

KONFERENZ FÜR JUNGE ERWACHSENE IN DEUTSCHLAND 2017

GENERAL SUBJECT:

**BEING WATCHFUL IN LIFE
AND FAITHFUL IN SERVICE**

*June 9th - 11th 2017
Goslar, Germany*

Message One

Being Watchful in Life

Scripture Reading: Matt. 25:1-13

I. “At that time the kingdom of the heavens will be likened to ten virgins, who took their lamps and went forth to meet the bridegroom”—Matt. 25:1:

- A. Virgins signify the believers in the aspect of life:
 - 1. Being a virgin is not a matter of work, service, or activity; it is a matter of life.
 - 2. Being a virgin is not a matter of what we do or are able to do; it is absolutely a matter of what we are.
 - 3. In the new creation God makes all the believers females, virgins loving the Lord Jesus—2 Cor. 11:2:
 - a. Anyone who considers himself a man and not a virgin will not be qualified to go to the air to meet the Lord—1 Thes. 4:17.
 - b. If we would participate in the New Jerusalem, which is an aggregate virgin, we ourselves must be virgins who love the Lord and wait for Him—Rev. 21:2; S. S. 6:13; 1:3.
- B. Lamps signify the spirit of the believers, which contains the Spirit of God as the oil—Prov. 20:27; Rom. 8:16; Heb. 1:9:
 - 1. The believers shine with the light of the Spirit of God from within their spirit.
 - 2. The believers become the light of the world, like a lamp shining in the darkness of this age, to bear the testimony of the Lord for the glory of God— Matt. 5:14-16; Phil. 2:15-16.
- C. *Went forth* indicates that the believers are going out of the world to meet the coming Christ:
 - 1. As virgins, we do not settle or linger in any place; instead, we are going out of the world to meet the coming Christ as our Bridegroom—Matt. 9:15.
 - 2. We are the virgins going, and Christ is the Bridegroom coming—John 3:29.

II. “The prudent took oil in their vessels with their lamps”—Matt. 25:4:

- A. Vessels signify the soul of the believers—Rom. 9:21, 23.
- B. Having oil in our lamps signifies having the Spirit of God dwelling in our spirit; taking oil in our vessels signifies having the fullness of the Spirit saturating our soul.
- C. All believers have their lamps burning, but many have no desire or intention of preparing oil in their vessels.
- D. If we are prudent virgins, we will have not only the ordinary portion of oil—the Spirit in our spirit—but also the extra portion of oil—the Spirit in our soul for our transformation—2 Cor. 3:18.
- E. To be transformed is to be saturated with the extra portion of the oil, to be filled with the Spirit in all our inward parts—Rom. 12:2; Eph. 4:23.

III. “Go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves”—Matt. 25:9b:

- A. To buy means to pay a price; we have to pay the price for the filling of the Spirit in our soul:

1. The Spirit who came into our spirit (Rom. 8:16) was given freely, but the saturating Spirit to fill our entire being, especially our soul, is not free; this is something that we have to pay a price for, that we have to buy.
 2. How much we will be transformed depends on how great a price we are willing to pay.
 3. The infilling of the Holy Spirit is obtained at a cost, such as giving up the world, dealing with the self, loving the Lord above all, and counting all things loss for Christ—Matt. 16:24-26; Mark 12:30; Phil. 3:7-8.
 4. To have our soul, our being, saturated and filled with the Spirit cannot be accomplished in one day; it is a lifelong matter.
- B. If we are willing to pay the price, the Spirit will fill us and saturate us, and we will have the extra portion of oil prepared in our vessel, making us ready for the Lord's coming back—Matt. 24:44.

IV. “As they were going away to buy, the bridegroom came; and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast. And the door was shut”—25:10:

- A. *Those who were ready* must be those who are invited to the marriage dinner of the Lamb (Rev. 19:9), which is the wedding feast in Matthew 22:2:
1. We should be ready by always having oil in our vessel, by always being filled with the Spirit of God in our whole being—24:44.
 2. The marriage feast will be held in the air (1 Thes. 4:17) during the Lord's coming; it will occur before the manifestation of the kingdom as a reward of mutual enjoyment with the Lord to the believers who are ready.
- B. The foolish virgins, who do not take oil in their vessels and who are not ready when the Lord Jesus comes, will miss the wedding feast—Matt. 25:11-12.

V. “Watch therefore, for you do not know the day nor the hour”—v. 13:

- A. To be watchful is to be filled with the Holy Spirit; if we are not being filled all day long, we are not being watchful.
- B. In order to be watchful, we need the infilling of the Spirit, the spreading of the Spirit from our spirit to every part of our inward being—Eph. 5:18; 4:23.

VI. If we would be prudent virgins, those who are watchful in life, we need to redeem the time—Eph. 5:16:

- A. To redeem the time is to seize every available opportunity; this is to be wise in our walk—v. 15.
- B. To be filled in our regenerated spirit is to be filled with Christ unto all the fullness of God—v. 18; 3:19.
- C. “If you are wise you will seek this fullness sooner, but if you are foolish you will put it off till later.... Seek above all things to have that extra supply of oil in the vessel....You cannot, by dodging the issue, avoid reaching maturity—or paying the price of it. But wisdom is connected with time. Those who are wise redeem the time”—W. Nee, *Sit, Walk, Stand*, p. 33.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

PROPHECY OF THE KINGDOM (4)

We have seen that the section of the prophecy of the kingdom concerning the church covers two aspects: the aspect of being watchful and ready and the aspect of being faithful and prudent. Watchfulness and readiness are related to our Christian life. We all need to be watchful and ready for the Lord's coming. However, a proper Christian should take care not only of the aspect of life, but also of the aspect of service. For service, we need faithfulness and prudence. Thus, we need to be faithful toward the Lord and prudent toward our fellow believers. As we have seen, in chapter twenty-four both aspects are covered. In life we need to be watchful and ready, and in service we need to be faithful and prudent.

The way to be watchful is through the infilling of the Holy Spirit; it is by having the extra portion of oil. By ourselves we can be neither watchful nor ready. The only way to have the extra portion of oil is by the infilling of the Holy Spirit. This is the way for us to be watchful and ready. Likewise, the way to be faithful and prudent in the Lord's service is through the spiritual gifts. Without the spiritual gifts, we do not have the ability to be faithful or prudent. Our faithfulness and prudence depend upon the gifts we have received of the Lord. Therefore, in chapter twenty-five we have both the infilling of the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit. The Spirit affords us the infilling for life and also the gifts for service. It all depends upon the Spirit. How can we be watchful? Only by the infilling of the Holy Spirit. And how can we be faithful? Only by the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

PARABLE FOR WATCHFULNESS

Ten Virgins

Matthew 25:1 says, "Then shall the kingdom of the heavens be likened to ten virgins, who took their lamps and went forth to meet the bridegroom." The word "Then" here means "at that time," that is, at the time of the parousia. When the parousia described in chapter twenty-four is taking place, many things will be happening. Then the kingdom of the heavens will be likened to ten virgins.

Virgins signify believers in the aspect of life (2 Cor. 11:2). Believers, who are the kingdom people, are like chaste virgins, bearing the Lord's testimony (the lamp) in the dark age and going out of the world to meet the Lord. For this they need not only the indwelling, but also the fullness of the Spirit of God.

We Christians firstly are virgins. Being a virgin is not a matter of work, service, or activity, but a matter of life. Moreover, we are not only virgins, but chaste, pure virgins. Being a virgin is not a matter of what we do or are able to do; it is absolutely a matter of what we are. Whether we are male or female, we are virgins. Although I am an old man, I conduct myself like a virgin. I would never sell my status as a virgin. Even before the enemy, I am a virgin.

Verse 1 says that the virgins took their lamps and went forth to meet the bridegroom. Lamps signify the spirit of the believers (Prov. 20:27), which contains the Spirit of God as the oil (Rom. 8:16). The believers shine with the light of the Spirit of God from within their spirit. Thus, they become the light of the world, like a lamp shining in the darkness of this age (Matt. 5:14-16; Phil. 2:15-16) to bear the testimony of the Lord for the glorification of God. Thus, as virgins we do not take weapons for fighting or sports equipment for playing, but lamps for testifying, shining, and enlightening. In our hand is a lamp shining for the Lord's testimony.

