

**MEETING GOD'S NEED
AND PRESENT NEEDS IN THE LORD'S RECOVERY**

(Saturday—First Morning Session)

Message Four

**Prayer to Absorb God and to Express God
by Praying to God as a Friend So That We Can Co-work with God**

Scripture Reading: Psa. 27:4; Jer. 17:7-8; Matt. 6:6; Col. 2:6-7, 19; Isa. 37:31; Gen. 18:1-22

I. The meaning of prayer is to absorb God; the more we contact God, the more we will absorb Him, and the more we absorb Him, the more we will enjoy Him as our light and our salvation:

- A. In Psalm 27:1 David says, "Jehovah is my light and my salvation"; God's being our light and our salvation shows that God Himself is what we need; what God gives us is just Himself; light is God, salvation is God, power is God (1 Cor. 1:24), and grace is God (John 1:16-17; 1 Pet. 5:10; 1 Cor. 15:10; cf. Gal. 2:20); every spiritual need that we have is God Himself.
- B. David contacted and absorbed God by beholding Him as beauty (Psa. 27:4); when he contacted God to absorb God, he was enlightened and received salvation within:
 - 1. Beholding God as our beauty is a great key and a great secret to experiencing God for His heart's desire—2 Cor. 3:16-18.
 - 2. By the divine dispensing through the washing of the water of life in the word of Christ, He beautifies us as the house of His beauty to be His beautiful bride for His beautification—Isa. 60:7, 9, 13, 19, 21; 59:21; Eph. 5:26-27; Rev. 19:7.
- C. There is a hymn that says, "Just as I am" (*Hymns*, #1048); this means that we should come to God just as we are without trying to improve or change our condition; we received Christ in this way, and we should walk in Christ in this way—Col. 2:6-7a.
- D. To pray is to come to the Lord just as we are; when we come to the Lord, we should lay our inner condition before Him and tell Him that we are short in every matter; even if we are weak, confused, sad, and speechless, we can still come to God; no matter what our inner condition is, we should bring it to God.
- E. Instead of caring about our condition, we need to enter into God's presence to contact Him by looking to Him, beholding Him, praising Him, giving thanks to Him, worshipping Him, and absorbing Him; then we will enjoy God's riches, taste His sweetness, receive Him as light and power, and be inwardly peaceful, bright, strong, and empowered; we will then learn the lesson of staying connected to Him when we are ministering the word to the saints—1 Pet. 4:10-11; 2 Cor. 2:17; 13:3.

II. Colossians 2:6-7 reveals that Christ as the good land is the rich soil in which we have been rooted so that we may grow with the elements that we absorb from the soil—cf. 1 Cor. 3:6, 9; Col. 2:19:

- A. By working together with God, Paul planted the believers as the living plants into Christ as the soil; God put us, the living plants, into Christ as the soil (1 Cor. 1:30; Rom. 6:4-5) so that we may grow in Christ as life (Eph. 4:15-16) and be transformed in life to become precious materials for God's building (1 Cor. 3:12).

