

Preparing for His Return

by Hoseah Wu

To prepare for the Lord's return, we must obey His commands, give up our individual identity, and surrender ourselves to Him, letting go of our old self and embracing a new life in Christ.

Duration: 53:22

Scripture: Matthew 11:1-11, Matthew 21:1-11, Mark 10:32, Mark 10:46 - 11:11

Topics: "Christ's Return"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on his experiences of traveling and preaching in different countries. He emphasizes the urgency of time and the need for God's people to prepare themselves for the Lord's return. The speaker shares a practical example of how he and a brother have been visiting families in their area, demonstrating the importance of living an obedient life. He also mentions the baptism of three individuals and highlights the mindset of one brother who rejoiced in the fact that he was going to die, symbolizing his surrender to God. Overall, the speaker encourages listeners to prioritize obedience and trust in the Lord's provision, sharing personal experiences of how God has come through despite their doubts and physical weariness.

Transcript

It is a joy to be with you here this morning, and thank the Lord for this wonderful opportunity to see your smiling faces, thank the Lord. First, I want to thank Brother and Sister here in Richmond for praying for us, myself, Brother Kong, and Mary Kong, and Dana, while we were away for two months, the month April, May, and part of June. We do appreciate your prayer.

We sense the power and the presence of the Lord with us while we are away. I'm sure Brother Kong has reported to you of the events that took place in Hong Kong, and Sydney, Australia, as well as Singapore. So when I was sitting there, and we were singing Majesty, and followed by Let There Be Glory, it sort of just made me feel I was back in Singapore, because in Singapore, Dana said, let's try to combine those two short choruses together, and we've been trying, we try those in Singapore quite often, and we were able to enter the spirit of worship, and just combine some of those short choruses together.

Now, did you do those two songs together often? Or ever since the Singapore conference? Okay, but by way of just sharing what's in my heart, recently, we were in Toronto, about this matter of sharing, when Michael Woods heard that we were coming down, and they imposed on me to share with you this morning. But when we were in Toronto, I was asked to attend a small gathering of college students and

post-college graduates. They wanted to come together for fellowship, and they asked me to see what I can contribute to their gathering.

And all I mentioned to them is, don't come to expect to receive. When we come to the Lord's house, we come together as his people. We have to come with eagerness to share, not just to receive.

In that way, we bring fullness into the house of the Lord. And so, we're sharing some of those matters, and one young brother from Minneapolis, and he shared some of these things. I thought they touched my heart, and I just want to convey this to you.

He said, the reason why we cannot share first is that we really have nothing to share. We all dry up. There's nothing we really can share.

He said, if we have nothing to share, and we are the Lord's, it shows that our life before the Lord is in question. That is some statement. He said, when we come as the Lord's people, and we feel there's nothing I can contribute to the Lord's people, into the gathering of the Lord's people, then my life before the Lord is in question.

And he said, if that is the case, we have to examine ourselves as far as our walk with the Lord. Is it normal, or something's wrong? Now, the second thing is that we have something to share, but we're afraid to share. That's most often with us.

We have something. We know there's something we have to share, we must share, but we just don't have the courage to get up there and share what's in our heart. And he said, if that is the case, it shows our whole self-life is still intact.

The reason why we cannot share is self is in the way. If there's something that we can share, we know we should share, but we cannot share, the only thing that hinders us from sharing is that self-life. We are afraid that somebody will look at me and say, oh, he said something not quite correct, how people think of us.

They'll criticise, you know. So he said, self-life is intact. That's the second reason.

Now, the third reason is your lack of faith. We have something to share, we know we must share, and the self's been dealt with, but we still lack that courage to share, hence we don't have any confidence in the Lord. As though he's not able to get through to us.

As though we must do it for him in our own natural strength. In that way, he said, it's a lack of faith. He said, those are the three reasons why most of the saints are afraid to share.

First, it's because we feel there's nothing we can share because our life before the Lord is in question. Second, is that we have something to share, we are afraid to share because our self-life has not been dealt with. And the third thing is that we have something to share and the self-life has been dealt with, but we don't have that courage to share, it's simply lack of faith.

