripture. But he could not overcome the temptation of riches from Balak.

Brothers and sisters, we must have the grace of the Lord to keep us from the temptations of the enemy. Only the Lord Himself can keep us.

All these individuals have gone through times of testing, but they lived and abided in Christ.

6. Under attack, they proved the Lord's victory. There are so many stories in the Old Testament. In the days of Hezekiah, when the Assyrians attacked and surrounded the city, Hezekiah called Isaiah to pray and God sent the angels to scatter the enemy. Under attack they proved the victory of the Lord.

Today the attack of the enemy is fierce. We know the great attacks from the enemy on the congregations. Through all this may the Lord remind us of how we overcome by the Lord's strength. Paul writes in the letter to the Corinthians that we do not battle against flesh and blood, but it is a spiritual warfare. Not only can we overcome the attack of the enemy, we can restore others.

Through history, these individuals overcame. Likewise, the Lord will deliver us.

7. In times of desolation and barrenness, they testify to the Lord's purpose. We see in the times of the Israelites they have gone through great times of desolation. From the times of Joshua to Judges, they went through a great time of desolation, more than 400 years. Only through the partial deliverance of the judges were the people able to sustain a living.

We thank the Lord that at the end of the period of judges, we see 2 women: Hannah, mother of Samuel, and Ruth. Hannah brought in Samuel, and Ruth brought forth David. And these dark times were turned around so that the purpose of God was once again restored.

Samuel in his ministry to the people caused the house of Israel to turn to God after 20 years. Those were glorious times in their history. In desolate times they testified to the purpose of God.

In the last part of the Old Testament, when the people of Israel were returning from captivity after 70 years, they lived in terrible times. But we see how the people of God were hidden. They loved and followed the Lord. Ezra brought and taught the Word of God in these desolate times. He was surrounded with desolation, but he spent time with the Word of God.

Just like in church history we have the Brethren movement. Many returned to the Word of God and brought a revival in their time. That movement was one of great light. Brother Watchman Nee tells us that in that 100 years, you could find more than 1,000 who were known. So many of them were able to receive revelation from the Word of God and brought forth great light. This changed the generation.

Brothers and sisters, in that generation also saw many sisters pen many beautiful hymns, even though they did not preach. The hymns are full of light. Before I would just sing the hymns and assumed that it was a famous brother who wrote it. But then I see so many hymns written by these sisters. They lived in desolate times, and in their hidden life, they had beautiful fellowship with the Lord. They were unaffected by the world in which they lived.

May we pray that the Lord deliver us from this world in which we live, that we will not be intermarried to it. Especially my younger brothers and sisters, may you be different from all others around you. May you have a single heart.

In their captivity, the Lord gained Ezra, Zerubbabel and Nehemiah and many others. They were few in number, and in desolation they restored the testimony of the Lord.

I deeply feel that the Lord has the same expectation for us in this generation. It is not the expecting of a few, but the expectation is on each and every one. Let us not forget that the Lord has an expectation of us. May we not disappoint Him.

I will never forget these words of an elderly American sister:

"When I was young, the Lord called me and I gave myself to the Lord. I faithfully served Him. Now I am old. But if the Lord has expectations of me today, I will not disappoint Him."

Do we have the same ambition? Do we cry out "Lord, if no one in this generation loves You, I will still love you? I will not disappoint you." May the Lord give us such a desire.

So in these great times of desolation, there will be individuals who love the Lord. They are precious treasures in the eyes of God.

We have these short lives which we live. It would be so sad if we love this present world. If we give our broken lives into the Lord's hand, and the Lord receives it, it is His great mercy. Let us take hold of this opportunity, that in these desolate times, we may uphold His testimony.

8. In their death, they prove the Lord's resurrection. In these times we live, the shadow of death pervades. We see many wars and many lives extinguished. This is the outward situation. What is even more scary is the spiritual death that pervades all the churches on the earth.

I once read a newspaper article that in the past 20 years, 40-60 million Christians have stopped worship. You can see how great this spiritual death has pervaded. Through the pandemic, churches have decreased in number. Through hardships, the power of death pervades again.

But we must know this resurrection power within us. As we live by it, we can overcome the power of death. May we receive this abundant grace from our Lord, that in the church we may have more testimony of His resurrection.

So I have summarized the lives of these individuals in Hebrews 11 into these 8 points. Of course, I am aware they may not be complete, but may it be an encouragement and reminder to us all. We live in difficult times. May the Lord use His Word to encourage us within.

We can see in the first century how the apostle Paul was a beautiful testimony of one who ran. He was a servant who was faithful to what his Master entrusted to him. He strove diligently to serve the Lord, even under such difficult situations.