The virgins went forth. This signifies that the believers are going out of the world to meet the coming Christ. The virgins do not linger or settle in any place. Instead, they are going out of the

world. In one of his writings, D. M. Panton said that the world was just a pathway to him and at the end of this pathway there would be a grave. If the Lord delays His coming back, the world eventually will afford me only a resting place, a tomb in which to lie as I wait for the Lord's coming. We are not settled in this world. We are going out of the world.

The bridegroom signifies Christ as the pleasant and attractive person (John 3:29; Matt. 9:15). How good it is that in this parable the Lord likens Himself not to a victorious general or great commander-in-chief, but to a bridegroom, a most pleasant person. Thus, we are the virgins going, and He is the Bridegroom coming.

The Five Foolish Ones Not Taking Oil with Them

Verse 2 says, "And five of them were foolish, and five were prudent." Five is composed of four plus one, signifying that man (signified by four) with God (signified by one) added to him bears responsibility. The fact that five are foolish and five prudent does not indicate that half the believers are foolish and the other half are prudent. It indicates that all believers bear responsibility to be filled with the Spirit of God.

Verse 2 says that five of the virgins were foolish and five were prudent. The Lord Jesus mentions the foolish first because in the bearing of responsibility the problem is not with the prudent ones, but with the foolish ones. Being foolish does not make these five virgins false. In nature they are the same as the five prudent ones.

Verse 3 tells us the reason they were foolish: "For the foolish, when they took their lamps, did not take oil with them." Oil signifies the Spirit of God (Isa. 61:1; Heb. 1:9). The foolish ones were foolish because they had oil only in the lamp, but not the extra portion of oil in the vessel. In addition to the regenerating Spirit, they did not have the infilling Spirit, the extra portion of the Holy Spirit.

The Five Prudent Ones Taking Oil in Their Vessels

Verse 4 says, "But the prudent took oil in their vessels with their lamps." Man is a vessel made for God (Rom. 9:21, 23-24), and man's personality is in his soul. Hence, vessels here signify the soul of the believers. The five prudent virgins not only have oil in their lamps, but also take oil in their vessels. Having oil in their lamps signifies that they have the Spirit of God dwelling in their spirit (Rom. 8:9, 16), and taking oil in their vessels signifies that they have the fullness of the Spirit of God saturating their souls.

We need to be very clear about the lamps and the vessels. According to the Hebrew text, Proverbs 20:27 says that the spirit of man is the lamp of the Lord. Within the lamp is the oil, the Holy Spirit. The New Testament reveals that our spirit is the place the Holy Spirit indwells. According to Romans 9, we are vessels made by God. Our being, our personality, is in our soul. Therefore, the vessel in this verse signifies our soul. Through regeneration we have the Spirit of God in our spirit. This causes our lamp to burn. But the question is whether or not we have the extra portion of the Holy Spirit filling our soul. Although we have the oil in our lamp, we need the extra portion of the oil in our soul. This signifies that the Spirit must spread from within our spirit to every part of our soul. Then in our soul we shall have an extra amount of the Holy Spirit. If we have this extra portion, we are prudent. If we do not have it, we are foolish. In other words, if we are indifferent to the infilling of the Holy Spirit, we are foolish. If we are wise, we shall pray, "Lord, have mercy on me. I want to have Your Spirit not only in my spirit, but also in my soul. Lord, I need the infilling of the Spirit. I need the extra portion of the Holy Spirit to fill my entire being." Without this extra portion of the Spirit, we cannot be watchful or ready. In order to be watchful and ready, we need the infilling of the Holy Spirit, the spreading of the Spirit Himself from our spirit to every part of our inward being.

The Bridegroom Delaying

Verse 5 says that the Bridegroom delayed His coming. The Lord Jesus truly has delayed His coming again. In Revelation He promised to come quickly, but nearly two thousand years have passed, and still He delays his coming.

Because the Bridegroom delayed His coming, all the virgins “became drowsy and slept.” Becoming drowsy signifies becoming sick (Acts 9:37; 1 Cor. 11:30), and going to sleep signifies dying (1 Thes. 4:13-16; John 11:11-13). While the Lord delays His coming back, the majority of the believers firstly become sick and then die.

A Cry at Midnight

Verse 6 says, “But at midnight there is a cry, Behold, the bridegroom! Go forth to meet him!” Midnight signifies the darkest time of this dark age (night). That will be the end of this age, the time of the great tribulation. “Cry” signifies the voice of the archangel (1 Thes. 4:16).

Verse 7 says, “Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps.” “Arose” signifies resurrection from the dead (1 Thes. 4:14). This is the resurrection predicted in 1 Thessalonians 4:16 and 1 Corinthians 15:52.

After the virgins arose, they “trimmed their lamps.” This signifies their dealing with their testimony in life. This indicates that after resurrection our life for the Lord’s testimony will still need to be dealt with if it is not perfect before we die.

The Foolish Wanting to Borrow Oil from the Prudent

Verse 8 says, “And the foolish said to the prudent, Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.” This word implies that even after resurrection the foolish believers will still need the fullness of the Spirit of God. “Going out” proves that the lamps of the foolish virgins are lighted, having oil in them, but not having an adequate supply. The foolish virgins represent the believers who have been regenerated by the Spirit of God dwelling in them, but who are not filled with the Spirit of God so that He may saturate their whole being.

The Answer of the Prudent

Verse 9 says, “But the prudent answered, saying, Lest there be not enough for us and for you, go rather to those who sell and buy for yourselves.” This indicates that no one can have the fullness of the Holy Spirit for others. We may borrow many things, but we cannot borrow the infilling of the Holy Spirit. This is like eating. No one can eat for you.

The prudent virgins told the foolish ones to go to those who sell and buy for themselves. Those who sell oil must be the two witnesses during the great tribulation, the two olive trees and the two sons of oil (Rev. 11:3-4; Zech. 4:11-14). During the great tribulation, the two sons of oil, Moses and Elijah, will come to help God’s people.

To buy indicates the need of paying a price. The fullness of the Holy Spirit is obtained at a cost, such as giving up the world, dealing with the self, loving the Lord above all, and counting all things loss for Christ. If we do not pay this price today, we must pay it after resurrection. Those who do not pay the price do not have the extra portion of the Holy Spirit. Eventually, the foolish virgins will realize that they need to love the Lord with all their heart and soul. They will see that they need to give up the world and deal with the self.

The Bridegroom Coming and the Ready Ones Going In with Him to the Marriage Feast

Verse 10 says, “And as they were going away to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut.” The word “came”

refers to the Lord's coming to the air (1 Thes. 4:16), a part of His parousia. Those who are ready must be those who are invited to the marriage dinner of the Lamb (Rev. 19:9). We should be ready (24:44) by always having oil in our vessel, always being filled with the Spirit of God in our whole being. To watch and be ready should be our daily exercise for the Lord's parousia.

To go in with Him refers to the rapture of the resurrected believers to the air (1 Thes. 4:17) during the Lord's parousia. The marriage feast in verse 10 is the marriage dinner of the Lamb (Rev. 19:9), which will be held in the air (1 Thes. 4:17) during the Lord's coming, His parousia. It will occur before the manifestation of the kingdom as a reward of mutual enjoyment with the Lord to the believers who are ready, who have been equipped with the fullness of the Holy Spirit before they die.

After those who are ready go in with the Bridegroom to the marriage feast, the door is shut. This is not the door of salvation, but the door to enter into the enjoyment of the Lord's marriage feast.

The Foolish Virgins Coming Later, but the Bridegroom Not Knowing Them

Verses 11 and 12 say, "And later the rest of the virgins came also, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us! But he answered and said, Truly I say to you, I do not know you." The later coming of the foolish virgins refers to the later rapture of the resurrected believers. They paid the price for the extra portion of oil, but they obtained it too late. Time means a great deal here, for when they came, the door was shut.

When they asked the Lord to open to them, He said, "I do not know you." To not know here indicates not to recognize, not to approve, as in Luke 13:25; John 1:26, 31; 8:19. The foolish virgins had their lamps lighted, went forth to meet the Lord, died, and were resurrected and raptured, but were late in paying the price for the fullness of the Holy Spirit. Because of this, the Lord would not recognize or approve of them for participation in His marriage feast. They missed this reward dispensationally, but they do not lose their salvation eternally.