And lack of faith is not honouring the Lord. Well, so I just share that with you, Pauline. So when I was asked to share, and I kept thinking of those three reasons, is there any excuse for me not to share this morning? And so I have no choice, so I'm here.

If I'm a fool, I'm a fool for the Lord. So that should be our attitude. Now there's another thing, he said in this matter of sharing, we do need some God and sister to push us once in a while.

Now we are shy. Now if you know about Stephen King, the way he deals with some of us, he does that. I was pushed by him a few times.

But it's in love, and it's for my good. Because when he pushed me to some responsibility, what can you do? You just have to cast yourself at the Lord's mercy. You know you cannot do it, you have no strength to do it, you have no wisdom to do it, where do you go? You go to the Lord.

So I say responsibility, spiritual responsibility is good for us. So that we'll cast ourselves at the Lord's mercy and so that you will come through. Well, now I'll just share what's in my heart.

Now how much time do we have? Where is Jerry? Yeah, okay. Because in the Far East, the few time I share, we have interpreter. So if I share 20 minutes, the total time will be 40 minutes.

But today we have no interpreter, so it's different. But anyway, I've handled off for this past year, six months I was away from home for about four months. And I visited quite a few countries with brother and sister in various places.

There's one thing that impressed upon my heart is that no matter where you meet God's people, they're sensing of the urgency of time. The Lord is coming soon. What must we do as his people? How can we prepare ourselves for his return? And so when I was meditating upon this matter, the thought came to me quite a few months ago.

When the Lord first came to this earth, there was no welcoming party to receive him. The angels announced his coming. But on earth, there was no welcoming party.

In fact, the scripture says he came to his own, his own receiving out. He knew that he would be rejected. But he came anyway.

That's love. He came and he knew he'd be rejected. He came because of love.

Because his love for the Father and because his love for you and me. But his second coming, brothers and sisters, will be different. He will not come until there is a welcoming party ready to welcome him back.

We see that in the scripture. Therefore, they set a delay for over 2,000 years because that welcoming party has not been formed yet. First time he came as a lamb to be slain for the redemption of sin.

But second time when he comes, he will come as a lamb of Judah. He will come as a king. The arrival of a king is something to behold.

Now we notice in this country, every time we watch television, if Boston, D.C., they receive a foreign secretary, it is quite an event. You have the trumpeters, you have the flags, you have the cannons announcing the arrival of the foreign secretary. Now brothers and sisters, the Lord's second coming, he will not come until there is a welcoming party for him.

Then he will come. I believe the Lord is waiting, waiting everywhere on this earth for that welcoming party to be formed. So shall we turn to a few important scriptures? Let's turn to the Gospel of Mark.

Gospel of Mark, chapter 10, and we'll read verse 48 to the end. And they came to Jericho, and as he was going out from Jericho with his disciples and a great multitude, a blind beggar named Bartimaeus, the son of Teneus, was sitting by the road. And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me.

And many were sternly telling him to be quiet, but he kept crying out all the more, son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus stopped and said, call him here. And they called the blind man saying to him, take courage, arise, he is calling for you.

And casting aside his cloak, he jumped and came to Jesus. And answering him, Jesus said, what do you want me to do for you? And the blind man said to him, Rabbani, I want to regain my sight. And Jesus said to him, go your way.

Your faith has made you well. And immediately he regained his sight and began following him on the road. Let's continue to chapter 11 and read the first 11 verses.

And as they approached Jerusalem at Bethphage and Bethany near the Mount Olive, and he sent two of his disciples and said to them, go into the village opposite you. And immediately as you enter it, you will find a coat tied there on which no one yet has ever sat. Untie it and bring it here.

And if anyone says to you, why are you doing this? You say, the law has made of it. And immediately he would send it back here. And they went away and found a coat tied to the door, at the door, outside the street, and they untied it.

And some of the bystanders were saying to them, why are you doing, what are you doing, untying the coat? And they spoke to them just as Jesus had told them. And they give them permission. And they brought the coat to Jesus and put their garments on him.

And he sat upon it. And many stripped their garments in the road and others stripped leafy branches which they had cut from the field. And those who went before and those who followed after were crying out, Hosanna, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David. Hosanna in the highest. And he entered Jerusalem and came into the temple.

