THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD AND GOD'S DISPENSING FOR GOD'S ECONOMY

(Saturday—First Morning Session)

Message Four

The Measure of God's Rule and Ministry on Spiritual Warfare

RK *Hymns*: 873

Scripture Reading: 2 Cor. 10:12-15; Eph. 2:6; 6:10-12

2 Cor 10:12 For we do not dare to class or compare ourselves with any of those who commend themselves; but they, measuring themselves by themselves and comparing themselves with themselves, are without understanding.

2 Cor 10:13 But we will not boast beyond our measure but according to the measure of the rule which the God of measure has apportioned to us, to reach even as far as you.

2 Cor 10:14 For we are not extending ourselves beyond our bounds, as if we did not reach you, for we were the first to come even as far as unto you in the gospel of Christ.

2 Cor 10:15 We are not boasting beyond our measure in others' labors, but have the hope, as your faith is increasing, to be magnified in you according to our rule unto abundance,

Eph 2:6 And raised us up together with Him and seated us together with Him in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus,

Eph 6:10 Finally, be empowered in the Lord and in the might of His strength.

Eph 6:11 Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the stratagems of the devil,

Eph 6:12 For our wrestling is not against blood and flesh but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenlies.

I. "We will not boast beyond our measure but according to the measure of the rule which the God of measure has apportioned to us"—2 Cor. 10:13:

A. The apostle Paul was bold, but he was not bold without limit; this shows that he was under the restriction of the Lord:

1. Paul's boasting was according to the measure of the rule which the God of measure, the ruling God, had apportioned to him.
2. His ministry to the Gentile world, including Corinth, was according to the measure of God (Eph. 3:1-2, 8; Gal. 2:8); hence, his boast was within this limit.

Eph 3:1 For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of you, the Gentiles-

Eph 3:2 If indeed you have heard of the stewardship of the grace of God which was given to me for you,

Eph 3:8 To me, less than the least of all saints, was this grace given to announce to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ as the gospel

Gal 2:8 (For He who operated in Peter for the apostleship to the circumcision operated also in me for the Gentiles),

B. The word *rule* in 2 Corinthians 10:13 literally means "a measuring rod," like the rule of a carpenter:

2 Cor 10:13 But we will not boast beyond our measure but according to the measure of the rule which the God of measure has apportioned to us, to reach even as far as you.

1. The word *measure* in verse 13 indicates being ruled by God; God has allotted us just so much for our work and experience.

2 Cor 10:13 But we will not boast beyond our measure but according to the measure of the rule which the God of measure has apportioned to us, to reach even as far as you.

2. There is One who is ruling and measuring—the God of measure, the God who rules; therefore, we must stay within the limits of God's ruling, of God's measuring.

C. From 2 Corinthians 10:13-15, we can see that although we expect the Lord's work to spread, we must learn how to be under God's restriction:

2 Cor 10:13 But we will not boast beyond our measure but according to the measure of the rule which the God of measure has apportioned to us, to reach even as far as you.
2 Cor 10:14 For we are not extending ourselves beyond our bounds, as if we did not reach you, for we were the first to come even as far as unto you in the gospel of Christ.
2 Cor 10:15 We are not boasting beyond our measure in others' labors, but have the hope, as your faith is increasing, to be magnified in you according to our rule unto abundance,

1. We should not expect a spread that is without measure; that kind of spread would certainly not be within the limit of a walk according to the Spirit—Rom. 8:4-5, 14.

Rom 8:4 That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the spirit.
Rom 8:5 For those who are according to the flesh mind the things of the flesh; but those who are according to the spirit, the things of the Spirit.
Rom 8:14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

2. From experience we can testify that if we spread the work according to the Spirit, there will always be a limit:
   a. Inwardly, we do not have the peace to spread the work beyond a certain point.
   b. Outwardly, the environment does not allow us to go beyond a particular boundary line.

