

BEING A BROTHER

By Titus Chu

MESSAGE FIVE: APPRECIATE BEING A BROTHER (2)

In the previous message we began our fellowship on how one needs to appreciate being a brother. It is our place by birth. It is our highest exercise in growth. It is the hardest lesson to really learn. It is also the greatest manifestation and test through which we must pass.

Very few are able to pass the test of manifestation. This is why those who love the Lord often must experience extra suffering. This extra suffering is added by the Lord as a protection for us. He knows we may be manifested beyond our capacity. Therefore He adds something to keep us. Paul himself said that the Lord gave him a thorn in the flesh to prevent him from being lifted up over to the greatness of his revelations (2 Cor.12:7). This thorn functioned to protect Paul and to preserve him.

BE A BROTHER FOR THE MATURITY IN LIFE

Once I was praying with Brother Lee. I was very impressed with the revelation he had received and shared with the saints. Very naturally I prayed, "Lord, we are thankful for all the revelation you have rendered to us through Your servant." Brother Lee prayed immediately, "Lord, cover us in Your precious blood." To pray in thanks regarding a servant of the Lord is proper, but to do so in his presence can expose him to the enemy's attack. His feeling, though, was that he was just a brother.

When you stand upon the ground that you are a brother, Satan has no way to infect you. Just remember that being a brother is the greatest manifestation and the greatest test to you in your Christian life. Can you just be a brother among all the other brothers? We all need to be manifested in the maturity of life, but as you become more mature you also need an ever greater appreciation that you are a brother.

BE A BROTHER BY MEANS OF THE HUMANITY OF JESUS

Secondly, to be a brother you need the humanity of Jesus. In other words, only the Lord knows how to be a brother. Not one of us knows how to be a father, mother, daughter, son, or sibling, let alone a brother in the church. In our fallen condition no one knows how to be right in anything. All husbands know they are not good husbands, all wives know they are not good wives, and all parents know they are not good parents. Why should it be that just because you have come into the church life that you can be a good brother? Whether you can be a good brother in the church life depends upon whether you have been constituted with the humanity of Jesus. This constitution is manifested mainly in how much you know how to be a brother among the saints.

The humanity of Jesus does not exalt itself. All of His human virtues are for you to be a brother in the church life. Therefore, if you know how to be a brother or sister in the church life, you have had some amount of transformation. Transformation is not measured by how strongly you release your spirit in a meeting or how able you are to give a message. Transformation may issue in these things, but it is not manifested by them. There are many good preachers who haven't experienced much transformation. Therefore, don't think that because I am here ministering this word that I have made it. How well a person may be able to preach or how powerful a person may be in the gospel does not reveal how transformed he is.

It is one's humanity that reveals how much transformation one has received. If you do not see this, you will bask in others' appreciation and think you are someone special. If this is allowed to continue, you will miss the real thing and be ruined. It is your humanity that shows where you are.

For example, when I went to Taiwan for the elder's training, I did my best to abide by the regulations. I was told that I didn't need to worry about a badge, but I felt that elevated me to a status above that of being a brother. If others needed a badge, I should have one too. If others needed permission to do certain things, I should seek permission also. Our spiritual growth or tenure in the recovery should not make us special.

Some of the leading ones who praised the training while they were in Taipei came back and criticized it after they returned to the United States. These were manifested brothers who had traveled among the churches. They were known and appreciated by the saints. Now they have turned against Brother Lee. What is lacking? Something is wrong with their humanity.

Your concept must change. Don't appreciate your improving ability to give messages. That is of little value. Nor should you appreciate how much more you can accomplish now that you've had some training. Your real progress and growth will be seen in your humanity. Your transformation with the humanity of Jesus is the reality of spiritual attainment. If your humanity is not being properly developed, your spiritual attainments are false and need to be tried. It is relatively easy to acquire riches of truth and to improve your ability to speak and so on. This development is deceptive and therefore dangerous if not accompanied by true transformation.

Without the humanity of Jesus you can become affected by your apparent riches. Some take advantage of their training and assign themselves a status different from others. Thus they are led away to something besides being a brother. Because the saints are simple and love the Lord, they honor those they perceive as serving the Lord. It is easy to unconsciously take advantage of this. Be careful! Without the humanity of Jesus we can lose the reality of being a brother.