Now this incident in Matthew 11 is recorded as well in the Gospel of Luke and also in the Gospel of Matthew but with slight variation. But the interesting thing about Mark is that in chapter 10, it ends with this one blind person and who regained his sight. And the Lord said, you go your way.

And he said, I'll follow him. Then he followed Lord Jesus. And the interesting thing is in verse 50 that when he came to Lord Jesus, he cast aside his cloak.

He cast aside his garment. He jumped up and came to Jesus. Now, brothers and sisters, I was looking into some books about this donkey, this coat.

A donkey to us in this country is not a very common animal. But in the eastern part of this world is a very useful animal like our tractors here. It does all kinds of work.

It is a boarding carrier. It helps us go from place to place and carry tremendous load. If you recall in the Scripture, when Abraham was asked to offer Isaac up on the mountain, you'll notice that Abraham rose up

early in the morning and he saddled the donkey.

Donkey was one of the instruments by which Abraham used in offering Isaac because all the woods and all the things necessary for the offering were carried by this donkey up to the mountain. Now, you'll notice there's another donkey that's very famous. It's the donkey of Balaam who spoke.

That's another donkey. Now, there are also other donkeys in the Scripture but I could not get into it. But the Lord Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a coat, on a donkey.

Something that is very significant. We'll see that maybe later on. And also this garment that we put on.

Chapter 10 about this blind man, the moment he came to Jesus, the first thing he did was throw away his garment. Then maybe we'll touch a little bit about that. But brothers and sisters, what I'm going to share this morning, just a few points this morning about how to prepare ourselves as God's people so that we can incorporate into that welcoming party for His return.

First thing we notice is that He sent two disciples. Asked them to do certain things and the Lord often asks to do strange things, unreasonable things. He asked them to go to the village and to this certain place where there'll be a coat tied to a post.

He said, untie it and bring it to me. Now, this coat belonged to someone and this coat was tied to the post. And the Lord simply gave instruction to the two disciples.

He said, you go there and untie this coat and bring it to me. Now, you know, the disciples, I'm sure if they are thinking disciples, they will have many questions to ask the Master. How can we do it? How is it possible that we can go into this village and do just that without getting into trouble? But Gordon says, these two disciples may never question the Lord.

They obey. Gordon says, I believe towards the end of this age, if we are not careful, we will have many, many questions that we'll have to ask the Lord. And those questions, I believe, will never be answered.

But only through our obedience we'll witness those answers given. We want the answers before we go to do the work. But also, you go to do the work and you'll find the answer there.

I believe that is one of the things the Lord's people must learn in these last days. Now, F. E. Meyer says, when the Lord gives commands, he never accompanies his commands with visions. But he always accompanies his commands with promises.

And with many of us, we always like to say, now, why do we do this? Why does the Lord ask me to do this? Now, brothers and sisters, we often ask that. And the why and the how and so forth is always a question arising from our soul life. Because the Spirit is always willing to obey.

But our natural life is always in question. Always question the activity of the Spirit. So, brothers and sisters, we have to learn not to listen to the reasoning of our natural life, our soul life, but simply rely on our Spirit.

We know what the Lord wants, we simply go ahead and obey and do it. Now, brothers and sisters, it's not easy because the soul is against the Spirit and the Spirit is against the soul. The two will never go together.

But thank God the Lord says, tell whoever asks you that the Lord is in need of it. And brothers and sisters, the Spirit can always answer our soul life, the Lord wants me to do it. And our natural life will be silent.

So, brothers and sisters, the conflict toward the end of this last age will not be so much external. Of course, there'll be external, but also it will be something tremendous internal. There'll be a spiritual conflict, not just without, but also from within.

Now, so to be one who really loves the Lord and obeys the Lord, first, we have to honor the Lord's Word. First, those two disciples, they heard the Lord spoke to them and they honor His Word and they obey. And so, brothers and sisters, in this life, we need to listen to the Lord's Word.

Honor His Word through an obedient life. And thank the Lord. The few places that I visited with God at Home recently, God is raising up men and women everywhere that are willing to listen to the voice of the Spirit.

And to listen and as well as to obey. Many, many assemblies raised up is because of a few that are willing to take the step of obedience. This obeying and the untying of the coat, you can see there's a link together.