D. Paul had to learn to take the Lord's restriction:

1. Paul wanted to go to Rome, but he did not expect to go there in bonds—Acts 26:29.

Acts 26:29 And Paul said, I would to God that both by little and by much, not only you, but also all those who hear me today might become even such as I am, except for these bonds.

2. Paul told the believers in Rome that he expected to go to Spain by way of them (Rom. 15:24), but he never went to Spain.

Rom 15:24 Whenever I may go to Spain, for I hope to see you in passing and be sent forward there by you, if first I am filled, at least in part, by your company.

3. Paul was willing to be subject to God's measuring; his bonds and imprisonment were God's sovereign restriction.

E. Based on the principle of God's measuring, Paul told the Corinthians that whatever he did and spoke was not beyond his measure; Paul always acted and behaved within his measure—1 Cor. 2:1-5, 12-13.

1 Cor 2:1 And I, when I came to you, brothers, came not according to excellence of speech or of wisdom, announcing to you the mystery of God.
1 Cor 2:2 For I did not determine to know anything among you except Jesus Christ, and this One crucified.
1 Cor 2:3 And I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling;
1 Cor 2:4 And my speech and my proclamation were not in persuasive words of wisdom but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,
1 Cor 2:5 In order that your faith would not stand in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.
1 Cor 2:12 But we have received not the spirit of the world but the Spirit which is from God, that we may know the things which have been graciously given to us by God;
1 Cor 2:13 Which things also we speak, not in words taught by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual things with spiritual words.

F. The apostles always moved according to God's ruling; whatever God measured out to them became their jurisdiction.

G. In the church service we need to realize that God has measured out only a certain amount to us, and we should not extend ourselves beyond our measure; we need to know our limitations—2 Cor. 10:12, 14.

2 Cor 10:12 For we do not dare to class or compare ourselves with any of those who commend themselves; but they, measuring themselves by themselves and comparing themselves with themselves, are without understanding.

2 Cor 10:14 For we are not extending ourselves beyond our bounds, as if we did not reach you, for we were the first to come even as far as unto you in the gospel of Christ.

H. Like Paul, we should move and act according to how much God has measured to us—v. 13.

2 Cor 10:13 But we will not boast beyond our measure but according to the measure of the rule which the God of measure has apportioned to us, to reach even as far as you.

II. As we live with Christ in His ascension as a new creation in resurrection, we engage in spiritual warfare for the kingdom of God—S. S. 4:8; 6:4, 10; Eph. 2:6; 6:10-12:

S. S. 4:8 Come with me from Lebanon, my bride; / With me from Lebanon come. / Look from the top of Amana, / From the top of Senir and Hermon, / From the lions' dens, / From the leopards' mountains.

S. S. 6:4 You are as beautiful, my love, as Tirzah, / As lovely as Jerusalem, / As terrible as an army with banners.

S. S. 6:10 Who is this woman who looks forth like the dawn, / As beautiful as the moon, / As clear as the sun, / As terrible as an army with banners?

Eph 2:6 And raised us up together with Him and seated us together with Him in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus,

Eph 6:10 Finally, be empowered in the Lord and in the might of His strength.

Eph 6:11 Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the stratagems of the devil,

Eph 6:12 For our wrestling is not against blood and flesh but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenlies.

A. In ascension we look with Christ "from the lions' dens, / From the leopards' mountains"—S. S. 4:8b:

1. The lions' dens and the leopards' mountains signify the heavenlies, where Satan and his subordinates are.
2. The victory has been gained, but Satan and his evil forces are still in the heavenlies; we must have our living in ascension, far above the evil powers—Eph. 3:10; 6:12.

Eph 3:10 In order that now to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenlies the multifarious wisdom of God might be made known through the church,

Eph 6:12 For our wrestling is not against blood and flesh but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenlies.

3. Here we fight with Satan and his power of darkness by being empowered in the Lord and in the might of His strength, and by putting on the whole armor of God (vv. 12-20); this is the reality of living in the ascension of Christ.

Eph 6:12 For our wrestling is not against blood and flesh but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenlies.

