

# **BEING A BROTHER**

**By Titus Chu**

## **MESSAGE TWO: BEING A BROTHER VERSUS BEING A WORKER**

In the previous message we shared that being a brother is the highest place ordained for us by God. We also touched upon our normal place in the Body life. Regarding this we have four statuses: that of brother, in contrast to being a worker; that of being a member in contrast to being a ruler; that of being a slave in contrast to being a lord; and that of the being the Lord's friend in contrast to being an employee.

### **BEING A BROTHER IS MORE DIFFICULT THAN BEING AN "APOSTLE"**

Being a brother is the highest place ordained for us by God. This realization should be a safeguard to us. Many, however, disregard their status as brother and seek something else they think to be higher, such as apostle, elder, or "ministering brother." Very few realize that it is more difficult to be a brother than to be a traveling "apostle," elder, or brother who can give messages. Most who travel giving conferences have not raised up any churches, and what they minister is not really theirs yet, but they pass it on as though they have it. How can such a person function as a brother?

In contrast, to be an apostle as Paul was truly is the highest operation in the church life, for he operated to raise up saints and churches from "scratch." Today the good apostles still try to find the hungry ones to raise up, while the easy-going ones go from conference to conference, using other people's fruit. Thus many who travel as apostles these days have little chance to grow well, for every good message they give causes them to forget they are brothers and to think they are something else.

For those who have been serving in the church life for some time, to function as an elder is easier than to function as a brother. Eventually the hardest lesson and the greatest trial coming to those who love the Lord has to do with whether they will be able to continue on as brothers in the Lord's recovery. After a few years in the recovery many lose their sensation of being brothers. Such may be called brothers, but they no longer operate according to what God has ordained for them.

You don't know how fearful I am for you young brothers. When I see you come back from giving a conference, filled in spirit, I see you filled with poison. You have done something that gives you a reputation, but which was cheap in its execution. You didn't raise up the congregation you spoke to. Furthermore, your ministering was all from Brother Lee. But you flew on the airplane, met the elders at the airport, and sat in the front row at the meeting. How could you go on as a brother in your locality?

Recently a brother shared a number of points in his locality on how the church should stand there. He has the right to share his burden as an elder in his locality. When he found out that the points were published and sent to other places, however, he approved of it. How could he have such a mentality? Because he had traveled from place to place giving conferences to people others had raised up. He himself had not raised anything up, but he felt he had the position to operate in this way.

I have been in the recovery thirty-six years now, and I have only learned this lesson in the last few years. My recent experience in a certain locality helped me much. Usually when I visited there, someone would be at the airport to greet me. This time when I went there was no one. I had to take a taxi to where I was to stay and when I got there I had no key. Formerly when I went, people respected me. This time people looked at me and wondered whether I was "in the flow". This kind of thing doesn't necessarily try your apostleship or eldership. This kind of thing tries whether you are willing to be just a brother. Before 1986 I could never give you this word, because I had not experienced such a test of whether I could just be a brother in the church.

## **GROWING INTO WHAT WE HAVE BEEN BORN WITH**

We just like to be someone special. In our view, being a brother is the “entry-level” position in the church life. In reality, however, it is the highest place, and the hardest for you to attain in full. How many people grow into what they were born to be? Out of the millions in this city, how many have grown into their humanity as God created it? All were born to be men as God created man to be. Yet though so many come to be engineers, politicians, factory workers, and so on, how many become what they should have become? That which you are born with can be the hardest thing for you to enter into.

Eventually you will be surprised at how hard it is to be a brother in the church life in the Lord’s recovery. It is much easier to travel as a so-called apostle. If you don’t believe me, wait until you begin traveling and giving conferences. In my experience, the real trial is not present when I travel; it is present when I return to my locality. At that time I am reminded of who I really am. When you travel, you feel as though you are quite prevailing. When you came home it is manifested who you really are.

The hardest operation in the church life is to be a normal functioning brother. If asked, I would have to honestly say that after being in the church life this long I just haven’t seen many normal functioning brothers. Generally speaking, either a brother thinks of himself as nobody and doesn’t function normally, or he thinks of himself as somebody and doesn’t function normally. Either way, he is frustrated from functioning normally as a brother. It seems we just cannot handle who we really are and what we are meant to be.

God has made you a holy brother, a true brother in the church life. This is the highest place you can ever attain to. The real progression in experience seems to be that first you are a brother, then you become an elder, then a mini-apostle, after which the real growth begins and you grow from being an apostle into an elder, and then from an elder into a normal, functioning brother.

**IT IS NOT EASY TO BE  
“JUST A BROTHER” AFTER BEING FULL-TIME**

I used to think that being a brother was elementary and simple. I have now found that to be a brother is very difficult. For you to walk into a meeting with all your riches and experiences and to be treated as just one of the brothers is not easy. For you to have so much spiritual attainment before the Lord and then not to be honored at all by others is difficult.

When I was young there must have been a hundred and forty full-time workers. Today a number are doing a Christian work outside of the recovery. (The best laborers today among the Chinese Christian groups are those that left the recovery.) There may be five to ten such brothers. Then another five to ten are still laboring faithfully in the recovery. Some of them helped me when I was young. The rest, well over a hundred, simply left the work. There is nothing wrong with their resuming or taking up a job, but many also left the recovery. A number even left the Christian life. Just before they left they were those telling us how to love the Lord and how to go on in the church life. This was possible because they handled their serving as a job.

You can say you serve the Lord, walk according to burden, and that the Lord is caring for you, yet this can all be talk. In actuality you may be carrying your being full-time as a job to gain increase, help the new ones love the Lord, get consecrated, and get perfected. Every day you are getting together to plan how to get the college students together, when to have a conference, and so on. Perhaps one day you may leave the work. Yet, if you leave the work, aren't you still a brother? The sad thing is that out of more than a hundred who left the work, most cannot make the meetings anymore. Why? They cannot do the hardest job. For any brother who has been with us for five or so years, to be an apostle is easy. Many of you would be able to give enjoyable conferences. But the strange thing is, once you have traveled and given messages, you can't be a brother anymore.

**IN ORDER TO OPERATE WELL AS AN ELDER  
OR APOSTLE ONE HAS TO KNOW HOW TO BE A BROTHER**

Only when you know how to be a brother can your apostleship or eldership be successful. I have never seen any elder operate effectively who did not know how to be a brother among the saints. Furthermore, I have never seen an apostle who could really build up the churches who did not also have the exercise of being a brother among the saints.

**THE DANGER OF SPECIAL TRAINING**

Any special kind of training has the ability to kill you. It can cause you to feel you are no longer a brother. Next year we are planning to share more on how to be an elder. Perhaps the third year we should have a training in matters of apostleship. The fourth year labor will then be vacant, for you all will have died. Even after a little learning you have somewhat left being a brother.

It seems that those who know little in the church life survive year after year just by the very fact that they know little. It is tempting to those who learn anything, whether in Taipei or in the United States, for four months or nine months, to promote themselves out of the highest place, the place of being a brother. For this reason I frequently warn the full time brothers here. Why? Once you give a few conferences, once you travel a few places to help some churches, you begin to walk differently. The elders feel you have caught some kind of fever. Eventually your learning makes you someone who cannot be helped. We all need to be aware of this. There is no higher position in the church than that of being a brother. May the Lord have mercy.

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