Maybe I can give you some practical illustration here. Recently, in our area, we've been trying to do some visitation. A brother and I, every Wednesday evening, we would make an effort to visit one family per week, if possible.

And so, the only time we can get to their place to visit is around 8 o'clock, 8.30 and sometimes 9 o'clock. And we will stay sometimes till about 10.30, 11 o'clock and then we'll come home. Well, we find obedient life is the way not just for individual release but also for the release of other brothers and sisters.

You know in Romans 5, it tells us through one man's disobedience, many or all were made sinners. But through one man's obedience, many were made righteous. Now, I believe this principle not only applies to Christ himself, this principle also applies to our family life as well as our church life.

There's one case in our fellowship. The sister, during giving birth to her firstborn, in the hospital, she was, how shall I put it, she was infected with an unusual virus. Because of that, she was paralyzed from waist down and mobile.

And they're both young. The wife was the Lord's, the husband was not the Lord's then. But through this tragic experience, the Lord restored her fully to himself.

Because of her obedience to the Lord, seeking the Lord and coming to the fellowship and when she comes to the fellowship, she has been such an encouragement to many saints. Because she will come and she will enter into the fellowship and her smile and her presence is an encouragement to all of us. But because of her obedience, her husband came to know the Lord.

For instance, there are many situations in the home we witness is through the husband's obedience, the wives came to know the Lord. Or through the obedience of the wife, the husband was restored to the Lord. Or through the obedience of the parents, the youngsters are restored to the Lord.

Or through the obedience of the youngsters, the parents are restored to the Lord. Brothers and sisters, sometimes the way to restore brothers and sisters is not really preaching to them. But in the obedience to

the Lord, somehow they are restored.

And so in this incident we see, through the obedience of these two disciples, they coped for some time. They coped, was released. And so the Lord can settle it and enter into Jerusalem.

Now brothers and sisters, this incident is very interesting. It has to do with entering into Jerusalem. So I feel this may have something to do with the second coming of the Lord.

And the next thing is this garment. This blind person in chapter 10, verse 50, he cast aside his cloak and he jumped and he came to Jesus. Brothers and sisters, we know our garment represents us.

Our garment we wear identifies our profession. Now in this country, when you go to the hospital, you see all the doctors wear their uniform. And nurses also have their uniform.

The cook in the kitchen, they also have their uniform. And especially in the olden days, your rank in the society is by what you wear. In the Old Testament, priests had the priestly garments.

Kings had their kingly garments. Soldiers had their soldiers' garments. So it's by what you wear, people identify you.

Now brothers and sisters, we can never become that welcoming party for the Lord as long as we retain our own individual identity. Because when he comes, you will be the king. You will come as the Lord of all.

So brothers and sisters, so Bartimaeus, the blind man, he knew, he said, if I want to come to the Lord, first thing I have to do, I have to throw away my cloak, my garment. In other words, I have to give up my own identity. When I come to Christ, I must give up myself so that he can become my life.

I'm so thankful to know that you will be baptising three sisters. Two weeks ago, we baptised three in our area, two brothers and one sister. And one brother reminded us long ago, he said, when you take a step of baptism, he said, do you know that is the end of you? And then when this brother was about to be baptised two weeks ago, he said, he got up about six o'clock in the morning and he just rejoiced.

He said, today I know I'm going to die. He got up early in the morning, just rejoiced in the fact that today I'm going to die. Now brothers and sisters, that's strange.

I mean, you go and tell the people of the world, I'm prepared to die. They think there's something wrong with you. But brothers and sisters, for Christians, our dying in the Lord is a glorious thing.

There's a glorious end and also a glorious beginning. So brothers and sisters, this experience is not just one, it's to be carried out through the rest of our life. And the Lord is waiting for his people to completely give themselves over to him.

In other words, we let go of our identity. Now brothers and sisters, this is the most important thing, about the Lord's coming. Because when he comes, he will become as our bridegroom.

So when a bride and a bridegroom get married, the wife loses her total identity. He becomes Mrs. So-and-so. So I always say, when this young man says, I do, he loses his identity.

But when she says, I do, she also loses her identity. They become a new being altogether in Christ. And so, you know, my daughter get married in April.

