

PERFECTING TRAINING ON PRAYER LIFE

The Church in Brampton, Ontario

December 17, 2006

Message Three

Having Much and Thorough Prayer

Scripture Reading: Matt. 18:18-20; Ezek. 33:7; Rev. 1:13; 1 John 5:16; Rev. 8:3; Exo. 28:29-30; Eph. 6:18-19

- I. “... if two of you are in harmony on earth concerning any matter for which they ask, it will be done for them from My Father who is in the heavens”(Matt. 18:19).
- II. **Much and thorough prayer always issues in the organic shepherding—Ezek. 33:7; 34:23; Rev. 1:13; Heb. 7:25; Matt. 18:18-20; 1 John 5:16.**
 - A. In God’s recovery by life, He first sends the watchman to His people, and then He Himself appears as the Shepherd.
 - B. Christ, the Son of Man who cares for the churches in love is girded about at the breast with a golden girdle —Rev. 1:13.
 1. The priests in the Old Testament need to put on holy garments for their ministry —Exo. 28:4.
 2. The priestly garments can be compared to the uniform worn by a policeman, qualifying the priests to serve, and sanctifying the priests.
 - C. The Christ who ministers as the High Priest is the interceding One, ministering bread and wine to us —Gen. 14:18-20; Heb. 7:25.
 - D. The prayer of the vital group recovers and gains the sinning brother—Matt.18:18-20.
 - E. Through asking in one spirit with Christ for the sinning brother, we can become the means, the channel, through which God’s life-giving Spirit can impart life to the one for whom we ask—1 John 5:16.
- III. **Much and thorough prayer can be typified by the picture of the tabernacle and the priestly service in the Old Testament—Exo. 33:1-5; 28:15, 17, 29-30; Num. 4:3.**
 - A. Being typified by the altar of the burnt offering, the laver, and the incense altar in the tabernacle—Exo. 38:1-8; 33:1-5.
 1. The altar of the burnt offering signifies the prayer in which we open to the Lord and consecrate ourselves to Him—Num.6:1-4; Rom. 12:1.
 2. The laver signifies the prayer of thorough confession—1 John 1:9.
 3. The incense altar signifies the prayer of executing the divine administration—Exo. 30:1-5; Rev. 8:3.
 - a. The ark in the Holy of Holies is the central government, our heavenly Washington, D.C. The incense altar may be regarded as our heavenly White House.
 - b. Christ’s intercession is the center of the execution of the divine administration —Rev. 8:3.
 - B. Being typified by the breastplate as part of the garment of the priest when he ministers—Exo. 28:15; 17, 29-30.
 1. The high priest enters into the Holy of Holies with a plate upon his breast which is a building of gold and precious stones—Exo. 28:9-10, 15, 17, 20-21.
 2. When the Urim and the Thummim were added to the breastplate, they caused it to become the breastplate of judgment—Exo. 28:29, 30; Num. 27:21.
- IV. **“By means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit and watching unto this in all perseverance and petition concerning all the saints,” (Eph. 6:18).**
 - A. Among God’s children, prayer is the one thing that is most easily attacked.

- B. We must be watchful to fight for a time to pray, to guard prayer, to stop prayers that are not prayer, and to be on guard against Satan's strategy to cut off our prayer.

Excerpts from the ministry:

THE PRAYER OF THE VITAL GROUP IS THE BINDING AND RELEASING PRAYER

We have to see the connection between verses 17 and 18. Verse 17 is so low, saying that we should let the sinning one who will not listen to the church be to us like a Gentile and a tax collector. But verse 18 says that we should touch heaven by our binding and releasing prayer. This is the prayer of the vital group. Verse 19 says, "Again, truly I say to you that if two of you are in harmony on earth concerning any matter for which they ask, it will be done for them from My Father who is in the heavens." This is the practice of a vital group of two or three in harmony touching the very God in heaven. These are the two or three mentioned in verse 16: "But if he does not hear you, take with you one or two more...." These are the members of a vital group.