- B. According to God's economy, the one who trusts in the Lord is like a tree planted by water, signifying God as the fountain of living waters (Jer. 2:13; 17:7-8); a tree grows beside a river by absorbing all the riches of the water; this is a picture of God's economy, which is carried out by His divine dispensing (cf. Isa. 57:20-21 with footnote 1 on v. 20; 55:7; 12:1-6; John 4:10, 14; 7:37-38; 1 Cor. 12:13).
- C. In order to receive the divine dispensing, we as the trees must absorb God as the water (cf. 3:6); the riches of the supplying God dispensed into us as the trees constitute us with God's divinity and cause us to grow with the growth of God (Col. 2:19); in this way we and God become one, having the same element, essence, constitution, and appearance (Rev. 4:3; 21:11).
- D. If a plant does not absorb nutrients from the soil, the plant cannot grow; likewise, if we do not receive what comes out of Christ as the Head, the Body cannot grow; holding the Head is, therefore, equal to being rooted in Christ as the soil; to hold the Head is to remain in Christ, staying intimately connected to Him without any insulation between us and Him—Col. 2:19.
- E. The growth of the Body depends on the growth of God, the addition of God, the increase of God, within us; God's building is "growing into a holy temple in the Lord" in whom we also "are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit" by our absorbing the riches of Christ; the actual building of the house of God is by the believers' growth in life—Eph. 2:21-22.
- F. Individual growth becomes corporate growth; if all the members grow individually, the Body will be built up corporately—*Hymns*, #395 and #840.
- G. Colossians 2:7 puts being rooted and being built up together; this is because being rooted is for growing, and growing is genuine building (Eph. 4:15-16; 1 Cor. 3:6, 9); the only way to become deeply rooted in Christ is to contact Him as the soil in order to daily absorb the water in the word (Eph. 5:26); in this way we "take root downward and bear fruit upward" (Isa. 37:31).
- H. We need to take time to absorb Christ day by day by having a personal and private time with Him (Matt. 6:6; 14:22-23; Mark 1:35) so that spontaneously we will walk in Christ and live out Christ for the corporate expression of Christ (Col. 2:6-7):
 1. Our daily need is to allow adequate time for prayer, which will enable us to absorb more of the riches of our God; in the morning many saints may spend time with the Lord, but they may not absorb much of His riches because they are in too much of a hurry; we cannot absorb the riches of Christ into us as our nourishment if we are in a hurry—cf. Psa. 119:48, 97.
 2. We must spend more personal and private time with the Lord in order to absorb Him; we must exercise our spirit to spend more time in our spirit to adore the Lord, to praise Him, to offer thanks to Him, and to speak to Him freely; then God will give us the growth as we enjoy Him as our banquet—Matt. 22:4; Rev. 3:20.
 3. The addition of God into us by receiving Him as our new nourishment and fresh enjoyment through His words of spirit, life, gladness, and joy (John 6:57, 63; Jer. 15:16) is the growth that He gives (Josh. 1:8-9; Psa. 119:15, 48).
 4. If we spend a considerable amount of personal and private time with the Lord daily in order to absorb God, the salvation of His countenance will become the salvation of our countenance—42:5, 11.

III. The meaning of prayer is also for us to express God; in Psalm 27:4 David says that he desired not only to behold the beauty of Jehovah but also “to inquire in His temple”; to inquire is to let God speak within us so that the words spoken to Him in prayer are actually God’s speaking within us, God’s expressions:

- A. Real prayer is our coming to God, letting God speak within us, and expressing to God what He has spoken back to Him—“When You say, Seek My face, / To You my heart says, Your face, O Jehovah, will I seek” (v. 8).
- B. John 15:7 says, “If you abide in Me and My words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you”; this verse presents three crucial points:
 - 1. First, we must abide in the Lord, which is to remain in fellowship with the Lord.
 - 2. Second, the Lord’s words must abide in us; when we abide in the Lord and are in constant fellowship with Him, He speaks within us.
 - 3. Third, our asking the Lord comes from the Lord’s speaking within us; if we are in fellowship with the Lord, He will speak within us, and then we will have the words with which to ask Him, that is, to pray to Him.
- C. When we really touch, contact, and absorb God, He will speak within us; then we pray according to His inner speaking; to pray is to go to God, meet Him, draw near to Him, commune with Him, and absorb Him so that He can speak to us inwardly; when we pray to Him with His words to us, our prayer expresses God.
- D. In our contact with the Lord, we need to learn the following principles:
 - 1. We should not direct the Lord in our prayer (cf. 2:4); instead, like Saul of Tarsus, we should ask, “What shall I do, Lord?” not “This is what I will do, Lord” (Acts 22:10).
 - 2. When we draw near to the Lord and contact Him, He causes us to see our needs and points out our problems, faults, stains, and sins; the way for us to take the living water is to confess these sins to the Lord—John 4:15-18.
 - 3. When we draw near to the Lord to contact Him, we should seek the Lord Himself as the unseen spiritual matters, not the seen physical matters—6:27, 31-33; 2 Cor. 4:18; Heb. 11:27.
 - 4. Human opinions frustrate the Lord’s power, so not until we are hopelessly weak, an utter failure, and completely dead, will the Lord manifest Himself in us and to us as resurrection power—John 11:3, 5-6, 17, 21, 25-26, 32-35, 38, 41-44; 2 Cor. 1:8-9.
 - 5. When we draw near to the Lord, we need to let Him do what He wills in us—John 13:6-9; Luke 1:37-38.
 - 6. Even when we are cold and indifferent toward the Lord or have fallen into the world, He will manifest Himself to us; we may fail and change, but the Lord never fails or changes—John 21:1-25; Isa. 49:15-16; Jer. 31:3.
- E. Inquiring prayers honor God; David knew how to pray because he often inquired of Jehovah (1 Sam. 23:2, 4; 30:8; 2 Sam. 2:1; 5:19, 23); after God spoke to David through Nathan the prophet, David “sat before Jehovah” (7:18) and told the Lord, “Do as You have spoken” (v. 25b); he then told the Lord that because of His speaking, “Your servant has found it in his heart to pray this prayer to You” (v. 27).