I'm sure Brother Kong told you about his delay. The bridegroom was there, the bride was there, and the families were there, but the preacher was not there. But through the experience, I learned one thing.

The Lord on the cross has said, I do already. And he's waiting for all of us in the church to say, I do. But the reason why we cannot say, I do, because we still want to retain our identity.

We're not willing to give ourselves up. So brothers and sisters, so the most important is that all throw away this cloak, this garment. And so they throw their garment on the donkey and on the road for the Lord to get into Jerusalem.

Brothers and sisters, if the Lord is to come again, he must have people that are willing to let go of themselves and give up their identity altogether. Now, this matter of branches. Besides garments, there are also branches.

Joseph was called the fruitful branch. Joseph, you know, in Genesis 49, when Jacob was blessing his 12 sons. The Lord Jesus in the Old Testament, he was called the righteous branch in the prophecy in Isaiah and Jeremiah.

And Kenya this morning was reading from Revelation 5. He's not only the line of the tribe of Judah, but he's also the root of David. He is the root and he's also the branch. And John 15, we are told that we are the branches and he's the vine.

Now, brothers and sisters, we are all branches from that wild olive tree. For us to be grafted into the true vine, there has to be that cutting off. So they not only throw their garments, but they also cut branches from the field and lay it on the ground.

Now, the field in the scripture speaks of the world. Now, brothers and sisters, many, many fellowship that have visited is that brothers and sisters are still attached to something of the world. Those who serve the Lord, they serve the Lord with 80% of their heart, but 20% still very much.

For themselves. And so therefore, many gathering cannot really revive, cannot serve the Lord with such life and strength and such power because there's a dividedness, a divided heart. Now, the divided heart is an unbroken heart.

Broken heart is a whole heart. Now, that's something we cannot take it in, but that is true in the scripture. When our heart is unbroken, our heart is whole, is wholehearted to the Lord.

If our heart is not broken, we are not wholeheartedly to all the Lord. And so, brothers and sisters, so it's necessary when the Lord comes, he will find those who are willing to cut themselves off from any attachment from this world. And so they cut off all these branches and they lay them at the Lord's feet.

Now, brothers and sisters, we know we are being grafted into the world, but in our experience, many times we still feel that there's that gravitation toward the world. We are not completely delivered from that. And therefore, brothers and sisters, we have to keep reminding ourselves and we have to be reminding one another that we really belong to this world.

We've been cut off positionally. Therefore, we have to enter experientially about this cutting off. And we lay our branches at the feet of Jesus.

Now, the obedience to God's word would take in three ways. And then you will see that it's coming, it's illustrated in this blind person. First, he took off his cloak, then he jumped up.

Jumping up, it is a manifestation of strength, life. When a baby is jumping all over the place, you say, oh, what a lifeless person. The one who sits always lying down, he said, that's a lifeless person.

So brothers and sisters, the only way to be delivered from any weakness of our love, our service to the Lord throwing away our garment is the only way. So this blind person, the moment he threw away his cloak, he was able to jump up. And when he jumped up, he knew where to go.

He came to the Lord Jesus. Now, the interesting thing, brothers and sisters, after he was regained sight, in verse 32, the Lord said, now you may go your way. The Lord never wants to coerce us to love him and serve him.

He is very generous. Love is very original. Love has to come from the heart.

You cannot force love. Love has to come from within. And so the Lord will not want us to follow him because of mere obligation.

He wants to love him and serve him and welcome him back because we love him intensely. And so verse 32, the Lord said, you go your way. And brothers and sisters, in this last days, the Lord is still saying that same word to us.

He will bless us. He will shower his love upon us. And next time, he said, you want to go your own way, you may.

You may. And so in many places, there are brothers and sisters who experience the love of the Lord, the blessing of the Lord, the joy of the fellowship, yet somehow they're still going on their own ways. To be a Christian, to come to the fellowship, is just for self-expediency.

They still live their own life. They come to take advantage of the Lord. You can say it that way.

And they still go their own way. And the Lord said, I won't mind. I'm full of grace and truth.

You can come just enjoy me. I won't mind. But this blind man, once he caught sight of the Lord Jesus, he can never go back to his own way again.