If a brother sins against us, we need to deal with him first in love. If we cannot get through, we should bring with us one or two more to contact him. If we still cannot get through, we should tell it to the church, and if the church cannot get through, then the sinner brother will lose the fellowship of the church. But this is not all. We have to then pray in the way of binding and releasing, and we have to pray in harmony. Whatever we pray, our Father in heaven will accomplish to gain that person. Verse 20 says, "For where there are two or three gathered into My name, there am I in their midst." This is the reality of the vital groups. These two or three are gathered into the Lord's name for His purpose, not into their names for their purposes. (*The Vital Groups*, pp. 4-5)

MUCH AND THOROUGH PRAYERS ALWAYS ISSUE IN THE ORGANIC SHEPHERDING

Christ, the Son of Man Who Cares for the Churches in Love Is Girded about at the Breasts with a Golden Girdle

Verse 13 also says that Christ, the Son of Man, was "girded about at the breasts with a golden girdle." Have you ever seen someone girded about at the breasts with a girdle? This is quite meaningful. The priests in the Old Testament were girded at the loins for their ministry (Exo. 28:4). In Daniel 10:5 Christ is also girded with fine gold at His loins. But here Christ as our High Priest is "girded about at the breasts." The breasts signify love. To be girded at the loins is to be strengthened for work, whereas to be "girded about at the breasts" signifies care in love. Christ's work in producing the churches has been accomplished. Now He no longer needs to be girded at His loins for work. What He is doing now in the midst of the churches is to care for them in love. This requires Him to be "girded about at the breasts with a golden girdle." This "golden girdle" signifies divine strength. Christ is now exercising a divine care over the churches, moving among them in His humanity and caring for them with His divine strength. What a loving care He exercises over His churches today! (*Life-Study of Revelation*, p. 104)

The Priestly Garments Can Be Compared to the Uniform Worn by A Policeman

The priestly garments signify that those who serve God as priests must have a certain kind of expression. The priestly garments can be compared to the uniform worn by a policeman. When we see a man dressed in the uniform of a policeman, we know that this person is a policeman. A policeman's uniform is his expression. The same is true of the garments worn by a judge in a courtroom. A policeman's uniform and a judge's robe illustrate the fact that clothing signifies expression. According to the New Testament, the priestly garments signify the expression of Christ. Every aspect of the priestly garments signifies an attribute or virtue of Christ. Therefore, the priestly garments are the serving ones' expression of Christ. (*Life-Study of Exodus*, p. 1342)

The Christ Who Ministers as the High Priest Is the Interceding One,

Ministering Bread and Wine to Us

If you read Hebrews 7 again, you will see that the Christ who ministers as the High Priest is the interceding One. As you are fighting during the day, slaughtering the negative things, Christ, the High Priest, is interceding for you. This is clearly mentioned in 7:25. At the end of the day, when you have finished your fighting and He has finished His interceding, He comes to you with bread and wine to have a good time with you. This is our High Priest. While the victor was fighting, Melchisedec was watching and interceding. He saw Abraham's victory and knew when to come with the bread and wine. The Bible does not need to tell us certain things because if you see the front side you automatically know the back side. If you see the front of my face, you know something about the back of my head. The ministering Melchisedec must also have been the interceding high priest. This is the kind of High Priest that we have today in Christ. (*Life-Study of Hebrews*, p. 363)

Because We Ask for the Brother Sinning, We Can Become the Channel, through Which God Can Impart Life to the One for Whom We Ask

The subject of "will give life" is still he, the subject of the first predicate "shall ask." This indicates that the asker will give life to the one asked for. This does not mean that the asker has life of himself and can give life by himself to others. It means such an asker, who is abiding in the Lord, who is one with the Lord, and who is asking in one spirit with the Lord (1 Cor. 6:17), becomes the means through which God's life-giving Spirit can give life to the one he asks for. This is a matter of life-imparting in the fellowship of the divine life. To be one who can give life to others, we must abide in the divine life and walk, live, and have our being in the divine life. In James 5:14-16 the prayer is for healing; here the prayer is for life-imparting.

The vital point here is that if we would pray for a brother according to what is described in verse 16, we need to be one with the Lord. We must abide in the Lord and ask in one spirit with Him. Because we are so one with the Lord, we can become the means, the channel, through which God's life-giving Spirit can impart life to the one for whom we ask. This imparting of life takes place in the fellowship of the divine life.