In telling them that He did not know them, the Lord was saying, "I do not appreciate you or recognize you, and I do not approve of the way you lived on the earth. Also, I do not approve of your coming so late." Thus, they are rejected from the enjoyment of the kingdom feast.

Watching

Verse 13 concludes, "Watch therefore, for you do not know the day nor the hour." Chapter 24:40-44 refers to the rapture only of the living believers who are ready. Chapter 25:1-13 is needed to cover the rapture of the dead and resurrected ones. When we read this portion of the Word, we see how watchful we need to be. To be watchful and ready is a very serious matter. No other book warns us as often as the book of Matthew does. I can testify before the Lord that for more than forty years I have been warned by this book. Whenever I have been a little careless, I have remembered the warnings contained in Matthew. Yes, we all are virgins, but are we foolish or prudent? We all need to answer this question for ourselves. Whether we are prudent or not depends on whether or not we have the extra portion of the Holy Spirit in our vessel. (*Life-study of Matthew, message sixty-four*)

Message Two

Being Faithful in Service

Scripture Reading: Matt. 25:14-30

- I. The Lord likened Himself to a man going abroad (into the heavens) and delivering to his slaves his possessions—Matt. 25:14:**
 - A. Slaves signify believers viewed from the aspect of service—1 Cor. 7:22-23; 2 Pet. 1:1; James 1:1; Rom. 1:1.
 - B. *His possessions* signifies the church (Eph. 1:18) with all the believers, who constitute God's household— Matt. 24:45.
- II. To one of his slaves he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one—to each according to his own ability—25:15:**
 - A. A talent, the largest unit of weight, was worth 6,000 denarii; the denarius was the chief silver coin of the Romans; it was considered good pay for a day's labor— cf. Matt. 20:2.
 - B. Talents signify spiritual gifts (spiritual skills and abilities)—Rom. 12:6; 1 Cor. 12:4; 1 Pet. 4:10; 2 Tim. 1:6.
 - C. All the members of the Body of Christ are gifted, and all are gifts—Rom. 12:6a; Eph. 4:7-8.
 - D. The filling of the Spirit in life enables us to use the spiritual gift in service (work), and the spiritual gift in service matches the filling of the Spirit in life, that we may be a perfect member of Christ—cf. John 7:38; 1 Pet. 4:10.
 - E. *Own ability* signifies our natural ability, which is constituted of God's creation and our learning—cf. Acts 7:22.
- III. The five-talented one traded with his talents to gain another five talents, and the two-talented one traded with his talents to gain another two talents— Matt. 25:16-17:**
 - A. Trading with talents signifies using the gift the Lord has given us—cf. 1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6.
 - B. Gaining other talents signifies that the gift we received from the Lord has been used to the fullest extent, without any loss or waste—cf. 2 Tim. 4:5b.
- IV. The one-talented one went off, dug in the earth, and hid his master's money—Matt. 25:18:**
 - A. The main emphasis in this parable is on the one-talented one, who received the smallest gift; it is very easy for the least gifted ones to mistreat or ignore their gift.
 - B. The earth signifies the world; thus, *dug in the earth* signifies becoming involved in the world to bury the gift we have received from the Lord.
 - C. *Hid his master's money* signifies rendering the Lord's gift useless, letting it lie waste under the cloak of certain earthly excuses; to make any excuse for not using the Lord's gift is to hide the gift.
- V. When the master returned to settle accounts with his slaves, the five-talented one and the two-talented one both received a reward—vv. 19-23:**

- A. The Lord will settle accounts with us at His judgment seat, where our living, conduct, and work will be judged for reward or punishment—1 Cor. 4:5; Matt. 16:27; Rev. 22:12; 1 Cor. 3:13-15.
- B. Although the gift given to the two-talented one is smaller than that given to the five-talented one, the Lord’s appraisal and reward to both are the same— “Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful over a few things; I will set you over many things. Enter into the joy of your master”—Matt. 25:21, 23:
 - 1. *A few things* signifies the Lord’s work in this age— cf. Mark 14:8; Rev. 3:8.
 - 2. To be set over many things signifies the ruling authority and the responsibilities in the coming kingdom—Rev. 2:26; Luke 19:17-19.
 - 3. *The joy of your master* signifies the enjoyment of the Lord in the coming kingdom—cf. Phil. 3:14.

VI. The one-talented one was rebuked by his master and was punished—Matt. 25:24-30:

- A. The one-talented one said that he was afraid and went off and hid his master’s talent in the earth, telling his master that he kept his gift:
 - 1. To be afraid is negative; we should be positive and aggressive in using the Lord’s gift—cf. 1 Thes. 2:2; Col. 1:29.
 - 2. To go away and hide the Lord’s gift is to be too passive; we should be active in the Lord’s work— 1 Cor. 15:58; 16:10.
 - 3. From generation to generation, all the difficulties lie with the one-talented ones, and as a result there is the weight of death in the church.
- B. The master told the evil and slothful slave, “You should have deposited my money with the money changers; and when I came, I would have recovered what is mine with interest”—Matt. 25:26-27:
 - 1. To deposit the master’s money with the money changers, the bankers, signifies the use of the Lord’s gift to save people and to minister His riches to them.
 - 2. *Interest* signifies the profitable result we gain for the Lord’s work by using His gift.
- C. In the coming kingdom the Lord’s gift will be taken away from the slothful believers, and they will be cast into the outer darkness, but the faithful believers’ gift will be increased, and they will enter into the uttermost enjoyment of Christ—vv. 28-30.

VII. “All the problems in the church today issue from the one-talented ones. The Lord has shown us that there is not one whose gift exceeds five talents. For a span of twenty years the church may have only one with five talents, but every day the church can have five persons, each with one talent. Any one of the children of God, even the one in the poorest condition, still has one talent; and when you put five of the one-talented ones together, it equals one who has five talents. If all the one-talented ones in the church today would bring forth their talents, there would be no need of so many great gifts among us. Just by the coming forth of the one-talented ones, let me tell you, the whole world will be conquered”—W. Nee, *Further Talks on the Church Life*, p. 143.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

PROPHECY OF THE KINGDOM (5a)

As we pointed out in the foregoing message, to be regenerated, to have the new birth, is to have the Spirit in our spirit, that is, to have the oil in our lamp. To have the Spirit in our soul means that we grow in life, are transformed, are renewed in our whole being, and have our soul saturated with the Holy Spirit of God. This is to have the oil in the vessel. This is the way to be watchful and to be ready for the Lord's coming. It is also the way to be prepared to be raptured into the Lord's presence.

PARABLE FOR FAITHFULNESS

Having covered the parable for watchfulness (25:1-13), we proceed in this message to the parable for faithfulness (25:14-30). The parable of the virgins is for watchfulness, but the parable of the talents is for faithfulness.

When we were on chapter twenty-four, we pointed out that concerning the believers, there are two aspects: the aspect of watchfulness and readiness and the aspect of faithfulness and prudence. The believers have these two aspects because they have a dual status. The first aspect of this dual status is related to life, and the second aspect is related to service. No Christian should neglect these two aspects; rather, we must pay the proper attention to both, becoming proper in life and in service. Regarding life, we are virgins; regarding service, we are slaves. This means that in watchfulness we are virgins. This relates to what we are. But in faithfulness we are slaves. This relates to what we do.

The virgins need something inward—the inward filling of the oil in the vessel. The slaves, however, need something outward—the spiritual talent. The infilling of the Holy Spirit is inward, but the talent, the spiritual gift, is outward. As vessels we need the oil inwardly, and as slaves we need the talents outwardly.

A Man Going into Another Country

Verse 14 says, "For it is as a man who, going into another country, called his own slaves and delivered to them his possessions." The word "it" refers to the kingdom of the heavens, indicating that this parable of the talents, like the parable of the ten virgins, is also concerning the kingdom of the heavens. The man here signifies Christ, who was going into another country, that is, into the heavens.

Delivering His Possessions to His Slaves

Verse 14 says that this man delivered his possessions to his slaves. The slaves signify believers in the aspect of service (1 Cor. 7:22-23; 2 Pet. 1:1; James 1:1; Rom. 1:1). As we have seen, the status of the believers in their relationship toward Christ is of two aspects: in life they are the virgins living for Him; in service, in work, they are His purchased slaves serving Him.

I believe that the possessions delivered to the slaves include the gospel, the truth, the believers, and the church. The believers are God's inheritance, God's possession (Eph. 1:18). Matthew 24:45 indicates that the believers are also His household.