And the scribe said, immediately after he regained his sight, he began to follow him. So brothers and sisters, to follow the Lord, we have to hear his voice. When we hear the word come, the next response, we have to be willing to throw away our garments.

We have to be willing to be cut down as branches to lay at the Lord's feet. Now brothers and sisters, those two things are the most difficult thing for a Christian to do. Not just in the things of the world, but even in Christian things.

There are temptations in the world, but there are also temptations in Christianity. There are places where those who serve God, they are serving a work rather than the Lord himself. And for many of them, it is very difficult to give up what they've been doing.

And because of that, the Lord's work cannot go on and the testimony cannot be established because the work has become more important than the Lord himself. Now I say that because I witnessed that in some places in the Far East. The other groups over there, the gifts are becoming more important than the Lord himself.

And brothers and sisters, the Lord must come first before all these other things. And so the things of the world could be our garments, but even Christian things can also become our garments. And we need to help each other through our obedience to untie one another.

We have to help one another through obedience so that we can remove our garments and remove each other's garments. So that we can, through obedience, we can help each other so it will be like those cut down branches laid at the feet of the Lord Jesus. So that he can take them up and graft it into himself so it will become fruitful branches and to give him praise and to give him glory.

Now I just want to share a few minutes, maybe some of the things that Brother Kong did not share with you on this trip. And just to share with you the goodness of the Lord and how the Lord came through in spite of our unbelief, our unwillingness to really follow the Lord or in spite of our physical weariness. Now to be aware for two months, living in suitcases and you stay in each place for two weeks and you uproot and go to another place for two weeks and then you uproot and go to another place for two weeks is not very easy.

To live with someone for two few days, it's pleasant. But to live with someone lesser for four months, it's a different story. But I thank the Lord for Brother Kong for their love and passion and they put up with me.

And we prayed together every morning. Now as you know, I was given the assignment in Singapore to take care of the morning devotion for six days and also do the translation for Brother Kong. In Sydney, I also translated him for a few times.

The important thing is how the Lord came through. When we were in Sydney, Brother Kong said, you know, I'm going to stick on the mystery of Christ and I want you to be alert on a few things. So I want you to look over my notes.

So I was privileged to look into some of Brother Kong's notes and you know, his hand reading is very, very fine because he writes on his knees and it's hard to decipher. So sometimes it would take me a long time just to read one page and see what he has to say. But the interesting thing is that when we arrived in Singapore, Brother Kong changed his approach altogether.

So the notes didn't do that much good. He said, I think we have to be very real, very practical. We have to bring the Lord right here to the people.

And I'm sure those who have heard that take, you know what Brother Kong said, on the mystery of Christ in the eternity past, the mystery of Christ in creation, the mystery of Christ in prophecy, the mystery of Christ in his earthly life and the mystery of Christ in his personal ministry and the mystery of Christ in his second coming. And we had no idea when he arrived in Singapore that some of the young people in Singapore were enticed into a different teaching altogether, all the way. They questioned the deity of Christ.

We had no idea. And somehow the Lord has led Brother Kong to speak on the mystery of Christ from eternity to eternity. How he is the God himself.

He's the self-existent and he's the sinless one and he's the expression of God. And then after the conference was over, we discovered there were those who were in the meeting who tried to follow, who were persuaded to follow the way of his teaching. And then one Brother Kong, he said, if Brother Kong knew about what's happening in Singapore, therefore he speak what is, you know, he had no idea.

And I knew it was the Lord. The message was just so timely and thank God both the Lambs and God there were there at the same time because both of them had some encounter with the people of the way. And so we feel the Lord was really, really in it.

Our Singapore was very, very hot. Very, very hot. And we stayed at a Y and we were gassed into the meeting place.

And brothers and sisters, we had watch, morning watch, I think it was six, seven o'clock. Seven o'clock. And we have ministry, fellowship, then we have lunch, we have afternoon session, ministry and we have evening ministry.

And we usually don't get back to the Y until about 11 o'clock, 10.30, 11 o'clock. And it's hard to get up in the morning, be ready for the morning watch. And brothers and sisters, and how the Lord came through.

