

**THE CHRISTIAN LIFE, THE CHURCH LIFE,  
THE CONSUMMATION OF THE AGE, AND THE COMING OF THE LORD**

(Saturday—First Morning Session)

Message Four

**Being Faithful in Service in the Lord's Commission and in His Gifts  
for His Second and Imminent Coming**

Scripture Reading: Matt. 24:45-51; 25:14-30

- I. Matthew 24:45-51 reveals that we must be faithful in service in the Lord's commission to give God as food to the members of His household so that we may win Christ as our reward in the coming kingdom:**
- A. God has a household and a household administration, an economy, to dispense Himself as food to the members of His household for His expression—1 Tim. 1:4; 3:15; Eph. 2:19.
  - B. God has set faithful and prudent slaves over His household as household administrators, stewards, channels of supply, to give His people food at the proper time—Matt. 24:45; 1 Cor. 9:17; Eph. 3:2; 1 Cor. 4:1; 1 Pet. 4:10; Phil. 1:25.
  - C. *Give them food* refers to ministering the word of God and Christ as the life supply to the believers in the church; Christ as the life-giving Spirit is our food, embodied and realized in the word of life—Matt. 24:45; John 6:57, 63, 68; Acts 5:20; 1 John 5:16:
    - 1. In order to enjoy the Lord as our spiritual food so that we can feed others, we must pray over and muse on His word, tasting and enjoying it through careful consideration—Eph. 6:17-18; Psa. 119:15; Ezek. 3:1-4.
    - 2. We must devote ourselves to prayer and the ministry of the word—Acts 6:4; 2 Cor. 3:6, 8; John 7:37-39; cf. Heb. 7:25; 8:2.
  - D. To say in our heart that our Master delays is to love the present evil age and not to love the Lord's appearing—Matt. 24:48; 2 Tim. 4:8, 10; cf. Acts 26:16:
    - 1. We must beware of covetousness, not storing up treasure for ourselves but being rich toward God—Luke 12:16-21; 2 Cor. 6:10; Eph. 3:8.
    - 2. "Remember Lot's wife" (Luke 17:32) means that we should not love and treasure the evil world that God is going to judge and utterly destroy; this is a solemn warning to the world-loving believers—vv. 28-32; cf. Rom. 1:21, 25.
    - 3. We must be watchful and beseeching so that the day of the Lord's coming would not come upon us suddenly as a snare—Luke 21:34-36; cf. Matt. 2:3.
  - E. To beat our fellow slaves is to mistreat fellow believers—24:49a; Acts 9:4:
    - 1. We must not judge and condemn our fellow believers but be kind to them, tender-hearted, forgiving them, even as God in Christ forgave us—Luke 6:37; Eph. 4:31-32; cf. 1 Thes. 5:14.
    - 2. We must not revile or criticize our brothers but consider them more excellent than ourselves—2 Tim. 3:1-2; 1 Pet. 3:8-10; Jude 10; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; Phil. 2:2-4, 29; Rom. 12:3:
      - a. Reviling is when we cause the saints to inwardly suffer pain or to be inwardly wounded by assailing and criticizing them harshly with abusive language.
      - b. The Lord's way is to bind up our wounds (healing us) and to pour oil and wine on our wounds (giving us the Holy Spirit and the divine life)—Luke 10:33-34.
      - c. One of the reasons the church is divided and damaged is that there are reviling words; those who take in reviling words bear the same responsibility as those

- who speak reviling words; in order for the church to maintain the oneness, we have to withstand reviling words.
- d. The consciousness of sin comes from knowing God; in the same way, the consciousness of reviling words comes from the knowledge of the Body; reviling words are opposed to the testimony of the Body.
  - e. The Lord warns us that revilers will not inherit the kingdom of God in the next age as a reward to the overcoming saints—1 Cor. 6:10.
3. We must not lord it over our fellow believers but serve them as slaves to feed them with the resurrected Christ as the life-giving Spirit—1 Pet. 5:3; Matt. 20:25-28; cf. Num. 17:8.
- F. To eat and drink with the drunken is to keep company with worldly people, who are drunk with worldly things—Matt. 24:49b; cf. Eph. 5:18:
1. Because of their divine nature and holy standing, the believers should not be yoked together with the unbelievers; this should be applied to all intimate relationships between believers and unbelievers, not only to marriage and business—2 Cor. 6:14; 1 Cor. 15:33; cf. Prov. 13:20.
  2. We must flee youthful lusts and pursue the all-inclusive Christ with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart—2 Tim. 2:22.
- G. The faithful and prudent slave will be rewarded with the authority to rule in the manifestation of the kingdom, whereas the evil slave will be cut off from the glorious Christ, from the glory of His kingdom, and from His glorious presence in His kingdom—Matt. 24:47, 51.