Giving Five Talents, Two Talents, and One Talent

Verse 15 says, "And to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one; to each according to his own ability." While oil in the parable of the virgins signifies the Spirit of God, talents in this parable signify spiritual gifts (Eph. 4:8; Rom. 12:6; 1 Cor. 12:4; 1 Pet. 4:10; 2 Tim. 1:6). For life we need oil, the Spirit of God, even His fullness, that we may be enabled to live the

virgin life for the Lord's testimony; for service, for work, we need the talent, the spiritual gift, that we may be equipped as a good slave for the accomplishment of the Lord's work. The fullness of the Spirit in life is for us to use the spiritual gift in service, and the spiritual gift in service matches the fullness of the Spirit in life that we may be perfected as members of Christ.

Verse 14 says that the man gave his slaves his possessions, but verse 15 says that he gave them talents. This indicates that the talents in verse 15 are the possessions in verse 14. In other words, the Lord uses His possessions as talents for us. For example, the gospel is the Lord's possession. But when it is given to us, it becomes our talent. Likewise, the truth is the Lord's possession. But when the truth is given to us, it becomes a talent. In the same principle, all the believers are the Lord's possessions. When the believers are given to us, they become our talents. Without all the believers, my talent would not be very big. Furthermore, the church is the Lord's possession. When the church is given to us, it becomes our talent. The more of His possessions the Lord gives to us, the more talents we shall have. In like manner, the more the Lord burdens us, the more talents we shall have.

Many Christians know that in this parable the talents are gifts. However, they do not know that the source of the gifts is the Lord's possessions. Today the Lord's possessions primarily are the gospel, the truth, the believers, and the church. If you do not care for these things, you will not have any talents. The gospel needs to become our possession. The same is true of the truth, the believers, and the churches. My talents are not natural. Rather, they are the gospel, the truth, the believers, and the church. If you took all these things away from me, I would have nothing left. I have a strong talent because I have not only the gospel and the truth, but also thousands of believers and hundreds of churches. This is the reason this ministry has had impact.

We should not wait in an indifferent way for the Lord to give us something. No, we must diligently seek the gospel and the truth. We should be eager to know the fall of man, redemption, regeneration, salvation, the cleansing of the blood, and the washing of the Spirit. All these are aspects of the full gospel. The more you receive of the gospel, the more talents you will have. We need to pray that the Lord would help us to know the truth and to experience it. We need to experience the truth concerning the church, God's eternal purpose, and God's economy. Eventually, these truths will become our talent. Then we shall be able to minister them to others. In this way, the Lord's possessions become our talent. Furthermore, we need to pray, "Lord, I want to take care of the saints and bear their burdens. My heart is for them." If we have a heart for the saints and are burdened for them, they, the Lord's possession, will be given to us as a talent. How thankful I am that so many saints and churches have become my talent! My ministry is strongly backed up by all the saints and all the churches in the Far East. If the Lord sent me to another place, I would also have the support of the churches in the United States, for the churches here have become an addition to my talent.

If you want to receive more talents, you must have a heart to care for the saints. For example, when someone is unemployed, you need to pray for him and bear his burden. This will be a proof that the Lord has given that one to you as a talent. However, not to bear the saints or care for them means that you forsake the Lord's possession. Every dear saint is a precious part of the Lord's possession. It is not a small matter to be concerned for the saints, for they are the Lord's possession.

When the Lord's possessions are in His hand, they remain His possessions. But when they are delivered to us, they become our talent. Do not drop any burden that the Lord has given you. No matter how busy I am, I cannot drop any talent, for to do this is to drop the Lord's possession. The Lord has a vast work in His recovery. For this work, He needs thousands of young brothers and sisters to be raised up to bear the responsibility.

The talent is not something of your natural birth; rather, it is altogether related to your burden. If you take up a burden, you will receive a talent. If you take up a burden for one local church, you will receive one talent. But if you take up the burden for five churches, you will have five talents. During the past twenty-eight years, more than two hundred eighty churches have been built up under this ministry. Recently, when I was accused, criticized, and condemned, I asked the Lord whether or not this ministry was wrong. At that time He pointed out to me that the way to know the tree is by its fruit. He told me to look how many churches have been established and built up by this ministry. However, if we are ambitious for ourselves, this ambition will kill the talents.

To Each according to His Ability

Although the talents are not our ability, but the Lord's possession, they are delivered to us according to our ability. Our ability is constituted by God's creation and our learning. The capacity of our ability is based upon the willingness of our heart. If we do not have any willingness in our heart, then we shall not have the capacity to receive the talent. The capacity to receive the talent is measured by the willingness of our heart.

Those with Five Talents and Two Talents Trading with Them

Verses 16 and 17 say, "Immediately, he who received the five talents went and traded with them and gained another five; similarly, he who received the two gained another two." To trade with the talents signifies using the gift the Lord has given us, and to gain other talents signifies that the gift we received from the Lord has been used to the fullest extent, without any loss or waste.

According to chapter twenty-four, the slave is to supply food to those in the household. This refers to the ministering of the nourishing Word with the riches of Christ as the life supply to those in the Lord's house. Here, however, it speaks of trading with the talents to cause the talents to multiply. Therefore, the result of our service has two aspects. The first aspect is that others are fed and given rich nourishment. The second aspect is that the Lord's possessions are multiplied. For example, the more we preach the gospel, the richer the gospel becomes. It is the same with the truths. As we minister the truths to others, the truths multiply. This is also true of the saints and the churches. Both the believers and the churches will multiply. Thus, five talents are multiplied into ten, and two talents are multiplied into four.

The Slave with One Talent Digging in the Earth and Hiding It

Verse 18 says, "But he who received the one went away and dug in the earth and hid his lord's silver." The main emphasis in this parable is on the one-talented one, the one who received the smallest gift. It is very easy for the least-gifted ones to fail to make the proper use of their gift.

As the earth signifies the world, so to dig in the earth signifies getting into the world. Any association, any involvement with the world, even a little worldly talk, will bury the Lord's gift to us. Hiding the Lord's silver signifies rendering the Lord's gift useless, letting it lie waste under the cloak of certain earthly excuses. Any excuse for not using the Lord's gift is to hide it. This is always the danger with the one-talented ones, those who consider their gift as the smallest.

With the one-talented slave in this parable, there is no multiplication. For instance, in a certain area there may be one church. Ten years later, there is still just one church in that area. Some may think that the one-talented slave did well in not losing his talent and in returning to the Lord what was His. The one-talented slave seemed to say, "Lord, here is what is Yours. You gave me one talent, and I have been faithful to keep, guard, protect, and preserve it. By Your

mercy and grace, I have kept it.” But the issue of our service must be the multiplication of our talents. It is not the Lord’s will for us simply to maintain what He has given us. If you are faithful merely to keep the gospel, the truth, and the church without any multiplication, the Lord will say that you are slothful. Furthermore, He will call you an evil slave. In the eyes of the Lord, it is evil to bury the talent and not to multiply it. The Lord does not care for our argument or excuses. He cares only that the one talent is multiplied into two. This is a serious matter. Our service must issue in the feeding and satisfaction of others and in the multiplication of the talent. (*Life-study of Matthew, message sixty-five*)

Message Three

How to Be Watchful in Life and Faithful in Service

Scripture Reading: Matt. 25:4, 9-10, 20-23

I. For life, we need oil, the Spirit of God, even His filling, that we may be enabled to live the virgin life for the Lord's testimony—Matt. 25:4, 9-10:

- A. Our urgent need is to gain more of the Spirit as the consummation of the processed Triune God, to live a life of buying an extra portion of the Spirit to saturate our entire being—v. 9; cf. Dan. 5:27.
- B. Every day we need to be watchful by paying the price to buy the Spirit as the golden oil so that we may supply the churches with the Spirit for the testimony of Jesus and be rewarded by the Lord to participate in the marriage dinner of the Lamb—Matt. 25:9-10; Rev. 3:18; Zech. 4:6, 12-14; Judg. 9:9:
 - 1. We need to love the Lord above all, having our eyes opened to see His supreme preciousness—Matt. 22:37; Phil. 3:8.
 - 2. We need to count all things as loss on account of Christ that we may gain Him, be found in Him, and know Him—vv. 7-10.
 - 3. We need to enjoy the Lord in the Word every day early in the morning to have a new start each day— Psa. 119:147-148.
 - 4. We need to deal with sins thoroughly—1 John 1:7, 9.
 - 5. We need to abide in fellowship with the Lord daily and hourly—v. 6; 2 Cor. 13:14.
 - 6. We need to redeem our time and spend our energy to be saturated and soaked with God's holy Word— 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Col. 3:16.
 - 7. We need to be watchful, on the alert, for our prayer life, redeeming our time to pray—Eph. 6:18.
 - 8. We need to redeem the time in these evil days to be filled in spirit by speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, by giving thanks to the Lord at all times for all things, and by being subject to one another in the fear of Christ—5:14-21.
 - 9. We should not grieve the Holy Spirit of God by speaking rotten (noxious, offensive, or worthless) words; instead, we should speak words of grace to give grace to those who hear—4:29-30.
 - 10. We should not quench the Spirit; instead, we should always rejoice, unceasingly pray, and in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for us—1 Thes. 5:16-19.
 - 11. We need to live, act, behave, do things, and have our being according to the spirit—Rom. 8:4.
 - 12. We need to be filled with the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, as the supply of the Body of Christ, to live Christ for His magnification—Phil. 1:19-21a; Psa. 133; cf. 1 Thes. 5:25.