BE A BROTHER TO EXERCISE IN THE REVELATION OF THE MYSTERY

The third point concerning this matter of manifestation and test concerns the revelation of the divine mysteries. Regardless how much revelation you have received, your revelation should never become a justification for you to strive for something beyond your level of transformation. The Lord may give you a great revelation, but you must realize that transformation is needed to substantiate that revelation. Seeing something does not mean you have it. It has been many years since I first received my basic revelations. In the beginning, however, much of my revelation seemed theoretical. I shared it, I ministered it, but I hadn't fully experienced it. How much that revelation has been substantiated in me is related to how much I have been transformed, and how much I have been transformed is manifested by how much I am able to just be a brother in the church life.

In the early years in the recovery in this country a number of brothers from Christianity associated themselves with Brother Lee. Some even spoke the same revelation. Yet when you witnessed their daily life, it was evident that their transformation did not match their revelation. Therefore it became hard for them to continue, because their revelation exceeded the amount of transformation they had. Some of them didn't realize that their humanity didn't match their revelation. They thought they were big fish, not realizing they were actually quite small. Thus they got themselves into trouble spiritually and were unable to survive.

I am afraid even after this word many of you will say, “We have learned so much in this labor together, but where is the reality?” Don’t complain. There is much reality, but you remain inadequately transformed. Therefore your revelation is not real to you. You possess so many great facts, revelations, and utterances, but you yourselves remain quite small. If you at this time learn to be a brother, saying, “Yes, I see a lot, but I don’t yet have much,” you will be protected.

Paul received the greatest revelations. He was even taken up to the third heavens and down into Hades (2 Cor. 12:1-6). He didn’t reveal this until fourteen years later. How could he contain such a revelation? I don’t think we could wait fourteen years before sharing such a thing. We couldn’t contain such a thing even for one day, for we would be concerned that if we didn’t speak it, the elders wouldn’t know we had it and we wouldn’t be properly manifested. Some brothers even become fearful that they will lose the revelation they have received if they don’t speak it right away. If you can lose it, it proves it was never real anyway. Now you understand why your ability to be a brother is the truest test to your revelation. Paul had the ability to be just a brother in spite of his revelations, and that is why he was kept. Revelation and vision can kill you if you do not back it up with this kind of exercise. The most important thing for you to see and realize is that you need to be a brother in the church life.

BE A BROTHER TO CARRY OUT THE MINISTRY COMMITTED TO YOU

The fourth thing we fellowshiped over was how this matter tests and manifests our commitment in our ministry. Your ministry is whatever you have experienced of Christ. If you have experienced salvation, your ministry is to help others experience salvation. If you love the Lord, your ministry is to help others love the Lord. Therefore every one of us has some ministry.

It is not what you learn objectively that becomes your ministry. Only what you have learned or experienced subjectively constitutes your ministry. But regardless of how rich your ministry is, it will be tested by whether you can be a brother in the church life. If you don't know how to be a brother you will be unable to fulfill your ministry. When we experience just a little bit of attainment we feel we are special. As soon as we become special a distance comes in between us and others. Then the riches we possess cannot be fully ministered. You may be full of riches and burden but if you are short in this one matter, even though you may be taking the lead, what you see will go unrealized. How sober is this matter. Your ministry is fulfilled by your ability to be just a brother.

It is understandable and even right that saints honor a more mature brother laboring among them. But if such a brother thinks that he is special he will not be able to fulfill his ministry. I had the opportunity to be flown by a brother to some cities to minister. That actually would have been just as economical as driving, for others would be coming along, and quite a bit of time could be saved. But because it would give the appearance that I was someone special, I declined. We should never give the saints the feeling that we are anything other than just brothers. No matter how great the ministry is that the Lord has committed to you, you have to learn that you are still just a brother.

BE A BROTHER FOR THE EXERCISE OF YOUR OPERATION

The fifth matter we shared concerns the exercise of our operation. By means of your ministry you have an operation in the church life. By means of your commitment you exercise in the church life. As you are operating in the church life you must stand upon the fact that you are a brother. Revelation, ministry, and operation go together. Once you have a revelation of the divine mystery, you receive a commitment because you have a ministry. Out of this commitment of ministry you exercise according to your operation in the church life. Only a person

who knows how to be a brother can fulfill all this. If you seek to carry this out in any other manner you will not be able to do it.