Eph 6:13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Eph 6:14 Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth and having put on the breastplate of righteousness

Eph 6:15 And having shod your feet with the firm foundation of the gospel of peace;

Eph 6:16 Besides all these, having taken up the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming darts of the evil one.

Eph 6:17 And receive the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which Spirit is the word of God,

Eph 6:18 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 6:19 And for me, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known in boldness the mystery of the gospel,

Eph 6:20 For which I am an ambassador in a chain, that in it I would speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

B. Spiritual warfare is necessary because Satan's will is set against God's will; our fighting is to subdue the satanic will and defeat God's enemy—Matt. 6:10:

Matt 6:10 Your kingdom come; Your will be done, as in heaven, so also on earth.

1. We need to understand what the will of the Lord is—Eph. 5:17; Col. 1:9.

Eph 5:17 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

Col 1:9 Therefore we also, since the day we heard of it, do not cease praying and asking on your behalf that you may be filled with the full knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,

2. God's will is what He wants and what He intends to accomplish—Eph. 1:5, 9, 11:

Eph 1:5 Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

Eph 1:9 Making known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself,

Eph 1:11 In whom also we were designated as an inheritance, having been predestinated according to the purpose of the One who works all things according to the counsel of His will,

a. God has an eternal will, which is the source of His eternal purpose—v. 11; 3:11.

Eph 1:11 In whom also we were designated as an inheritance, having been predestinated according to the purpose of the One who works all things according to the counsel of His will,

Eph 3:11 According to the eternal purpose which He made in Christ Jesus our Lord,

b. Since God is eternal, without beginning or ending, His will is also eternal; it lies at the heart of the origin of the universe—Rev. 4:11.

Rev 4:11 You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power, for You have created all things, and because of Your will they were, and were created.

c. God created all things for His will so that He might accomplish and fulfill His purpose—Eph. 3:11.

Eph 3:11 According to the eternal purpose which He made in Christ Jesus our Lord,

d. The will of God is concentrated in Christ and is for Christ to have the first place in all things; Christ is everything in God's eternal will—Col. 1:15-18; 3:4, 10-11.

Col 1:15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the Firstborn of all creation,

Col 1:16 Because in Him all things were created, in the heavens and on the earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or lordships or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through Him and unto Him.

Col 1:17 And He is before all things, and all things cohere in Him;

Col 1:18 And He is the Head of the Body, the church; He is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things;

Col 3:4 When Christ our life is manifested, then you also will be manifested with Him in glory.

Col 3:10 And have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto full knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,

Col 3:11 Where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all and in all.

e. God wants to have Christ with the church; the will of God is to obtain the church as the Body of Christ—Eph. 5:32; 1:9, 22-23; 2:21-22; 4:16.

Eph 5:32 This mystery is great, but I speak with regard to Christ and the church.

Eph 1:9 Making known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself,

Eph 1:22 And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church,

Eph 1:23 Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.

Eph 2:21 In whom all the building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord;
Eph 2:22 In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit.
Eph 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.

C. In order to engage in spiritual warfare, we must maintain the position of ascension—S. S. 4:8; Eph. 2:6:

S. S. 4:8 Come with me from Lebanon, my bride; / With me from Lebanon come. / Look from the top of Amana, / From the top of Senir and Hermon, / From the lions' dens, / From the leopards' mountains.
Eph 2:6 And raised us up together with Him and seated us together with Him in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus,

1. The spiritual warfare mentioned in Ephesians 6:10-12 is based upon the position of ascension in 2:6.

Eph 6:10 Finally, be empowered in the Lord and in the might of His strength.
Eph 6:11 Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the stratagems of the devil,
Eph 6:12 For our wrestling is not against blood and flesh but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenlies.
Eph 2:6 And raised us up together with Him and seated us together with Him in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus,

2. The position of ascension causes us to be victorious in battle because only in the position of ascension can we have heavenly authority and pray with authority to deal with God's enemy.

D. Spiritual warfare is based on the victory of Christ; through death the Lord Jesus destroyed the devil, bringing him to nothing—Matt. 27:51-54; Heb. 2:14.