Undoubtedly, "life" in verse 16 refers to spiritual life imparted into the one asked for through the prayer of the asker. However, according to the context, this spiritual life will also rescue the physical body of the one asked for from the danger of suffering death because of his sinning (see James 5:15). (*Life-Study of 1 John*, pp. 330-331)

The Incense Altar Signifies the Prayer of Executing the Divine Administration

According to the diagram of the tabernacle and the outer court, the ark is the focus. However, in actual practice the center is the incense altar. This indicates that Christ's interceding life is the center of the divine practice, the divine administration. In the universe there is something that may be called God's economy, God's administration, God's practice. We may use different terms to describe this one matter: economy, administration, practice, dispensation, move, government. All these terms may be regarded as synonymous, as referring to the same thing. This means that God's economy, dispensation, administration, government, move, and practice all refer to the same thing. God is not idle: He is a God of purpose. He has a purpose, and He is moving, working, acting, dispensing, administrating. This diagram of the tabernacle is a very accurate and detailed picture of God's administration, God's economy, in this universe.

When we study the incense altar, we are studying the greatest matter in the universe. There is nothing more central than this. Although we are not politicians, we surely are heavenly statesmen. Furthermore, we are studying universal "politics," that is, God's politics. The ark in the Holy of Holies is the central government, our heavenly Washington, D.C. The incense altar may be regarded as our heavenly White House. This means that everything is executed, motivated, and carried out

from this divine center. The intercession of Christ is God's White House. Christ's interceding life, His prayer life, is the center of God's administration.

The book of Revelation is a book of God's administration, a book of divine execution. This book reveals the throne of God and the administration of God throughout the universe. However, the executing center actually is not the throne; the executing center is the incense altar in Revelation 8. Revelation 8:3 says, "And another Angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer, and much incense was given to Him that He should add it to the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne." On this altar the prayers of the saints are offered to God, and Christ's incense is added to these prayers. When the prayers of the saints ascend to God with the incense of Christ, God executes the policies of His administration. (*Life-Study of Exodus*, pp. 1593-1594)

**The High Priest Enters into the Holy of Holies with A Plate upon His Breast
Which Is A Building of Gold And Precious Stones**

The high priest enters into the Holy of Holies with a plate upon his breast which is a building of gold and precious stones. There are the two shoulderplates and the breastplate. On the two shoulderplates there are twelve names divided into two groups. One group of six names is on one side, and the other group of six names is on the other side. In this way, twelve names are divided into two group of six. But on the breastplate there are four rows of precious stones, each row composed of three precious stones. All of this is upon the priest's robe. When the high priest passes all the places of the outer court and the Holy Place to get into the Holy of Holies to stand before the mercy seat, there is such a building upon him. (*The Priesthood* , p. 192)

**WATCHING UNTO THIS IN ALL PERSEVERANCE
AND PETITION CONCERNING ALL THE SAINTS**

"By means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit and watching unto this in all perseverance and petition concerning all the saints" (Eph. 6:18). We should pay particular attention to the phrase "watching unto this" in this verse. What does "this" refer to? By reading the context we know that it refers to prayer and petition. The apostle said that it is not enough to pray at every time by means of all prayer and petition; we also must be watchful in the matter of prayer and petition. On the one hand we have to pray, and on the other hand, we have to be watchful. What does it mean to be watchful? Being watchful is to be awake and to survey and keep surveillance by keeping one's eyes open. Being watchful is to be on the alert for any danger or emergency. Being watchful in prayer and petition is to have the spiritual insight to discern the stratagems of Satan and to expose his aim and the method of his work.

Ephesians 6 is a chapter on spiritual warfare. The most important thing in this chapter is the prayer mentioned at the end. Among God's children, prayer is the one thing that is most easily attacked. This is why we must be watchful to fight for a time to pray, to guard prayer, to stop prayers that are not prayer, and to be on guard against Satan's strategy to cut off our prayer. We must remember that prayer is a service, an excellent service. We have to watch and pray, and we must practice conscientiously, so that Satan will not have the opportunity to destroy our prayer. (*The Prayer Ministry of the Church*, p. 75, p. 87-88)

