

HWMR: LIVING AND SERVING ACCORDING TO GOD’S ECONOMY CONCERNING THE CHURCH, (Week 3)

Scripture Reading: 1 Tim. 2:1-4, 8; Exo. 28:29-30; 31:1-3; Col. 4:2

1 Timothy 2:1	I exhort therefore, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings be made on behalf of all men;
1 Timothy 2:2	On behalf of kings and all who are in high position, that we may lead a quiet and tranquil life in all godliness and gravity.
1 Timothy 2:3	This is good and acceptable in the sight of our Savior God,
1 Timothy 2:4	Who desires all men to be saved and to come to the full knowledge of the truth.
1 Timothy 2:8	I desire therefore that men pray in every place, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and reasoning.
Exodus 28:29	So Aaron shall bear the names of the sons of Israel in the breastplate of judgment on his heart when he goes into the sanctuary, for a memorial before Jehovah continually.
Exodus 28:30	And you shall put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim; and they shall be on Aaron’s heart when he goes in before Jehovah, and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel on his heart before Jehovah continually.
Exodus 31:1	And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying,
Exodus 31:2	See, I have called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah.
Exodus 31:3	And I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom and with understanding and with knowledge and with all kinds of workmanship.
Colossians 4:2	Persevere in prayer, watching in it with thanksgiving.

A Proper Prayer Life for a Proper Church Life

Day 1

1 Timothy 2:1-2 - I exhort therefore, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings be made on behalf of all men; On behalf of kings and all who are in high position, that we may lead a quiet and tranquil life in all godliness and gravity.

- I. “I exhort therefore, first of all, that **petitions, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings** be made on behalf of all men; on behalf of kings and all who are in high position, that we may lead a quiet and tranquil life in all godliness and gravity. This is good and acceptable in the sight of our Savior God”—1 Tim. 2:1-3:**
- A. After speaking of God’s economy and after charging Timothy to war the good warfare for God’s economy (1:3-4, 18), Paul indicates that a **prayer ministry** is the prerequisite for the administrating and shepherding of a local church (2:1-3, 8).
 - B. A prerequisite for having a proper church life in the Lord’s recovery today is to have a **prayer life**; a proper church is a **praying church**; all in the Lord’s recovery must be **prayerful** and stand against the sin of prayerlessness—1 Sam. 12:23.
 - C. The elders in the church must take up Paul’s charge to “**first of all**” **pray** (1 Tim. 2:1); those who take the lead in the churches must have a **prayer life**; if we exercise ourselves to have a prayer life, the church will be **living and uplifted**.
 - D. Instead of talking so much and even instead of working so much, we should **pray more**; only after we have prayed for a matter thoroughly should we make a decision concerning it, not by ourselves independently, but in oneness with the Lord and according to His leading.

Day 2

1 Timothy 2:4 - Who desires all men to be saved and to come to the full knowledge of the truth.

1 Timothy 2:8 - I desire therefore that men pray in every place, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and reasoning;

- E. The Greek word for *intercessions* denotes an approaching of God in a **personal** and **confiding** manner, that is, an intervening, an interfering, before God in others' affairs for their benefit.
- F. "Recently, my activity was limited for a time so that I could rest and care for my health. When I heard about certain needs, I prayed for them. Perhaps the Lord **limited** me that He might impress me with the fact that **prayer is more important** than work. May we all learn the lesson that the way to have a good church life is to pray. This is crucial. If our talking is turned into praying, the church in our locality will be transformed"—*Life-study of 1 Timothy*, second edition, p. 28.
- G. We should pray on behalf of all men because God our Savior desires all men to be saved and to come to the full knowledge of the truth; our **prayer is required** for the carrying out of God's desire—1 Tim. 2:4.
- H. "I desire therefore that men **pray in every place**, lifting up **holy hands**, without wrath and reasoning"—v. 8:
 - 1. Hands symbolize our doings; hence, holy hands signify a **holy living**, a living that is pious and that belongs to God; such a **holy life strengthens our prayer life**.
 - 2. If our hands are **not** holy, our living is **not** holy and is **not** for God; we then have **no** supporting strength to pray, **no** holy hands to lift up in prayer.
 - 3. **Wrath** and **reasoning** kill our prayer; wrath is of our emotion, and reasoning is of our mind.
 - 4. To have a prayer life and pray unceasingly, our **emotion** and **mind** must be regulated to be in a normal condition, **under the control of the Spirit in our spirit**.

Concerning the brothers, Paul says in verse 8, "*I desire therefore that men pray in every place, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and reasoning.*" In a local church the leading ones must have a prayer life, as they were charged in verses 1 and 2, to set an example of prayer for all the members to follow by praying always in every place. In Ephesians 6 Paul tells us to **pray at every time**, but here he says to **pray in every place**. Although it is possible for us to pray at every time—morning, afternoon, evening, and night—it may not be possible for us to pray in every place. The requirement to pray in every place is more demanding than that to pray at every time. **If we can pray in every place, we can surely pray at every time.** But even if we are able to pray at every time, it still may not be possible for us to pray in every place. For example, it is not possible to pray in certain worldly places. Since you cannot pray in those places, **you should not go there**. If you can pray in a particular place, it is permissible for you to be there. But if you cannot pray in a certain place, you should not be there. According to verse 8, the brothers must bear the unique burden to pray in every place. Pray at work, at home, and in your car. As men, we should be those who pray.