Matt 27:51 And behold, the veil of the temple was split in two from top to bottom, and the earth was shaken and the rocks were split,
Matt 27:52 And the tombs were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised.
Matt 27:53 And they came out of the tombs after His resurrection and entered into the holy city and appeared to many.
Matt 27:54 Now the centurion and those with him guarding Jesus, when they saw the earthquake and the things that happened, became greatly frightened, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.
Heb 2:14 Since therefore the children have shared in blood and flesh, He also Himself in like manner partook of the same, that through death He might destroy him who has the might of death, that is, the devil,

E. We engage in spiritual warfare to conquer the satanic chaos and triumph in the divine economy—Eph. 1:10:

Eph 1:10 Unto the economy of the fullness of the times, to head up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth, in Him;

1. The history of the universe is a history of God's economy and Satan's chaos—Gen. 1:1-2, 26; Rev. 20:10—21:4:

Gen 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
Gen 1:2 But the earth became waste and emptiness, and darkness was on the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was brooding upon the surface of the waters.
Gen 1:26 And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of heaven and over the cattle and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.

Rev 20:10 And the devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where also the beast and the false prophet were; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.
Rev 20:11 And I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose face earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them.
Rev 20:12 And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and scrolls were opened; and another scroll was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by the things which were written in the scrolls, according to their works.
Rev 20:13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, each of them, according to their works.
Rev 20:14 And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.
Rev 20:15 And if anyone was not found written in the book of life, he was cast into the lake of fire.
Rev 21:1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and the sea is no more.
Rev 21:2 And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.
Rev 21:3 And I heard a loud voice out of the throne, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will tabernacle with them, and they will be His peoples, and God Himself will be with them and be their God.
Rev 21:4 And He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death will be no more, nor will there be sorrow or crying or pain anymore; for the former things have passed away.

a. Satan is the source of chaos, and God Himself is the divine economy.

b. Both in the Bible and in our experience, the satanic chaos always goes along with the divine economy—2 Cor. 4:6; 1 Tim. 1:4.

2 Cor 4:6 Because the God who said, Out of darkness light shall shine, is the One who shined in our hearts to illuminate the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.
1 Tim 1:4 Nor to give heed to myths and unending genealogies, which produce questionings rather than God's economy, which is in faith.

2. Instead of delivering us from chaos, God wants us to be one with Him to conquer the destructive satanic chaos in the old creation and to carry out the constructive divine economy for the new creation—Eph. 3:8-10; 2 Cor. 5:17.

Eph 3:8 To me, less than the least of all saints, was this grace given to announce to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ as the gospel
Eph 3:9 And to enlighten all that they may see what the economy of the mystery is, which throughout the ages has been hidden in God, who created all things,
Eph 3:10 In order that now to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenlies the multifarious wisdom of God might be made known through the church,
2 Cor 5:17 So then if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old things have passed away; behold, they have become new.

3. As we are suffering the chaos, we need to stand for and live out the divine economy—1 Tim. 1:4, 18; 2 Tim. 4:7.

1 Tim 1:4 Nor to give heed to myths and unending genealogies, which produce questionings rather than God's economy, which is in faith.
1 Tim 1:18 This charge I commit to you, my child Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you might war the good warfare,
2 Tim 4:7 I have fought the good fight; I have finished the course; I have kept the faith.

F. We need to engage in spiritual warfare for the divine building, the church as the Body of Christ; the building up of the church is a service of warfare—Matt. 16:18; Num. 4:3; 26:2; Neh. 4:14-23; 1 Tim. 1:18; 6:12; 2 Tim. 4:7.