First day I was able to be on time, the second day was fine. And as the week go by, we get weary physically getting, but the last day, the last day, and how the Lord came through, the last day. That evening we had a fellowship with someone and we stayed up very, very late.

And the next morning our watch, the alarm did not come off. And so we only had about five, eight minutes to get ready to go to the morning watch. But on the way to the meeting place, I just cried to the Lord because that is the concluding day of that conference.

And I was to conclude that morning watch with a short word. And brothers and sisters, one thing I experienced, the Lord is very sympathetic to our physical limitation. But somehow He came through.

And that is the glory to know that no matter what we are, as long as we give ourselves 100% to the Lord, He takes full responsibility. And so when I was in Hong Kong, I was sharing some of the experiences about those two months I was with Brother Kong. This brother commented, he said, I think the two months you spent with Stephen Kong is better than going to Bible School Seminary for four years.

And I said, I agree. And we prayed together and I learned to love our brother more than ever and to experience the joy of knowing. Brothers and sisters, the few countries we visited, the Lord is doing the work.

But those brothers and sisters do need our prayer. Now I know Richmond here, brothers and sisters, you do have corporate prayer and you do pray, not just for locally, but you also pray for God's work everywhere. And especially some of this country, the Lord needs to gather His people together as a testament.

God has people everywhere, but they are scattered. They are not together. And so the burden, when we came back this time, is the Lord may bring all those hearts together and to knit them together into a testament.

That is the need. Individually, they all have a vision. But somehow corporate, it is very difficult for them to come together.

And for us, we need to get through to the Lord, that the Lord will bring all these people together. And the reason why I share this morning is that many of them, they still retain their own garment. That's why they cannot come together.

Many of them, they want to be responsible and they think so, but they are still not willing to be those branches that are really cut down. And they are the Lord's feet. Many of them, they heard the word of the Lord, but they are not prepared to obey and follow Him utterly.

And that's the problem. And brothers and sisters, until the Lord can get such people, it will be very difficult for Him to return. It will be very difficult for that well-coming party to be fully formed and for His return.

Our brothers and sisters, as I say, the Lord Jesus on the cross, He always say, I do. His longing to be one with His brother. And the problem today, brothers and sisters, is that we are still hesitant.

We are still not quite ready to say, I do, to Him. To be one with Him in all that He wants. Now, lastly, I just want to share a few things.

Maybe it will be of interest to you. I really appreciate Gordon Sisson Richmond for the responsibility you've been assuming year after year for the conference. You may not know some of the impacts this conference had with some of the Lord's people.

Because they may not contact you directly, but some of them do get in touch with me. Lastly, I received a call from St. Paul, Minnesota. Three families came to Richmond Conference this past month.

And the Lord really spoke to those hearts. After they get back to Minneapolis and St. Paul, those three families began to meet together for prayer, for fellowship. So I said, I'll share this with the brothers and sisters in Richmond, that you remember those few three families in Minneapolis and St. Paul, that the Lord will begin a new work there.

They all go to a Chinese gathering. But every time when they come to Richmond, the pastor was not really that pleased. When they return, they put more pressure on them.

They're afraid to trust them with any more spiritual responsibility, afraid that they may entice all the others to go their ways. It is a threat. The pastor felt it's a threat to him.

So this brother told me, he said, I think I'm coming to an end of this relationship with this organized group. I believe the Lord is doing something new with all of us. I said, well, I'll share this with one in Richmond, that they'll continue to pray for people like that.

They really want to stand for the Lord, but they do need the prayer of the saints. They need to be encouraged that they can stand together. And also about this past conference, there's something, I don't know.

I've been to many conferences, I'm sure. We see as other, all through this year. But this year, it's been just something different.

I don't know about you. We feel something is just different. It's not quite what it was before.

And just share this with you for your encouragement. When we went back, we tried to rehearse what we heard, what we learned of the Lord. First Sunday, we shared the things we learned from the conference.

There was not enough time. There's still more people want to share. So the next Lord's Day and the next Lord's Day, I think we devoted at least three or four Lord's Days just to share what one another, remind each other what we heard in the conference.

In fact, they're going to do it again next week. And so, brothers and sisters, this is the first time that we felt the Lord has made such an impact. Because in the past, Ellen was saying that we know we had a nice meal, but we forget what we have eaten.