## **II. Matthew 25:14-30 reveals that we must be faithful in service in the Lord's gifts to make a profit for Him so that we may enter into the joy of the Lord in the coming kingdom:**

- A. The Lord likened Himself to a man going abroad (into the heavens) and delivering to his slaves his possessions; *his possessions* signifies the church (Eph. 1:18) with all the believers, who constitute God's household (Matt. 24:45).
- B. To one of his slaves the master gave five talents, to another two, and to another one—to each according to his own ability—25:15:
1. Talents signify spiritual gifts (spiritual skills and abilities)—Rom. 12:6; 1 Cor. 12:4; 1 Pet. 4:10; 2 Tim. 1:6.
  2. All the members of the Body of Christ are gifted, and all are gifts—Rom. 12:6a; Eph. 4:7-8.
  3. *Own ability* signifies our natural ability, which is constituted of God's creation and our learning—Matt. 25:15; cf. Acts 7:22:
    - a. The natural strength and ability become useful in resurrection for our service to the Lord in order to make us both pillars and pillar builders for the fulfilling of God's eternal purpose—1 Cor. 15:10, 58; cf. 2 Cor. 6:1-2; 1 Kings 7:13-22 with footnotes; Eph. 4:8, 11-12, 16; Gal. 2:9; Rev. 3:12.
    - b. Moses, Peter, and Paul's natural ability passed through the cross and came up in resurrection to be used by the Lord for the building up of His Body—Acts 7:22-36; Luke 22:32-33; 1 Pet. 5:5-6; Acts 22:3; Phil. 3:5-8, 14; Gal. 2:20; 2 Cor. 4:10-12; 2 Tim. 2:11.
- C. Trading with talents signifies using the gift that the Lord has given us; gaining other talents signifies that the gift we received from the Lord has been used to the fullest extent, without any loss or waste—Matt. 25:16-17; 1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6; 4:5b.

- D. In contrast to the five-talented and two-talented ones, the one-talented one went off, dug in the earth, and hid his master's money; this signifies not using the Lord's gift to save people and to minister His riches to them—Matt. 25:18, 27:
1. 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.
  2. *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.
- E. The master says to the evil and slothful slave that he should have deposited the master's money with the money changers (the bankers), and when he came, he would have recovered what was his with interest—v. 27:
1. In a sense, we may say that the money changers (the bankers) are all the new ones, young ones, and backsliding ones; the best way for us to use our talent is to take care of others, to become interested in others and concerned for them in order to dispense Christ into them.
  2. As we spend time with the Lord and open to Him regarding whom we should take care of, He will burden us; as we contact and have fellowship with others by being one with the Lord in cherishing them with His presence and nourishing them with His riches, we will spontaneously use our talent.
  3. Then when the Lord comes, He will recover what was His with interest as the profitable result that we gain for the Lord's work by using His gift.
- F. When the Lord comes back, He will settle accounts with us; this signifies the Lord's judging at His judgment seat (2 Cor. 5:10; Rom. 14:10) in the air (within His parousia) where the believers' living, conduct, and work will be judged for reward or punishment (1 Cor. 4:5; Matt. 16:27; 25:19; 1 Cor. 3:13-15).
- G. The Lord's reward is not related to the size and quantity of our work but to our faithfulness in using His gift to the fullest extent; Christ Himself will be our crown of life, crown of righteousness, and crown of glory as a reward to us for our enjoyment in the coming kingdom—Matt. 25:23; Rev. 2:10; James 1:12; 2 Tim. 4:8; 1 Pet. 5:4.
- H. In the coming kingdom the Lord's gift will be taken away from the slothful believers, and they will be cast into outer darkness, but the faithful believers' gift will be increased, and they will enter into the joy of their master (Matt. 25:21, 23); to participate in the Lord's joy is the greatest reward, better than glory and position, in the kingdom—vv. 21, 30.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1979*, vol. 2, "Basic Lessons on Service," pp. 100-104

*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1985*, vol. 5, "The Way to Practice the Lord's Present Move," pp. 514-517, 539-546