II. For service, for work, we need the talent, the spiritual gift, that we may be equipped as a good slave to accomplish what the Lord intends to accomplish— Matt. 25:20-23:

- A. Our inward motive for serving the Lord is our love for Him—Exo. 21:5.

- B. Our serving the Lord should always proceed out from Him as the source of blessing, be through Him as the means and the power, and be unto Him for His glory— Rom. 11:36; cf. Num. 18:1.
- C. We need to serve the Lord with our whole being according to the counsel of God by coordinating with the members of the Body—Rom. 12:1-2, 11; Acts 13:36a; 1 Cor. 12:14-22.
- D. We need to use the Lord's gift to build up the church by serving others with Christ and ministering Christ as grace to them—Matt. 25:27; 1 Pet. 4:10; Col. 1:7; 4:12:
 - 1. We need to serve as laboring priests of the gospel of God, saving sinners to offer them to God as acceptable sacrifices and eventually present them full-grown in Christ—Rom. 15:16; 12:1; Col. 1:28.
 - 2. We need to supply others with Christ as their spiritual food at the proper time—Matt. 24:45:
 - a. We need to speak Christ to all kinds of people daily in season and out of season—Acts 5:42; 8:4; 2 Tim. 4:2.
 - b. We need to desperately endeavor to build up a habit of speaking in any meeting—1 Cor. 14:26, 4-5, 12, 31.
 - c. We should always have something to speak in all the meetings as a freewill offering to God and to the attendants—v. 26:
 - (1) Before coming to the meeting, we should prepare ourselves for the meeting with something of the Lord, either through our experience of Him or through our enjoyment of His word and fellowship with Him in prayer.
 - (2) After coming into the meeting, we need not wait, and should not wait, for inspiration; we should exercise our spirit and use our trained mind to function in presenting what we have prepared to the Lord for His glory and satisfaction and to the attendants for their benefit—their enlightenment, nourishment, and building up.
 - 3. We need to care for people with the loving and forgiving heart of our Father God and the shepherding and seeking spirit of our Savior Christ— John 21:15-17:
 - a. Whatever we do should be with a burning spirit of love—2 Tim. 1:7.
 - b. Love is the most excellent way for us to be anything and to do anything for the building up of the Body of Christ—1 Cor. 12:31b; 13:4-8, 13.
 - 4. We should not mistreat our fellow believers by criticizing, judging, or exposing them; instead, we should admonish the disorderly, console the little-souled, sustain those who are weak in spirit, soul, or body, or weak in the faith, and be long-suffering toward all—Matt. 24:49; 1 Thes. 5:14.
 - 5. Through our involvement in the world, we should not render the Lord's gift useless, letting it lie waste under the cloak of certain earthly excuses— Matt. 25:18.
- E. We should always abound in the work of the Lord, knowing that our labor for the Lord in His resurrection life with His resurrection power will never be in vain, but will result in the fulfilling of God's eternal purpose—1 Cor. 15:58.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

PROPHECY OF THE KINGDOM (5b)

The Lord of the Slaves Coming to Settle Accounts with Them

Verse 19 says, “Now after a long time the lord of those slaves comes and settles accounts with them.” A long time signifies the entire church age, and the coming signifies the Lord’s coming to the air (1 Thes. 4:16) in His parousia. To settle accounts signifies the Lord’s judgment at His judgment seat (2 Cor. 5:10; Rom. 14:10) in the air (within His parousia), where the believers’ life, conduct, and work will be judged for reward or punishment (1 Cor. 4:5; Matt. 16:27; Rev. 22:12; 1 Cor. 3:13-15).

The Five-talented and the Two-talented Ones Both Receiving a Reward

Verse 20 says, “And he who received the five talents came and brought another five talents, saying, Lord, you delivered to me five talents; behold, I have gained another five talents.” The coming of the five-talented one refers to the coming to the judgment seat of Christ. Gaining another five talents is the result of the full use of the gift of the five talents.

Verse 21 says, “His lord said to him, Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful over a few things, I will set you over many things; enter into the joy of your lord.” The “few things” signify the Lord’s work in this age, “over” signifies the ruling authority in the coming kingdom, and the “many things” signify the responsibilities in the coming kingdom. The joy of the Lord signifies the enjoyment of the Lord in the coming kingdom. This is the inward satisfaction, not the outward position. To participate in the Lord’s joy is the greatest reward, better than the glory and position in the kingdom. Here we see two aspects of the reward given to the faithful slave: authority and enjoyment. The faithful will enter directly into the Lord’s presence in the manifestation of the kingdom.

The same reward is given to the two-talented one as to the five-talented one. When the two-talented one came and said that he had gained another two talents, the Lord said the same thing to him that He had said to the five-talented one (vv. 22-23). Although the gift given to the two-talented one is smaller than that given to the five-talented one, the Lord’s appraisal and reward to both are the same. This indicates that the Lord’s appraisal and reward are not related to the size and quantity of our work, but to our faithfulness in using His gift to the fullest extent. The same appraisal and reward would also have been given to the one-talented one if he had been as faithful.

The One-talented One Receiving a Rebuke and Being Punished

Verse 24 says, “And he also who received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew you, that you are a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter.” The one-talented one, who did not gain any profit for the Lord, also came to the judgment seat of Christ in the air. This proves that he is not only saved, but also raptured to the air. No unsaved person could be raptured and come to the judgment seat of Christ.

The one-talented one said that the Lord was a hard man, reaping where he did not sow and gathering where he did not scatter. Apparently the Lord is hard in His strictness, demanding that we use His gift to the fullest extent for His absolute work. It seems that the Lord’s work always begins from zero. He seemingly demands us to work for Him with nothing. This should not be an excuse for the one-talented one to neglect the use of his gift. Rather, this should force him to exercise his faith to use his gift to the uttermost.

The one-talented slave went away and hid the talent in the earth. In doing this he was too passive. We should be active for the Lord's work. Because he had buried his talent, he could only give it back to the Lord. Merely to keep the Lord's gift and not lose it is not sufficient; we must gain a profit by using it. The one-talented one seemed to be saying, "Behold, Lord, here is what is Yours. I didn't lose anything. I have been faithful to keep what You gave me."

Verse 26 says, "But his lord answered and said to him, Evil and slothful slave, you knew that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter." Here the Lord admits that He is strict in what He demands of His slaves for His work. In a sense, the Lord is such a hard man. He always reaps where He has not sown and gathers where He has not scattered. Consider the fact that the Lord's recovery began from scratch, from nothing.

In a sense the slave's word about the Lord's gathering where He has not scattered and reaping where He has not sown is true. But in another sense it is not true. We should not say that the Lord has not scattered, for He has given each of us at least one talent. His giving the talent to us is the sowing and the scattering. Now the Lord sends us to gather where He has not scattered and to reap where He has not sown. None of us can say that the Lord has given us nothing. At least we have one talent. This talent is the seed for sowing and the possessions for scattering. Therefore, we need to reap where the Lord has not sown and gather where He has not scattered. What the Lord has given you contains the producing element. Wherever you go with your talent, it will be productive. This productiveness, however, depends upon your practice, your exercise of the talent. If you use the talent, it will produce. But if you hide it, it will not produce anything.