We know we had a nice meal, but we forget what was on the table. But this time, when we went back, we remember what was on the table. We're able to share what we ate.

And I think the Lord has done something. And maybe we are not quite ready before, but the Lord has done a new thing in many hearts. And one more thing, brothers and sisters, is in our area, the Lord has begun to do a new work.

We have a group meeting in my home for about 12, 13 years now. Some of you visited us. But in our vicinity, there's a Chinese Bible study group and there's other Lord's.

And many of them got saved through the years. Now we are coming into a oneness of life and vision. And so there is a real commitment between our side, our group, and then the other group to the Lord.

The Lord may have something, a testimonial oneness. And so we are in the midst of looking for a place to meet. That's another example, for instance.

To be one, we have to let go of our own identity. The Chinese group must let go of their Chinese identity. Our Glasgow group must let go of our own identity for to be one. We must not be cut down.

And brothers and sisters, I believe the Lord is doing a new thing. And he is getting us together. And not just in vision, in heart, but really truly to become a body that we can express himself.

So just share some of these things with you, brothers and sisters. The Lord is doing a work there. It's hard, it's slow.

But we thank the Lord for all the years you, brothers and sisters, have been standing with us and praying with us. And lastly, brothers and sisters, verse 11 of chapter 11. You notice from verse 9 and verse 10 there is that war coming song.

Hosanna, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Blessed is the coming kingdom of our Father David. Hosanna in the highest.

And verse 11, please take note of verse 11. And he entered Jerusalem and came to the temple and after he looked all around, he departed to Bethany with the twelve saints. It was already late.

He went into the temple. He looked around and he left. Brothers and sisters, the Lord's intention is never to go to Jerusalem, enter the temple and look around and left.

His intention, brothers and sisters, is to enter Jerusalem and enter in his temple and stay. But he left because the people were not ready for him. And later you know that he went into the temple and he cleansed the temple because the temple is his house.

He is the son of the house. So brothers and sisters, just share the last thing with you. The Lord has come many times to our gathering.

He cannot stay. He left again. He will come again and he will go again.

He comes again and he goes again. But brothers and sisters, the Lord is waiting. He comes and looks around.

He is at a place where he is welcome, that he can remain with us forever. And that's what he is looking for. So verse 11, read it out loud.

He came into Jerusalem and went into the temple and he looked around and he left. Now why he left? Because the people were not ready for him. But brothers and sisters, may we be a people, not just here in Richmond but elsewhere, when the Lord comes, he said, I am so comfortable here.

I will just stay forever. That will be our joy. And let's praise the Lord and thank God.

And he is doing that kind of work. And let's pray and hope that wherever we find ourselves, that will be a place where he comes first. His comfort, our comfort.

So let's look to the Lord. Oh Father, we do thank you for this time that we can just encourage our hearts one another. We again have to play your mercy.

Lord, we do thank you for what you're doing and what you desire to do, what you desire to accomplish. May we be the people through them so that your work can be fully realized. We do thank you for the saints here in Richmond for all the years they've been standing for your interest and for your testimony.

We just pray that you continue to bless. And Lord, we just pray that this place will be a place where we know that you can make yourself at home. Lord, that you will be here.

Lord, from now until eternity. We do thank you that temple is yours. We are yours.

The house is yours. We belong to you. And Lord, we do desire to take your place amongst your people.

We do pray that you will not allow us to forget other saints throughout the world. Lord, they are in need. Lord, to be a prepared people.

Lord, for you to come and take your residence upon them. And so we just commit one another into your hands. We thank you for the testimony of the three sisters.

This one, the desire to enter this commitment in you. Lord, to take this step of baptism. We just pray that you'll bless that time.

And Lord, not only for them but also for us. Lord, to remind ourselves. Lord, that we no longer belong to the world.

We are those branches who's been cut down. Lord, we are to be grafted into Christ. Lord, our garments.

Lord, has been removed. Lord, we must lay our garments at your feet. Lord, we thank you that through burial, through our death with you and resurrection, we lose our identity.

We belong to you. And you become all in all in us. We give you praise, give you thanks for this opportunity that we can be together.

We give praise in the presence of the Lord Jesus. Amen.

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