For instance, if the Lord were to send you to help some churches, in what way would you go? You may feel you are going as an apostle, but due to your fallen humanity this thought can frustrate the Lord's purpose in sending you. Are you able to go and stand with the churches by being a brother among them? There is a brother among us who is visiting many churches these days. He went to one locality where they were giving a conference. A local brother did all the ministering and wouldn't allow this brother any opportunity to speak. He drove hours to be with them and then just sat through the meetings with everyone else. I couldn't have taken this. I wouldn't have known how to remain a brother in that situation, but this brother did. Yet the church there has been helped very much by him. In another place the brothers didn't fully receive him. He continued to go. He did not feel that he had to be treated in a special way. Today that church is doing quite well. This is not due to my sending a pastoral letter of official recommendation for this brother. This is due to a brother going to be with the saints as a brother. If someone had gone there with a work in view, the saints would probably not have received him or his efforts.

Many of you would have been occupied with how to impress the saints so they would accept you as a worker. If you go as a brother, however, that wouldn't be your thought. If the saints don't receive you as a worker, just sit there and enjoy the Lord with everyone. What you have will eventually be manifested. If you have something and the Lord is with you, even a three to five minute testimony would be of help to that place you are visiting.

If you know how to be a brother, no situation will stumble you. When I was young I was invited to go to a certain city by a brother for four weeks. By that time I had already been an elder and was currently laboring among the churches. I used all my accumulated vacation time to take off from work to go. I found out that I knew how to give conferences, but I didn't know how

to simply be a brother among the other brothers there. I obviously couldn't give a four-week conference, and the saints didn't know what to do with me for such a long period of time.

If I knew then what I know today, I believe so much more could have happened. It wasn't that I didn't possess revelation. I failed because I didn't know how to be a brother. Therefore all my revelation and all my ministry and all my operation came to nothing. I didn't spend my time with the saints exercising as a brother among them. I tried to be someone special. I didn't know then how crucial it was to be a brother.

BE A BROTHER TO HAVE A HEALTHY DAILY WALK AND LIVING

To have a healthy daily walk and living requires that you be a brother. Your daily exercise determines your daily life. If you are a brother, then you will have life in view. If you consider yourself as something other than a brother, then you won't focus on life in your daily walk. If you are focused on work, then you will read the Bible more when you have to give a message. You will pray when you are caring for someone, but not because you realize it builds you up as a brother. Your daily life should be affected by the realization that you are a brother in the church. As a brother you should be in the Lord's presence, in the Word, and in the gospel as a daily exercise. If even one-fourth of the saints had this kind of daily life, the church life would be so sweet and so prevailing. We need to shift the center of our daily life from a particular operation or work to just being brothers and sisters in life.

Many years ago the Lord told me, "Don't prepare beforehand for your messages." In the beginning I didn't quite understand why. Later I understood. Your messages should come out of your daily walk. It shouldn't be a conference that causes you to get into the Word, because you will stop reading the Bible when there is no pressure on you to prepare a message. Furthermore, your prayer will also fluctuate according to what you are doing

in the work. If you are work-oriented, your daily life becomes very abnormal. This is a test for anyone who desires to be used by the Lord.

If the Lord burdens you or asks you to prepare material for a message, you should do it, but you must realize that your life cannot be work-oriented. If so, your normal daily exercise will lapse, and you will be in danger.

It is normal for us to prepare for a conference with the young people, or prepare something for a meeting, or to dig into something before we visit another locality to minister. But if you don't handle this carefully it will damage you. Soon, if there is no conference you won't read the Bible. If you are not responsible for a meeting you won't labor and you won't pray. When you become involved with something you will pray for that thing, but how can the Lord hear you? He may say, "Where have you been the last three months? You only pray now because the high school summer camp is coming."

BE A BROTHER TO LABOR EFFECTIVELY

Many of you are frustrated in fruit-bearing because you take it as a duty and not as something of life. Your psychology is wrong. Since you view fruit-bearing as an assignment, you have no way to contact others with life in a normal way.

Let me give you an example. In school I loved some classes and hated others. I have forgotten everything I learned in the classes I didn't enjoy. The things that I did enjoy, however, are still with me today. These became my life, while the other classes were my work. The same applies with us today. You may hate to preach the gospel because to you it is a work. If you take it as a brother, it becomes your life. Your effectiveness is not according to how much you do; it is according to whether you can be a brother. As a brother you will not be work- or number-oriented. Those you care for as a brother will be related to you in life.

Thus you will be effective in your labor for the Lord's increase. May the Lord have mercy that we would all learn to appreciate being a brother in the church life.

This article is available online at
MinistryMessages.org

© 2002 Titus Chu