Matt 16:18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

Num 4:3 From thirty years old and upward even to fifty years old, all who enter into the service to perform the skilled work in the Tent of Meeting.
Num 26:2 Take the sum of the whole assembly of the children of Israel, from twenty years old and upward, by their fathers' households, all who are able to go forth for military service in Israel.
Neh 4:14 And when I saw the situation, I rose up and said to the nobles and the rulers and the rest of the people, Do not be afraid of them; remember the great and awesome Lord, and fight for your brothers, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your houses.
Neh 4:15 And when our enemies heard that their counsel was known to us and that God frustrated it, we all returned to the wall, each man to his work.
Neh 4:16 And from that day half of my servants labored in the work, and half of them held the spears and the shields and the bows and the armor; and the rulers were behind all the house of Judah.
Neh 4:17 Those who built the wall and those who carried burdens took the loads with one hand doing the work and with the other holding a weapon.
Neh 4:18 And as for the builders, each had his sword strapped to his side, and so they built; and he who sounded the trumpet was beside me.
Neh 4:19 And I said to the nobles, the rulers, and the rest of the people, The work is great and large, and we are separated on the wall, each far from the other.
Neh 4:20 In whatever place you hear the sound of the trumpet, gather yourselves to us there. Our God will fight for us.
Neh 4:21 So we labored in the work; and half of them held spears from the start of dawn until the stars came out.
Neh 4:22 I also said to the people at that time, Let every man and his servant spend the nights inside Jerusalem so that they may be a guard for us by night and work by day.
Neh 4:23 So neither I nor my brothers nor my servants nor the men of the guard who followed me, none of us took off our clothes; each had his weapon at his right hand.
1 Tim 1:18 This charge I commit to you, my child Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you might war the good warfare,
1 Tim 6:12 Fight the good fight of the faith; lay hold on the eternal life, to which you were called and have confessed the good confession before many witnesses.
2 Tim 4:7 I have fought the good fight; I have finished the course; I have kept the faith.

G. The purpose of spiritual warfare is to bring in the kingdom of God—Rev. 12:10:

Rev 12:10 And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, Now has come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ, for the accuser of our brothers has been cast down, who accuses them before our God day and night.

1. Spiritual warfare is the warfare between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan—Matt. 12:26, 28-29.

Matt 12:26 And if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand?
Matt 12:28 But if I, by the Spirit of God, cast out the demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.
Matt 12:29 Or how can anyone enter into the house of the strong man and plunder his goods unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will thoroughly plunder his house.

2. The kingdom of God is the exercise of the divine will and the overthrowing of the power of Satan by the power of God—6:10; 12:28.

Matt 6:10 Your kingdom come; Your will be done, as in heaven, so also on earth.
Matt 12:28 But if I, by the Spirit of God, cast out the demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

3. The work of the church is to bring in the kingdom of God, and through prayer the church must release the power of the kingdom of God upon the earth—16:18-19; 6:9-10, 13; 18:19; Rev. 11:15.

Matt 16:18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

Matt 16:19 I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of the heavens, and whatever you bind on the earth shall have been bound in the heavens, and whatever you loose on the earth shall have been loosed in the heavens.
Matt 6:9 You then pray in this way: Our Father who is in the heavens, Your name be sanctified;
Matt 6:10 Your kingdom come; Your will be done, as in heaven, so also on earth.
Matt 6:13 And do not bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.
Matt 18:19 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.
Rev 11:15 And the seventh angel trumpeted; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign forever and ever.

III. On the day of His wedding, Christ will marry those who have been fighting the battle against God's enemy for years; that is, Christ will marry the overcomers, who have already overcome the evil one—19:7-9, 11-16:

Rev 19:7 Let us rejoice and exult, and let us give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.
Rev 19:8 And it was given to her that she should be clothed in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteousnesses of the saints.
Rev 19:9 And he said to me, Write, Blessed are they who are called to the marriage dinner of the Lamb. And he said to me, These are the true words of God.
Rev 19:11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sits on it called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war.
Rev 19:12 And His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems, and He has a name written which no one knows but Himself.
Rev 19:13 And He is clothed with a garment dipped in blood; and His name is called the Word of God.
Rev 19:14 And the armies which are in heaven followed Him on white horses, dressed in fine linen, white and clean.
Rev 19:15 And out of His mouth proceeds a sharp sword, that with it He might smite the nations; and He will shepherd them with an iron rod; and He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.
Rev 19:16 And He has on His garment and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

A. When Christ comes to fight against Antichrist and his army, He will come as the Son of Man, and as the Son of Man, He will need a counterpart to match Him and complete Him; this counterpart will be His bride—14:14; 19:7-9.

