

## Message Six

### **The Prayer of the Age to Fulfill God's Economy and the Sacrifice of Praise to Display Christ's Victory**

Scripture Reading: Acts 2:36; Eph. 1:19-23; Psa. 22:3; 119:164; Heb. 13:15; 2 Chron. 20:20-22

#### **I. The prayer of the age is the prayer of the church as the Body of Christ, as the one new man, the prayer that exercises the authority of Christ as the ascended Lord and Head of the Body to fulfill God's economy; to enter into this kind of prayer, we need a heavenly vision to see something that is far beyond our natural concept—Eph. 1:17:**

- A. We need to see the meaning of the ascension of Christ:
  - 1. The ascension of Christ indicates that the entire work of redemption has been completely accomplished—Heb. 1:3; 10:12.
  - 2. The ascension of Christ indicates that the lordship of Christ has been established—Acts 2:36:
    - a. Everything that the Lord has obtained and attained is being transmitted “to the church”—Eph. 1:19-23; 3:20-21.
    - b. We need to see the heavenly fact that Christ has been exalted by God, established as the Lord of the universe, and made Head over all things to the church; all things are under His feet, and everything that He has obtained and attained is being transmitted to the church, which is His Body—1:22-23.
- B. We need to see the church's position as the Body of Christ; because the church is the Body of Christ, the position of the church is exactly the same as that of Christ; since the Body is one with the Head, the position of the Body is exactly the same as that of the Head—1 Cor. 12:12, 27; Eph. 5:30.
- C. We need to see the authority of the church as the Body of Christ:
  - 1. The authority of the Body is the authority of the Head exercised by the Body.
  - 2. As the church, the Body of Christ, we need to assume the authority of Christ—Matt. 28:18b-19a; Luke 10:19.
- D. We need to see the prayer of the church as the Body of Christ:
  - 1. This kind of prayer is not the prayer of individual believers but the prayer of the church as the Body of Christ; physically, we may be praying in our room only by ourselves, but spiritually, we are one with the Body—cf. 1 Kings 8:48.
  - 2. In this kind of prayer, we do not beg the Lord to do something for us; instead, we claim what the Lord has obtained and attained:
    - a. Christ has obtained the lordship and the headship; He is the Lord and the Head over all things to the church.
    - b. Christ has attained the highest place in the universe; He has been raised from the dead and is seated at God's right hand in the heavenlies, far above all rule, authority, power, and lordship in the universe—Eph. 1:20-21.
  - 3. When we pray according to what the Lord has obtained in ascension, we may pray, “Lord, we do not go along with the present situation; as Your Body, we take the ground of Your ascension and claim Your lordship over the present situation.”
  - 4. When we pray according to what the Lord has attained in ascension, we should simply declare who we are and where we are; we are in the Body, the Body is in the Head, and the Head is transcendent; if we have the vision that we are the Body of the Head and that the Head is now transcendent, we will take the ground to claim

- what the Lord has attained and tell all the negative things, “Do not bother me. Go to the lake of fire! I am transcendent. You cannot touch me. You are under my feet.”
5. Because the Body is one with the Head in the heavens, the Body has the authority to bind and loose what has already been bound and loosed in the heavens—Matt. 16:19; 18:18.
  6. The church is built upon a rock, and this rock is the ascended Christ; as a result, the gates of Hades cannot prevail against the church—16:18.
- E. To fully enter into this kind of prayer and be able to exercise the authority given by the Head to the Body, there are two things that we must realize:
1. We must realize that we are members of the Body, and we must live, act, and move in the Body; as an example, imprisonment did not isolate Paul from the Body of Christ or cut him off from the supply of the Body—Phil. 1:19.
  2. In our daily life we must always put off the old man and put on the new man by being renewed in the spirit of our mind; the new man is composed of the Head with the Body, Christ with the church—Eph. 4:22-24; 2:15-16.
- F. “We need to see the vision of the ascended Christ and learn to pray the prayer of authority. For two thousand years these matters have been neglected, but we believe that in these last days the Lord is going to recover them. Too often we do not take the ground of Christ’s ascension and claim what He has obtained and attained. Nevertheless, we believe that the Lord will recover this lost ground. This is the highest peak, the highest mountain of the good land. In these last days the Lord will recover this highest peak, this highest mountain. We must realize the facts, take the ground, and claim what the Head has obtained and attained. This is the prevailing prayer of the church. This is the prayer of the age”—*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1963*, vol. 1, p. 165.