IV. The best prayer is to pray to God as a friend; Abraham was the friend of God; in Genesis 18 the God of heaven humbled Himself in order to befriend Abraham:

- A. After he was circumcised and his natural strength was terminated, Abraham lived in intimate fellowship with God and became God's friend—13:3-4, 18; 17:1-16; 2 Chron. 20:7; Isa. 41:8; James 2:23.
- B. The glorious intercession that Abraham made before God was a human, intimate conversation between two friends, an intimate talk according to the unveiling of God's heart's desire—Gen. 18:1-33.
- C. Even before the incarnation (John 1:14) Jehovah as Christ appeared to Abraham in a human form, with a human body, and communed with him on a human level (Gen. 13:18; 18:1-22); as Abraham was enjoying sweet fellowship with God, he received a revelation from Him regarding the birth of Isaac and the destruction of Sodom.
- D. The birth of Isaac is related to the coming of Christ as grace, and the destruction of Sodom is related to God's judgment upon sin; this means that Christ must come in and sin must go out.
- E. God revealed to Abraham His intention to destroy Sodom, because He was seeking an intercessor to intercede for Lot (vv. 16-22; 19:1; cf. Heb. 7:25; Isa. 59:16; Ezek. 22:30); God wanted to save Lot in order to protect Christ's genealogy through Ruth, a Moabitess and a descendant of Lot (Gen. 19:37; Ruth 1:4; Matt. 1:5).
- F. Thus, in God's intimate fellowship with Abraham, in a mysterious way, without mentioning Lot's name, God revealed His heart's desire; the proper intercession is not initiated by man but by God's revelation; thus, it expresses God's desire and carries out God's will—Gen. 18:17, 20-23; 19:27-29; Psa. 27:4-8; Heb. 4:16; 7:25; James 5:17.
- G. Apparently, Abraham was interceding for Sodom; actually, he was interceding for Lot by implication (Gen. 14:12; 18:23; 19:1, 27-29), showing that we should intercede for God's people who have drifted into the world.
- H. In Abraham's intercession for Lot, he did not beg God according to His love and grace; he challenged God according to His righteous way; God's righteousness binds Him much more than His love and grace do—18:23-25; Rom. 1:17.
- I. Intercession is an intimate conversation with God according to the inward intention of His heart; for this we must learn to linger in the presence of God—Gen. 18:25-32.
- J. Abraham's intercession did not terminate with Abraham's speaking but with God's, showing that genuine intercession is God's speaking in our speaking—v. 33; John 15:7; Rom. 8:26-27.
- K. In our intimate fellowship with God, we receive the revelation that all the impossibilities become possibilities with Christ—Gen. 18:10-15; 21:1-8; Luke 18:27.

V. During the first aspect of our prayer, we enter into fellowship with God, who then anoints us with His burden for the work and reveals His intention to us; the second aspect of our prayer is then to inquire of the Lord by petitioning Him concerning His will and His burden for the work; then we carry out the purpose of prayer by coordinating with God to co-work with God—Isa. 62:6-7; 45:11; Ezek. 22:30; Dan. 9:2-4; 1 Sam. 12:23; 1 Cor. 3:9; 2 Cor. 6:1a.