Many, however, consider that functioning is just a matter of speaking in the meetings. But the proper function of the members is to minister the life supply to others by taking care of them. The main aspect of the service is not simply to clean the meeting hall or take care of the gardening. We are here for God's possessions.

We all need to learn to use our talent to multiply the Lord's possessions. The Lord has given each of us part of His possessions as a talent, and our burden, duty, and responsibility are to see that this talent is multiplied. Do not make excuses for yourselves, and do not say that you have no time to take care of others. No matter how busy you are, it is still possible to use your function by taking care of others, even if you are able to come to only one meeting a week. Do not think that you are so weak. Perhaps you are weak; however, others are even weaker, and they need you. Even if you feel that you are the weakest one, there are some who are almost dead, and they need your help. The best way to use your talent is to take care of others, to become interested in others and concerned for them. This does not mean that you should become interested in the affairs of others. The Lord has employed you not for this purpose, but to take care of others.

Verse 27 says, "You ought therefore to have deposited my silver with the bankers, and when I came I would have recovered what is mine with interest." Depositing the silver with the bankers signifies using the Lord's gift to lead others to salvation and to minister His riches to them. Interest signifies the profitable result we gain for the Lord's work by using His gift.

In a sense, we may say that the bankers are all the new ones, weak ones, young ones, and backsliding ones. We need to deposit the Lord's possession with these bankers. The bankers are not the leading brothers, but the weaker ones, those who have problems....If you use your talent in this way to take care of others, you will not only multiply the talent, but you yourself will be in the third heaven and will quickly grow and be transformed. You will be renewed in the spirit of the mind, and among us there will be a marvelous testimony of the Body to the whole universe. The universe will see that we are not a religious gathering, but a living Body. For this, we all

need to use our talent, the Lord's possession. The result will be multiplication. I can testify that the more we take care of the saints and the churches, the richer we become.

Verse 28 says, "Take away therefore the talent from him, and give it to him who has the ten talents." Taking away the talent signifies that the Lord's gift will be taken away from slothful believers in the coming kingdom. The giving of the talent to the one with ten talents signifies that the gift of faithful believers will be increased.

Verse 29 continues, "For to everyone who has shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him who has not, even that which he has shall be taken away from him." To everyone who gains profit in the church age, more gift shall be given in the coming kingdom age; but from him who has not gained profit in the church age, even the gift he has shall be taken away from him in the coming kingdom age.

Verse 30 says, "And cast out the useless slave into the outer darkness; there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth." This word, the same as in 24:51, indicates that 25:14-30 is a completion to 24:45-51 concerning faithfulness for the Lord's work. Matthew 24:45-51 has dealt with the slave's unfaithfulness in fulfilling the Lord's commission, but 25:14-30 is still needed to deal with the slave's unfaithfulness in using the Lord's talent.

In both chapters twenty-four and twenty-five we see the matters of reward and punishment. According to 24:47, the reward to the faithful and prudent slave is that the Lord will set him over all His possessions. The evil slave, who beats his fellow slaves and eats and drinks with the drunken, will be cut asunder and have his portion with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth (24:49-51). In chapter twenty-five the five-talented one and the two-talented one are rewarded by being put over many things and by entering into the joy of the Lord. The slothful, one-talented slave, however, is punished by being cast into outer darkness. To many Christian teachers, being cast into outer darkness denotes eternal perdition of a false believer. But the context proves that this is not an accurate understanding. This is not the punishment of false believers, but of genuine believers who are not faithful. It does not refer to eternal perdition, but to punishment during the coming kingdom age.

In the previous message and in this message we have seen the matters of life and service. For life we need the infilling of the Holy Spirit, and for service we need the gifts of the Holy Spirit. In our life we need to be watchful, and in our service we need to be faithful. Our watchfulness in life is related to the early rapture, and our faithfulness in service is related to the reward. If we are watchful and faithful, then we shall be raptured early and we shall be rewarded when the Lord comes back. To be raptured early is to participate in the enjoyment of the wedding feast, and to be rewarded is to participate in the authority in the coming kingdom age. (*Life-study of Matthew, message sixty-five*)

KONFERENZ FÜR JUNGE ERWACHSENE IN DEUTSCHLAND 2017

Message Four

How to Enjoy God in Prayer

Scripture Reading: Psa. 42:1-2; 27:4; 2 Cor. 3:18; Psa. 62:1; 37:9; 104:34; 29:2; 150:1;
1 Tim. 2:1; Gen. 18:22, 33

I. Real prayer is nothing but waiting on God and breathing in God; breathing God is to absorb God:

- A. In order to breath in God through prayer, we must **appear** before God—Psa. 42:1-2.
 1. When we pray, we close our eyes not only to concentrate but also to stop our outward being; our outward being often wanders with our eyes.
 2. After we stop our entire being and shut the door to the outside world, we will be able to turn to the deepest part of our being and exercise our spirit.
 3. When we turn to exercise our spirit, we immediately touch God and appear before Him in our spirit; we must reach God.
- B. After touching God in our spirit we should be **silent** and calm; we must learn the lesson of not opening our mouth quickly; we do not need to shout and cry when we touch God—Psa. 62:1:
 1. We must learn a serious lesson in prayer; we must turn our being away from the outside world and stop our entire being and turn to our spirit and remain there silently.
 2. The more intimate we are with a person, the more silent we can be when we are with that person; simply by looking at each other our sentiments are conveyed without speaking.
- C. When we come before God in prayer, we must learn to stop our speaking, to cut off our words, and to simply turn to our spirit to appear before Him, touch Him, **behold** Him in silence, and gaze upon Him—Psa. 27:4; 2 Cor. 3:18:
 1. Beholding the beauty of the Lord is to look at the Lord in our spirit and to gaze on Him.
 2. We need to look at Him again and again, beholding, appreciating, and even treasuring Him; this is very sweet and necessary; this is to absorb God and enjoy Him.
- D. When we open our mouth, we do not need to ask or beg, but we can **inquire**; the best prayer is an inquiring prayer and this is the sweetest prayer:
 1. Many brothers and sisters have never inquired of the Lord, they only ask and beg; if we simply implore God when we pray, in reality, we are the Lord in this matter.
 2. There are times when we do things according to the index of a person's eyes; this is how we should pray.
 3. Those who have never learned this lesson of inquiring are wild and reckless in their prayers; but the Lord answers in a fine, gentle and proper way.
 4. The best prayer is an inquiring prayer, but inquiring can only happen when a person is calm.
- E. Next, we should learn to **wait** on God; this is a trying lesson—Psa. 37:9; 62:1:
 1. Many times when God asks us to do something for Him, He does not force us; He waits until we are ready; if God can wait on us, should we not wait on Him?

2. Waiting on God is to allow Him to determine the timing; we cannot dictate the time; He dictates the time and we need to wait.
- F. We also need to learn to **muse** or meditate on everything about God; His loveliness, His lovingkindness, His dignity, His glory, His attributes, and His acts:
 1. What touches God's heart the most and gives Him the sweetest thought is our musing on Him in His presence—Psa. 104:34
 2. We can muse on His dealing with us and with the saints of old, on the sweetness of His person; we can meditate on His desire, love, patience, character, glory, and sweetness; in this musing we absorb God and His element fills us.
 3. In our prayers we should forget about ourselves and spend more time to muse on Him, allowing Him and His acts to fill our spiritual eyes and our inward senses; God treasures this kind of musing; He appreciates this kind of meditation.
- G. As we touch Him, remain in Him, behold His loveliness, converse with Him, inquire of Him, and wait on Him, and muse upon Him, we should **worship** Him:
 1. We should worship Him in our spirit and with our whole being; we should attune our entire being to His holy splendor and worship Him in Holy splendor—Psa. 29:2
 2. We should prostrate ourselves before Him and offer Him our worship.
- H. We should also **praise** God; praise always follows worship; as we muse upon a certain matter, praises should flow forth from within us—150:1.
- I. We also should learn to participate in **intercessory** work; if we are able to spend more time before God, He will surely tell us the things that concern Him—1 Tim. 2:1:
 1. As we remain in God, muse upon Him, worship Him, and praise Him, He reveals His desire to us, and we intercede by inquiring; this kind of prayer is sweet.
 2. As soon as we know these things, we need to do the work of intercession in the form of inquiring; this is the best intercession.
- J. We also need to allow God to finish His speaking; this is what Abraham did; he prayed but God spoke—Gen. 18:33:
 1. Many times in our prayers we go away as soon as we have finished speaking.
 2. In our prayers we have no thought of God speaking but rather we go away as soon as we finish our speaking.