When many read the Acts of the Apostles, they say that Paul is a traveling evangelist. Many long to be traveling evangelists. I see many today who are not evangelizing but traveling to many places. I know that many do indeed have true burden, so I am not making a blanket statement.

Many think of Paul as a traveling evangelist, so they also aspire to do the same. Some travel in hardship, but we travel in leisure.

Let me share a personal experience.

About 20 years ago I was in China. I was in a comfortable seat on the airplane and enjoying good food. As I was eating, I felt horrible. I prayed, "Lord, the saints before have gone through so much hardship, sorrow, and many dangerous situations. They followed you at risk to their lives. Today I am in a big airplane with a steak in front of me. And I felt more and more terrible. I was ashamed.

Of course today, it is hard to find a boat to travel like they did in those days. May we have a desire not for external comforts or opportunities to travel. It is all by the Lord.

If you say that Paul is a traveling evangelist and if he invites you to come to his trip, would you dare to go? Young Mark followed cluelessly. He admired as Paul shared his experiences. He tagged along and couldn't take it anymore. The Bible records of how Paul was beaten, assailed and thrown into prison. Was he a traveling evangelist enjoying himself? When we share this, are we ashamed?

We thank the Lord that Paul saw that what God had entrusted to him was more precious than his own life. So the Holy Spirit testifies that even though bonds and afflictions wait for him, Paul did not consider his life dear to himself. As long as he could finish his course and the ministry entrusted to him, if he could testify to the grace of the gospel of God, he would be satisfied.

Paul had a different mindset from many. He focused on the will of God. He bore a wonderful testimony for our Lord, and brought countless blessings from the Lord to His church. Great revelations from the Lord came through the hand of Paul.

As we consider the experiences of these individuals, see how they are like our Lord. Our Lord had only one desire. He longed to accomplish that which the Father entrusted to Him. Throughout countless hardships, described by our brother this morning.

Perhaps today we may not be in the same dire situation, but the Bible tells us to arm ourselves with this attitude. We look to the Lord's own mercy.

My dear brothers and sisters, in Hebrews 11, those who run the heavenly way do not run only for themselves, they run for the purpose of God. They are valuable because all they do, they do unto the will of God. They do not have selfish ambition, but they wholeheartedly follow the Lord.

In these last days, as the Holy Spirit works throughout, He is looking for those whose hearts are pure and sincere towards Him. You and I must be pure and sincere to the Lord. Why are we doing what we are doing? Is it to manifest Christs? We look to the mercy of the Lord. In this generation, may the Lord find for Himself much treasure. That we may be those who follow Him in these desolate times.

At His coming, when all the saints appear in glory, may we receive praise from our Lord. May we focus on His will.

In Hebrews 11, when we speak of the purpose of God, many brothers have shared on this point. I hope to provide an overview of the purpose of God.

In the Old Testament, God uses Israel as a type. This typology of Israel is a complete picture. Allow me to put all this together to help us to have a clearer picture of the will of God.

The first thing is that God has allowed Israel to prosper and multiply in the land of Egypt. They entered, few in numbers, but over 400 years have become a large nation. They multiplied and were strong, and the Egyptians feared them.

This is the heart of God, that He should gain a people. God is not establishing His work among just a few individuals, but He means to obtain a corporate body to complete His will.

Hardships came, and God sent Moses to deliver Israel out of Egypt. This is the story of Exodus. God caused them to come into the wilderness. And they stayed there for 40 years. God wanted to deliver them from Egypt, the Egyptian way of thinking, the traditions of the Egyptians.

We know that the first generation who had left Egypt perished in the wilderness. In other words, it is God's desire for them to be entirely rid of everything to do with Egypt.

Through Joshua, they were led into the beautiful land of Canaan, this land of milk and honey. We know that they are to cross the river Jordan and follow the ark. They would cross the river and have heavy warfare with the Canaanites. They would be victorious and gain the land of Canaan as their inheritance.

It is there they establish the house of Israel. All 12 tribes had their inheritance. Canaan became the home for the Israelites, even till today. The people of Israel see Canaan as their home. It is there they establish their careers, but this is not the purpose of God.

After they received their inheritance, they built the city of Jerusalem. We know these are important typologies for us to know. Jerusalem is the administrative capital of God. After the city of Jerusalem was established, they built the temple in the city. God now has a habitation from which He can establish His throne. We know that this is the central government of God.

We are familiar with this. As we place it all together we see the complete picture. Brothers and sisters, today under the new covenant, as God establishes the church, the church carries the full meaning of the typology of Israel.