## II. Praise is the highest work carried out by God’s children:

- A. The highest expression of a saint’s spiritual life is his praise to God.
- B. God’s throne is the highest point in the universe, yet He sits “enthroned / Upon the praises of Israel”—Psa. 22:3.
- C. God’s name and even God Himself are exalted through praise:
  1. David praised God seven times a day; the Christian life soars through praises; to praise is to transcend everything to touch the Lord—119:164.
  2. David appointed Levites to play instruments to commemorate, thank, and praise God before the Ark of the Covenant of God—1 Chron. 16:4-6.
  3. When Solomon completed the building of Jehovah’s temple, the priests brought the Ark of the Covenant of Jehovah into the Holy of Holies; when the priests came out of the Holy Place, the Levites stood beside the altar, sounded the trumpets, and sang with cymbals, harps, and lyres; together they sounded praise to God, and at that moment the glory of Jehovah filled His house—2 Chron. 5:7, 12-14.
  4. We should praise the Lord all our life; we should sing praises to our God—Psa. 146:2; *Hymns*, #717, #124, #166.
  5. When we, the many sons of God, meet as the church and praise the Father, the first-born Son sings hymns of praise to the Father in our singing—Heb. 2:12.
- D. “Through Him then let us offer up a sacrifice of praise continually to God, that is, the fruit of lips confessing His name”—13:15:
  1. The book of Psalms is, in fact, a book of praise in the Old Testament; however, the Psalms contain chapters not only of praises but also of sufferings; God wants His people to know that the praising ones are the very ones who have been led through

- trying situations and whose feelings have been wounded, yet God perfected praises out of these ones—8:1-2; 84:4-6; 42:7, 11; 45:1-2.
2. The loudest praise comes very often from the ones who are passing through hardships, adverse environments, and downtrodden feelings; this kind of praise is most pleasing to God and is blessed by Him—cf. 23:4.
  3. The nature of praise is an offering, a sacrifice; in other words, praise comes from pain, suffering, and loss; God desires His children to praise Him through everything and in every situation—Heb. 13:15.
- E. Praise is the way to display Christ's victory and overcome spiritual attacks:
1. The ultimate goal of Satan is to stop all praises to God; prayer signifies spiritual warfare, but praise signifies spiritual victory; whenever we praise, Satan flees.
  2. "About midnight Paul and Silas, while praying, sang hymns of praise to God; and the prisoners were listening to them"—Acts 16:25:
    - a. Paul and Silas offered the sacrifice of praise in the jail; the wounds on their bodies were not yet healed, their pain was not soothed, their feet were in the stocks, and they were shut in an inner jail of the Roman Empire.
    - b. What was there to be joyful about? What was there to sing about? But there were two persons with transcendent spirits, who had surpassed everything; when they praised in such a way, the doors of the jail opened, the chains fell off, and even the jailer and his whole family were saved in a joyful way—vv. 19-34.
    - c. Whenever you run out of strength to pray and you find your spirit heavily oppressed, wounded, or sagging, praise Him; if you cannot pray, try to praise.
    - d. When you encounter unusual circumstances and problems and are bewildered and feel like collapsing, just remember one thing: "Why not praise?"; if you offer your praise at that moment, God's Spirit will operate in you, open all the doors, and break all the chains.
  3. "They rose up early in the morning and went out to the wilderness of Tekoa. And as they went out, Jehoshaphat stood up and said, Hear me, O Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem. Believe in Jehovah your God, and you will be established; believe in His prophets, and you will succeed. And when he had taken counsel with the people, he appointed them to sing to Jehovah and give thanks in holy array as they went out before the army and say, Give thanks to Jehovah, for His lovingkindness endures forever. And when they began to shout in song and to praise, Jehovah set ambushes for the children of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who were coming out against Judah; and they were struck"—2 Chron. 20:20-22:
    - a. Please note the words *when they began*; this means that at the very moment when everyone was singing praises to Jehovah, He rose up to smite the Ammonites, Moabites, and the people of Mount Seir; nothing moves the Lord's hand as quickly as praise.
    - b. Every time you encounter a problem, you should pray for mercy that you would stop manipulating and plotting and that you would learn the lesson of praising instead; much warfare can be won by praise.
    - c. Praise will last for eternity; it will never cease—Rev. 5:8-14; 7:9-12; 14:1-3; 15:2-4; 19:1-8; cf. 21:6; 22:20.
    - d. A person who praises God transcends everything; he overcomes continually by his praise; this is a principle, and this is also a fact.
    - e. To praise is to glorify God; God is worthy of all glory; may God gain abundant praises from His children.