Rev 14:14 And I saw, and behold, there was a white cloud, and on the cloud One like the Son of Man sitting, having a golden crown on His head and a sharp sickle in His hand.
Rev 19:7 Let us rejoice and exult, and let us give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.
Rev 19:8 And it was given to her that she should be clothed in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteousnesses of the saints.
Rev 19:9 And he said to me, Write, Blessed are they who are called to the marriage dinner of the Lamb. And he said to me, These are the true words of God.

B. The overcomers who constitute the bride of Christ fight the battle against all the enemies of God and defeat them—2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21:

Rev 2:7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.
Rev 2:11 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall by no means be hurt of the second death.
Rev 2:17 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, to him I will give of the hidden manna, and to him I will give a white stone, and upon the stone a new name written, which no one knows except he who receives it.

Rev 2:26 And he who overcomes and he who keeps My works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations;
Rev 3:5 He who overcomes will be clothed thus, in white garments, and I shall by no means erase his name out of the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.
Rev 3:12 He who overcomes, him I will make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall by no means go out anymore, and I will write upon him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which descends out of heaven from My God, and My new name.
Rev 3:21 He who overcomes, to him I will give to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat with My Father on His throne.

1. The overcomers engage in the warfare of life against death and reign in life over death—Matt. 16:18; John 5:24; 1 Tim. 6:19; 2 Tim. 1:10; 1 John 3:14; Rom. 5:17, 21.

Matt 16:18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.
John 5:24 Truly, truly, I say to you, He who hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life, and does not come into judgment but has passed out of death into life.
1 Tim 6:19 Laying away for themselves a good foundation as a treasure for the future, that they may lay hold on that which is really life.
2 Tim 1:10 But now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who nullified death and brought life and incorruption to light through the gospel,
1 John 3:14 We know that we have passed out of death into life because we love the brothers. He who does not love abides in death.
Rom 5:17 For if, by the offense of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.
Rom 5:21 In order that just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

2. The overcomers conquer the destructive chaos and triumph in the constructive divine economy; instead of being delivered out of the present chaos, they conquer the chaos by the processed and consummated Triune God as the all-sufficient grace—2 Tim. 1:9, 15; 2:1, 17-18; 4:22.

2 Tim 1:9 Who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before the times of the ages
2 Tim 1:15 This you know, that all who are in Asia turned away from me, of whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes.
2 Tim 2:1 You therefore, my child, be empowered in the grace which is in Christ Jesus;
2 Tim 2:17 And their word will spread like gangrene, of whom are Hymenaeus and Philetus,
2 Tim 2:18 Who concerning the truth have misaimed, saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and overthrow the faith of some.
2 Tim 4:22 The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with you.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

THE SPIRITUAL WARFARE OF THE CHURCH

Scripture Reading: Eph. 6:10-20; Ezek. 37:1-10

THE DIVINE COMMISSION OF THE CHURCH

In this chapter we will see something concerning the spiritual warfare of the church. The creation of man was for two purposes. On the positive side, it was so that man would express God, and on the negative side, it was to deal with the enemy of God. This refers to the image of God and the authority of God. In the New Testament, especially in Ephesians, the book most related to the church, we can

see the image and authority of God, that is, the way to express God corporately and fight the battle against the enemy of God in a corporate way. Nearly all the teachings in the New Testament are composed with the elements of the image of God to express God in Christ through the Spirit and the authority to fight the battle and deal with God's enemy. These are the two main components of God's eternal plan, and these are the two main items of the entire teaching of the Scriptures, especially in the New Testament.