Let us reflect and go through it again.

Israel prospered in the land of Egypt. This is the world of the gospel here on earth. We know that the children of God are saved and delivered out of this world. Thank the Lord that we see how the gospel has spread throughout the world. Sometimes I consider that throughout church history, there has not been as great a number of believers as today. There are more than 100 million saints in China alone. That probably surpassed the number of saints in the past. We see the burden of spreading the gospel among brothers and sisters. I have come across many who have zeal for the sharing of the gospel.

One time we were visiting China and we went on a cruise. I looked around and wondered where all the brothers and sisters had gone. They had gone to the front of the boat and were busy sharing the gospel with those serving on the ship. I was greatly moved. They were there on vacation and had the burden to share the gospel.

We are entrusted with the mission of the gospel. Wherever we go, there the gospel should be.

I remember when I was young, brothers and sisters shared this: when you board a train and someone sits next to you, this is someone the Lord has entrusted to you. This line really scared me, and I did not dare take the train.

One time I was on the train and someone sat next to me. I was uneasy and struggled. I looked at him but couldn't speak. I looked at him many times but couldn't bring myself to speak. I couldn't take it anymore and asked, "sir, do you believe in Jesus? Have you been to church?"

"No," he replied. I was about to speak more but he had come to his stop. I was so disappointed.

Many are like this. They are burdened to share the gospel with at least ten people before they go to bed that night. I do not see this much today. Dear brothers and sisters, you must preach the gospel, that the Lord would have us prosper in the land of Egypt.

But this is not enough. You need to take them out of Egypt. That they may come out of Egypt, not love the world and be delivered from worldly things. This is what Moses did. To share and teach brothers and sisters to bear the cross and mortify the evil deeds of the flesh.

This is the work of the church today. Through the picture of Israel we see that the flesh can never enter into the Promised Land. The whole generation had to pass away. All of the flesh must be put to death. The flesh cannot enter into eternity, so we put to death the flesh today. This is the work of the church today.

Then we need to lead brothers and sisters to enter into the fullness and riches of Christ. That is the land of Canaan. How rich it is! In Deuteronomy 8 we see how the land has rivers and streams, and fountains. The blessing of the produce there is uncountable. As a Christian we should be fully satisfied. But we see so many brothers and sisters who say they are starving in the house of God. Today we are not fed with the fullness of the abundance of Christ. We bring all the things of the world into the church. We cannot be made full on such things. These things will not satisfy us. We must enter into the beautiful land of Canaan. But there must be warfare because the enemy will resist.

We thank the Lord that He led Joshua across the river Jordan and that he submitted to the commander of the army of the hosts of God. In my understanding the commander is the Holy Spirit. As long as we follow the Holy Spirit, the Lord will lead us into battle and gain victory over the enemy, and we will gain the land as our inheritance, so that the children can enjoy the fullness of the land of Canaan.

We must enter into the riches of Christ.

Brothers and sisters, not only do we gain this inheritance, but there we establish the house of God. We know that the church is the house of God. She is not a religious institution. It is the place we find rest, and the place where the Lord finds rest.

And after we enter we establish Jerusalem, that the will of God be manifest here. We are not people doing our own thing, we are under His government. We are not ruled by a system but by God. The authority of God must be manifest in the church. And after the city is built, the temple in the city must be built.

It is there we serve and worship our God. it is the place He will establish His throne. The city of Jerusalem, the temple is the kingdom of God. Even before the foundation of the world, this is the picture in God's heart. He shows this to us through the people of Israel. When we place this together and see this full picture of the purpose of God.

May the Lord provoke us that we love Him and His will, and we live for His purpose. My dear brothers and sisters, if the church does not live for this, the church has lost its meaning. If we do not live for this, we would have lost our true meaning.

The apostle Paul tells us that as we run this course, we do not run only for our own sake, but our life is lived for His purpose. Only then do we have true meaning in our life. If you live for the Lord in this way, He will gain us. This is the purpose in which we run. May we look to the Lord's mercy. We are at the end times and have only a little while. May the Spirit of the Lord quicken us and make us alive, that we no longer slumber. May the Lord touch and open our eyes that we may see this glorious vision and rise up to do His will. So that in these times of desolation, we may be His testimony, and His heart may be satisfied. When He returns, may we receive Him in joy.

Lord, our hearts are filled with thanks unto you. You have worked in the days of old, and you are working today. May you save us from this chaos and confusion. May the heavens be opened unto us, that we may see your glory. In these last days, these difficult and perilous times, may you gain us for your own purpose. We are here. May you gain us. Hear our prayer. In the precious name of our Lord Jesus, Amen.