II. Enjoying God by praying at set times:

- A. Old Testament examples:
 1. David:
 - a. “Seven times a day I praise You / For Your righteous ordinances”—Psa. 119:164.
 - b. “Evening and morning and at noontime / I complain and moan, / And He hears my voice”—55:17.
 2. Daniel: “Now when Daniel came to know that the writing had been signed, he went to his house (in his upper room he had windows open toward Jerusalem) and three times daily he knelt on his knees and prayed and gave thanks before his God, because he had always done so previously”—Dan. 6:10.
- B. New Testament examples:

1. Cornelius: “And Cornelius said, Four days ago to this hour I was praying at the ninth hour in my house”—Acts 10:30.
2. Peter: “And on the next day as they were journeying and drawing near to the city, Peter went up on the housetop to pray around the sixth hour”—10:9.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

HOW TO ENJOY GOD IN PRAYER

Scripture Reading: Psa. 42:1-2; 27:4; 62:1; 104:34; 145:5; 29:2; 150:1; Gen. 18:22, 33

In this chapter and the next we will consider how we can enjoy God through prayer and reading the Word. Prayer and reading the Word are the most crucial means to receive and enjoy God.

Although prayer and reading the Word are quite common among us, there are many details to consider. Many people pray, but they do not know the meaning of prayer. Similarly, many people read the Bible, but they do not know the significance of reading the Word. The more common a practice is, the more science there is to it. We should never think that as soon as one becomes a Christian, he automatically knows how to pray and read the Word. It is not that simple. If a Christian truly touches the key to prayer and reading the Word, he is on his way to enjoying God daily. Let us now consider how to enjoy God through prayer.

PRAYER BEING TO BREATHE IN GOD

Prayer is not mainly a matter of coming to God to ask for something. The meaning of prayer is not to ask God to do something for us. The primary significance of prayer is to breathe in God, to absorb God. When we pray, we should not have a motive or intention of asking God to do something for us; rather, our intention should be to breathe in God and absorb Him. Regrettably, many Christians misunderstand the meaning of prayer. They think that we need to pray to God to ask for help because there are things that we cannot do. Let me say strongly, this is not prayer. Real prayer has nothing to do with asking God for help.

Simply put, prayer is our spiritual breathing. We all know what it is to breathe. When we breathe out, we exhale the carbon dioxide that is within us. When we breathe in, we inhale the oxygen that is outside of us. This is what happens when we breathe in and breathe out. In prayer we do the same thing—we breathe out what is within us, and we breathe in what is in God. Everything that we have in our natural being can be compared to carbon dioxide, and everything that God is can be compared to oxygen. When we pray, we breathe out everything undesirable, and we breathe in everything of God.

Recently we found a good hymn on prayer (*Hymns*, #255). This hymn says that when we come to God, we breathe out ourselves and everything we have, and we breathe in God and everything He has. By this breathing in and out, we are delivered from ourselves and are put into God. This kind of breathing discharges what is within us and brings in everything of God. When we breathe out, our sins are exhaled, and when we breathe in, God’s holiness is inhaled. By breathing out, we rid ourselves of weakness. By breathing in, we take in God’s power. We may be full of sorrow and grief, but as soon as we come to God and breathe out, the sorrow and grief are gone. After breathing out, we must breathe in. When we breathe in, God’s joy and comfort enter into us. This is the meaning of prayer. Prayer is to breathe in God, just as we

breathe in air. Whenever we pray, we breathe in God. Prayer is our spiritual breathing before God and in God. Even though we often do not know what to say when we wait on God, there is a sighing within us. This sighing can be compared to breathing. Our experience shows that when we sigh a little, the weight on our shoulder disappears. We are fully released and rested, and we overflow with a sense of sweetness. We may often find ourselves sinking into darkness and confusion within, not knowing which path we should take, what we should do, or even how we should pray. But while we wait on the Lord, we utter a sigh from deep in our being. It is interesting that after sighing for a while, the darkness and confusion vanish, and we become clear and uncluttered, knowing the way to proceed. This wonderful experience is the meaning of prayer. Real prayer is nothing but waiting on God and breathing in God. When we breathe, we exhale everything that we are and inhale everything that God is.

Let us now consider ten points to illustrate how we breathe in God through prayer.

Appearing before God

In order to breathe in God through prayer, we must appear before God. The psalmist says that he thirsts for God. His soul pants for God as the hart pants for the streams of water. He says, "When will I come and appear / Before God?" (Psa. 42:2). Do we appear before God when we pray? Do we thirst to touch Him in our spirit? Whenever we breathe in God, we must first exercise to appear before Him. We should never think that God is only in heaven; He is abiding in our spirit. When we pray, we close our eyes not only to concentrate but also to stop our outward being. Our outward being often wanders with our eyes. By closing our eyes when we pray, we close the gate of our eyes, shut the door to the outside world, and turn the direction of our being to our spirit. After we stop our entire being and close the door to the outside world, we will be able to turn to the deepest part of our being and exercise our spirit. When we turn to exercise our spirit, we immediately touch God and appear before Him in our spirit.

Being Silent

After touching God in our spirit, we must learn the lesson of not opening our mouth quickly. We do not need to shout and cry when we touch God. We should be silent and calm. The more silent and calm we are, the better.

Many of us cannot pray once we are told to be silent. As soon as we are quiet, our minds wander, and we become confused. We need to shout and cry in order to concentrate. This proves that we have not learned the proper lesson in prayer.

We must learn a serious lesson in prayer. We must turn our entire being away from the outside world. We must stop our entire being and turn to our spirit so that we can appear before God. The psalmist says that he desires to dwell in the house of Jehovah to behold His beauty (27:4). The house of Jehovah is our spirit. We must turn our entire being to our spirit and remain there silently. This is a matter of practice.

In order to have prayers that breathe in God, we first need to turn to our spirit to touch God. After we touch God, we need to be silent before Him. This is true even in human communication. A person is probably not that close to us if we can only speak loudly to him once we meet. The more intimate we are with a person, the more silent we can be when we are with him. Simply by looking at each other, our sentiments are conveyed without speaking. The same can be said concerning one who is experienced in touching God. When he touches God, he is silent. Even if he is moved to tears, these tears are inward rather than outward. If he has anything to say, he speaks quietly; he does not need to shout or cry. Everyone who learns to breathe in God learns this lesson. As we touch God in our spirit, the best thing to do is to be silent before Him.

Beholding His Beauty

Although these points do not have a legal or fixed order, we should learn to behold the beauty of the Lord in silence (v. 4). Many Christians have never heard of this practice. Beholding the beauty of the Lord is to look at the Lord in our spirit and to gaze at Him. When we come before God in prayer, we must learn to stop our speaking, to cut off our words, and to simply turn to our spirit to appear before Him, touch Him, behold Him in silence, and gaze upon Him. We need to look at Him again and again, beholding, appreciating, and even treasuring Him. This is very sweet and necessary. We should never consider prayer to be merely asking God to do something for us. No, the object and subject of prayer are not things. Both the object and subject of prayer are God Himself. First we should touch Him. Then we should be silent before Him. After this we should behold Him by looking and gazing at Him. This is to absorb God and enjoy Him.

Inquiring

When we open our mouth, we do not need to ask or beg, but we can inquire. Many brothers and sisters have never inquired of the Lord. They only ask and beg. They say, "God, my son is sick. I have this need and that lack." Their asking turns into begging: "Heal my son. Take care of me. Give me what I need." What is this? This is begging. These are not good prayers. The best prayer is inquiring prayer. As we touch God, wait in silence, behold His loveliness, and converse with Him, we can ask Him, "Would You like me to mention a certain matter now?" This is the sweetest kind of prayer.

When Abraham stood before Jehovah (Gen. 18), he did not open his mouth quickly. He waited before God, inquired of Him, and looked at Him. There are times when we do things according to the index of a person's eyes; we speak according to the expression on their face. This is how we should pray. The psalmist expressed his desire: "To dwell in the house of Jehovah / All the days of my life, / To behold the beauty of Jehovah, / And to inquire in His temple" (v. 4). We must turn to our spirit, behold Him, and then inquire of Him.