In Ephesians we can see the image of God especially in 4:22-24, which tells us to put off the old man and put on the new man, the corporate new creation in Christ, which was created according to the image of the Creator, that is, of God Himself. The church as the new creation has the image of God in order to express God in Christ through the Holy Spirit. Then in the last chapter of Ephesians, there is the fighting, the wrestling, the spiritual warfare to deal with the evil forces in the kingdom of darkness, that is, to deal with the enemy of God. If we are the victorious church, if we realize the real church life, then the Lord will be expressed through us so that we may have His true image and the heavenly authority to fight the spiritual warfare to deal with the enemy of God.

The two aspects of the divine commission of the church are to express God in Christ through the Spirit and to deal with the enemy of God. The purpose of the messages in this book is not to help us merely to know some truths, doctrines, or teachings. Rather, it is to help us to realize the genuine life of a Christian, which is the real life of the church, the victorious, corporate life of the Body, in order to express Christ and to deal with the enemy of God. We must bring Christ to people, exhibit Christ, glorify Christ, and express Christ in the divine image. This is on the positive side. We also have to fight the battle, deal with the enemy, bind the strong man, and chase the forces of darkness. This is on the negative side. This is the divine commission committed by the Lord to the church. What are we here for? We are here for the exhibition and expression of Christ on the positive side, and the fighting of the spiritual warfare to deal with the enemy of God on the negative side.

If we read Ephesians again with this point of view, we will see that the entire book can be summarized by these two aspects. The church is the Body of Christ to express and exhibit Christ and to glorify Christ in the divine image, and the church also fights the battle to bring the coming kingdom, to deal with the enemy of God, and to chase away the evil forces of darkness.

SPIRITUAL WARFARE BEING A CORPORATE MATTER

Ephesians 6:10-20 is the clearest portion of the New Testament dealing with spiritual warfare. Spiritual warfare is not an individual matter. Many of us received help from *The Pilgrim's Progress* when we were young, but the author of that book, John Bunyan, made spiritual warfare to be an individual matter. This may cause people to believe that the warrior in Ephesians 6 is an individual believer. In actuality, the warrior here is a corporate warrior, just as the Body in chapter 1, the new man, the house of God, and the building in chapter 2, the church as the mystery of Christ in chapter 3, the Body and the new man in chapter 4, and the bride as the wife in chapter 5 are all corporate. All of these are not individual persons but a corporate person, which is the church. The church is the corporate Body of Christ, the corporate new man, the corporate building, the corporate mystery, the corporate wife, and the corporate warrior. Therefore, spiritual warfare is not a matter of the individual saint; it is a matter of the church. If we do not have the church life, we have lost the ground for spiritual warfare. If we are not in the reality of the Body life, we have no ground to fight the battle; we have been defeated already. Without the church life, we are defeated, and it is impossible for a defeated person to fight the enemy.

The ground and standing for us to fight the enemy is the church, and the church is in Christ, in the Spirit, and in the heavenlies. On the one hand, as long as someone is saved, he is in Christ, even if he is a defeated Christian. However, if he is not in the reality of the Body life, he is not in Christ practically and according to experience. Therefore, in order to fight the spiritual warfare, we must realize the church life.

We may declare, "We are not on the earth; we are in the heavenlies!" Whenever we are even a

little earthly, we are defeated. We need to keep our heavenly ground and standing, but we must realize that the heavenly ground is for the Body corporately, not the members separately.

In the military today it is foolish for a soldier to fight alone. In order to fight the battle, we must form an army. If there is no formation of the army, there is no possibility to fight the battle. In Ezekiel 37, when the dead bones were revived and made alive, they joined together. When they were dead, they were scattered in thorough, absolute death, but when they were made alive, they became members joined to be a living body. According to the context of the chapter, this living body is the house of Jehovah, the building, the dwelling place of God, and it is also the army. This body is the building and the army. This is a good picture of the Body life. Can separated and scattered bones fight the battle? This is ludicrous. We must realize that no matter how strong we feel, we are not adequate by ourselves to fight the battle. To fight the battle is a matter of the Body. We must be built together. We must be in oneness and harmony as the living Body, the living building, and the living house of God. Then we can be the army.