I am afraid that many brothers and sisters have never prayed this way. It may be difficult for a sister who is praying for her husband's health to discuss the matter with God. It is difficult to find a person who would say, "God, can I pray for this matter? Can I bring up this subject now? What should I ask?" This is not how we usually pray. If a husband is sick, when his wife kneels down, she says, "God, my husband is sick. Please heal him quickly and promptly so that he will recover his health and even be healthier." How does this sister know that God wants to heal her husband promptly or to make him healthier than he was before? What if God wants him to be sick or wants to take him away? How does she know what God wants to do? She should discuss this matter with God. If she does not discuss this matter but simply implores God when she prays, in reality, she is the Lord in this matter; everything revolves around her. Brothers and sisters, have we learned the lesson of inquiring of God? Those who have never learned this lesson are wild and reckless in their prayers.

Our God is neither wild nor reckless. He will not deal with wild and obstinate people. Whether God is revealed as Jehovah in the Old Testament or as Jesus in the New Testament, He is shown to be a very civil and fine person; He is not wild...Many pray in a wild way, but the Lord answers in a fine way. He responds to man's prayer in a gentle and proper way.

It is difficult to find a person who does not pray to God in a wild way. We are not used to beholding His loveliness in silence; we are not used to living according to the index of His eyes. This is a pity. We must learn to be an inquiring person in our prayer. We should ask the Lord, "Can I bring up this subject at this time?" We should look at His eyes. If He is not happy, we should not continue. If He has an expression of approval, we can proceed by asking how we

should pray. This is what it means to inquire. Some may say, “This is too slow. Things will be delayed, and people will die.” We need to remember that time is in God’s hand. He is beyond time. The Lord can save a brother if he is sick, He can resurrect him even if he has died, and He can make him fresh even if he smells. We must believe that our Lord never delays any work. The best prayer is inquiring prayer, but inquiring can only happen when a person is calm. If we have never touched God and have never been calm before Him or never beheld His loveliness, we do not know the meaning of inquiring.

Waiting

We should learn to wait on God. This is a trying lesson. Even in human relationships waiting is an important element. Suppose I want a brother to help me. If he is busy when I go to see him, I cannot make my request. I must wait until he is no longer busy before I can open my mouth. We should not think that we can skip this step when we pray. Many times when God asks us to do something for Him, He does not force us. He waits until we are ready. If God can wait on us, should we not wait on God?

The book of Psalms is filled with the matter of waiting on God. In the prayers of the psalmists the word *waiting* is uttered numerous times. We need to wait on Jehovah (37:9). Our soul should wait in silence for God alone (62:1). We cannot breathe in God without first waiting on Him. Waiting on God is to allow Him to determine the timing. We cannot dictate the time; He dictates the time. We need to wait. When we pray, we need to inquire of God, and we also need to wait on God.

Musing

We also need to learn to muse or meditate on everything about God. We must meditate on God’s loveliness, His lovingkindness, His dignity, His glory, His attributes, and His acts. We must learn that when breathing in God through prayer, we should not only inquire of Him and wait on Him but also meditate on Him and ponder His acts.

We should not think that it is a waste of time to temporarily set aside other matters in our prayers while we meditate on God. God already knows our needs. What touches His heart the most and gives Him the sweetest thought is our musing on Him in His presence. This is the reason the psalmist says, “May my musing be sweet to Him” (104:34). We should remain in His presence and behold Him in silence. While we behold Him in this way, we inquire of Him, wait on Him, and muse on Him. We can muse on His dealings with us and on His dealings with the saints of old. We can also muse on the sweetness of His person. We can meditate on His desire, love, patience, character, glory, and sweetness. In this musing, we absorb God, and His elements fill us. We should gain this experience and learn this lesson.

Please trust in my word. We must leave our many affairs, our business, health, family, finance, and livelihood, in God’s hand and remember His promise that our heavenly Father knows that we need all these things (Matt. 6:32). We must cast all our anxiety on Him (1 Pet. 5:7). There is no need to spend much time praying for these things. There is no need to pray for every point. We should believe that He bears the responsibility for all our needs. In our prayers we should forget about ourselves and spend more time to muse on Him, allowing Him and His acts to fill our spiritual eyes and inward senses. God treasures this type of musing; He appreciates this kind of meditation. When we enjoy Him in this musing, He dispenses Himself into us and takes care of all our other needs. We should be at peace and focus on His sweetness instead of focusing on our own affairs. We need to spend time to muse upon His sweetness.

Worshipping

As we touch Him, remain in Him, behold His loveliness, converse with Him, inquire of Him, wait on Him, and muse upon Him, we should worship Him. We should worship Him in our spirit and with our whole being. We should attune our entire being to His holy splendor and worship Him in holy splendor (Psa. 29:2). We should prostrate ourselves before Him and offer Him our worship.

Praising

We should also praise God. Praise always follows worship. As we muse upon a certain matter, praises should flow forth from within us.

Interceding

We also should learn to participate in intercessory work. If time permits and we are able to spend more time before God, He will surely tell us things that concern Him. As soon as we know these things, we need to do the work of intercession. Abraham stood before God. As he remained in His presence, God seemingly said, "Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do? I have to let him know that I will destroy Sodom. But there is a child of mine in Sodom. On the one hand, I will destroy Sodom; on the other hand, I want to save Lot. This is My desire." Once Abraham heard this, he immediately began his intercessory work before God. In his prayer he said, "Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city; will You indeed destroy and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous who are in it?...Shall the Judge of all the earth not do justly?" (Gen. 18:24-25). Abraham's intercession was absolutely in the form of inquiring; he did not ask or beg. Abraham kept inquiring all the way to the end. This is the best kind of intercession. As we remain in God, muse upon Him, worship Him, and praise Him, He reveals His desire to us, and we intercede by inquiring. This kind of prayer is sweet.

Allowing God to Finish His Speaking

We also need to allow God to finish what He is speaking. This was what Abraham did. He prayed, but God spoke. The Scripture says, "Jehovah went away as soon as He had finished speaking with Abraham" (v. 33). Many times in our prayers we go away as soon as we have finished speaking rather than letting God go away when He is finished speaking. In our prayers we have no thought of God's speaking. We simply speak what we want. After praying, we say, "In the name of Jesus, Amen." Then we leave. We do not care if God is leaving or staying. Let me say this jokingly: It is perhaps a good thing that God's presence is not with us during this type of prayer. If God were with us He would feel very lonely. It is very impolite to meet someone, not allow him to speak, and leave as soon as we are finished speaking. This, however, is the way many people pray to God.

Although Abraham inquired in his prayer, God was the One speaking. In his prayer Abraham did not finish speaking and then walk away. Rather, Jehovah finished speaking and then left. After Jehovah departed, Abraham left. Can we wait for God to finish speaking before we say, "In the name of Jesus, Amen"? Many times as soon as we finish our speaking, we say Amen. We may say Amen to such a prayer, but has God said Amen? We have finished, but God has not finished. This is a pitiful condition. We have never learned to absorb God, to receive God, and to breathe in God. We pray in a wild and reckless way. We have never been trained in the matter of prayer. We have never surrendered in this matter. We have never allowed God to speak. Consequently, we do not gain much God at the end of our prayers. We have not absorbed Him or received very much of Him.

In summary, when we come to God to breathe Him in, we must first turn to our spirit to touch Him. We should be calm, behold Him, inquire of Him, and learn to wait on Him. We should also muse upon Him, worship Him, praise Him, and learn to intercede before Him. Later we should allow Him to finish His speaking. Then we can let Him know that we are satisfied. This is the best kind of prayer. It is a prayer that receives and absorbs God. If we always pray in this way, we will surely receive and appropriate much more of God, and He will surely be our real enjoyment. This is what it means to enjoy God through our prayer. May the Lord graciously enable us to live in this reality! (*How to Enjoy God and How to Practice the Enjoyment of God, chapter five*)

Calendar

2017

- Oct. 5th ~ 7th International Training for Elders and Responsible Ones
Leipzig, Germany
- Oct. 9th ~ 12th Bible distribution in the main universities in Germany
- Oct. 14th ~ 15th Conference in Stuttgart, Germany

2018

- Mar. 23rd ~ 25th Spring European University Conference,
De Hoof, Netherlands