If we read Ephesians from the first chapter to the sixth chapter, we will see that warfare is a matter of the Body of Christ, and the Body is a new creation in Christ, in the Spirit, and in the heavenlies. First, we must have the Body life, and then we can have the spiritual warfare. If we do not have the Body life, we are simply not adequate to have the warfare. In order to fight the battle, we must be in the reality of the Body life. In order to fight for America, one must be in the American armed forces. He cannot go to the battlefield alone. No one would be so foolish as to do this. He must first join the army and be trained, built up, and formed with the army. It is exactly the same with the Body of Christ. Why is spiritual warfare in the last chapter of Ephesians and not in the first, the second, or even the fifth chapter? It is because warfare is something of the Body, which is in Christ, in the Spirit, and in the heavenly places.

SPIRITUAL WARFARE BEING AGAINST THE EVIL SPIRITUAL FORCES

We also must realize that spiritual warfare is not a fighting against humans, that is, against flesh and blood. Rather, we fight with the spiritual forces, the evil spirits. This is not a small matter. I still remember well how Brother Watchman Nee held a conference in 1928 in which he spoke about the spiritual warfare in a very practical and detailed way. He was very much attacked by the enemy for this. After a certain period of time he told me, “Brother, if we are going to talk about spiritual warfare and deal with it in a practical way, we need at least thirty brothers and sisters to pray for us day and night. Otherwise, there will be many attacks.” Therefore, may the Lord cover us with His blood! The evil spiritual forces are not merely a doctrine or a term. In the universe there is such an evil force, which is the kingdom of darkness, the evil spirits. Even today we may not realize how much the evil spirits are working to damage the kingdom of God in order to frustrate the fulfillment of God’s purpose. This is a real fighting. Therefore, we do not fight with flesh and blood. We fight with the evil spirits. Our enemy is not people; our enemy is the forces of darkness.

In the past years and even up until today, it is difficult to say how many rumors the enemy has been constantly spreading. In 2 Corinthians 6:8 the apostle Paul speaks of “evil report and good report.” Even the apostle suffered many evil reports. The evil reports are simply rumors. I do not have the time or the heart to speak in detail, but it is a fact that there has been rumor after rumor constantly against us. Whenever one is in the lead, he is exposed to attack to some degree, and the attack of the enemy is upon him. When we were in mainland China, Brother Nee was very exposed to attack because he was taking the lead. I was very close to him, and nearly day by day I saw many things. As early as 1934 I was brought into this fighting because from that time on I began to share the responsibility to deal with this warfare. I saw the wiles, the tactics, and the subtle ways of the enemy and how our brother was attacked very much. The most serious attacks were the rumors.

There is such a reality that in this universe there are the evil forces of darkness, the evil spirits, fighting, frustrating, and damaging the interests of the Lord’s kingdom and His testimony. What shall we do? Shall we consider those who have been utilized by the enemy to spread rumors as our enemy?

If we do this, we are wrong. The real enemy is not the people. The real enemy is the evil forces behind the people. The people are merely the puppets of the enemy to be utilized by him. We should not fight the people; we should fight the evil forces behind them. The way to fight the evil forces is not by the flesh but by the Spirit, in the Spirit, and by prayer. The only way we can deal with the enemy who is working, fighting, behind certain people is to pray, to appeal to the throne in the heavens as the highest authority. Therefore, there is the need for real and prevailing corporate prayer. The church needs to come together to pray, not to deal with people. I have learned the lesson that whenever there is a rumor, we should not deal with it directly. When there is a rumor about the church, we should not talk to people or explain things to them. The more we explain, the more the rumors will come out. We should simply go to the Lord and appeal to the highest authority. Through the throne we deal with the evil forces which are behind the blood and flesh. We must learn this and practice this. (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1963,* vol. 3, "Basic Principles for the Practice of the Church Life," pp. 331-335)