As I am speaking about this matter of praying in every place, I am deeply burdened. I would beg you **all, especially the leading ones**, from now on to have another kind of life—a **life of praying in every place**. If you pray in every place, your living will be transformed, and the church in your locality will be transformed also. Some brothers may not be entirely satisfied with the church in their locality. The only way for the church in your locality to be satisfying to you is for you to **pray at every time and in every place**. Instead of discussing the situation of the church, pray for the church. The normal life of the brothers in the church is to pray in every place. (*Life-study of First Timothy (2nd ed.)*, chapter 4)

Day 3

Exodus 28:29-30 - So Aaron shall bear the names of the sons of Israel in the breastplate of judgment on his heart when he goes into the sanctuary, for a memorial before Jehovah continually. And you shall put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim; and they shall be on Aaron's heart when he goes in before Jehovah, and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel on his heart before Jehovah continually.

II. In order to be infused with the instruction of God to care for the church, the elders must have much and thorough prayer so that they can enter into the reality of “reading the saints,” just as the high priest in the Old Testament read the stones on the breastplate with the Urim and Thummim in the presence of God—Exo. 28:29-30:

- A. After the Urim and the Thummim were put into the breastplate, it became not only a memorial but also a **breastplate of judgment**—v. 30:
1. *Urim* means “lights,” “illuminators”—v. 30:
 - a. The Urim was an **illuminator** inserted into the breastplate under the twelve stones; it had the capacity to contain oil for burning, and the fire used to burn the oil came from the altar.
 - b. The Urim had twelve illuminators, one to **illuminate** each of the twelve transparent precious stones on the breastplate so that they could shine with light (David Baron).
 - c. The Urim typifies **Christ** as **lights, illuminators** (John 8:12; Luke 1:78-79), **shining** through the **Spirit** (the oil) and the **cross** (the fire from the altar).
 2. *Thummim* means “**perfecters**,” “**completers**”—Exo. 28:30:
 - a. The names on the twelve stones on the breastplate contained only eighteen of the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet; the remaining four letters were put on the Thummim, making it the perfecter and completer (David Baron).
 - b. By the shining of the Urim on the individual precious stones and by the darkening of the stones, the full alphabet of twenty-two letters could be used to spell out words and sentences.
 - c. The Thummim typifies **Christ** as the **perfecter** and **completer** (Heb. 12:2); thus, He is the spiritual alphabet for both **inscribing** and **completing** (cf. Rev. 22:13a).
 - d. Together, the Urim and the Thummim typify **Christ** as **God's witness, God's testimony** (3:14), as the **means** for God to speak to His people (Heb. 1:2).

Day 4

Romans 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.

Romans 8:14 - For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

- e. In the New Testament, the reality of the Urim and the Thummim is the **mingled spirit**—the unveiling Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, indwelling our receiving spirit, our regenerated human spirit—Rom. 8:4, 14, 16; Rev. 1:10; 4:2; 17:3; 21:10.
- B. According to the Old Testament, the Urim and the Thummim added to the breastplate were a means for God to speak to His people to indicate to them His leading; thus, we may say that the breastplate of judgment is a “**breastplate of leading**”—Lev. 8:8; Num. 27:21; Deut. 33:8; Josh. 7:16-21; 1 Sam. 23:6, 9-12; 28:6; Ezra 2:63; Neh. 7:65.
- C. In spiritual experience, in order to know God's leading we must judge whatever is of the flesh, the self, the old man, and the world; the fact that God's speaking as His leading was through the breastplate signifies that **God makes His leading known to His people through the church**.
- D. The breastplate of judgment for God's leading was like a heavenly, divine, and spiritual

typewriter, and His way of speaking through the breastplate with the Urim and the Thummim is the **opposite** of what we would expect:

1. God speaks not through the stones that are shining but **through the stones that become dark**; this means that **God speaks through negative situations**; because the Lord's speaking by the breastplate of judgment is through negative situations, that speaking is a judgment.

The **breastplate** signifies the **church with all the believers** built up together as one entity. All the transformed believers who are built up to become the one entity known as the Body of Christ, the church, are letters for God's speaking to us. This means that today, in the New Testament age, **God speaks to the church through all the saints**. We can see this in the way many of Paul's Epistles were written. In writing to a particular church, Paul considered the saints in that local church. In other words, he considered the condition and situation of the saints in that locality. Then he used the condition and situation of the saints as letters in the spiritual alphabet to compose an epistle. Paul did not write any of his Epistles in an abstract way with vain thoughts. No, his Epistles were always based upon the condition and situation of the saints in a particular locality. Thus, those saints became the letters used by Paul in the spiritual typesetting of an epistle.

What does this mean for us today? It simply means that **in a local church the leading ones need to seek the Lord's guidance by reading the actual situation and condition of the saints**. For example, suppose the leading ones are considering whether or not the church should have a meeting for the preaching of the gospel. Before making a decision, they should consider the saints in their locality, asking what the condition of the saints is. Then based upon their reading of the condition and situation of the saints, the leading ones will have the guidance of the Lord. This will enable them to know whether or not at that time they should have a meeting for the preaching of the gospel.

For us today, the **breastplate is the church**, and the **stones** on the breastplate **are the saints**. Every saint bears some letters. Therefore, with the saints we have the letters of a heavenly and spiritual alphabet. Furthermore, by reading the condition and situation of the saints, we can have certain "words." When these words are put together we have a complete sentence, a complete thought. This is the **speaking of God through His redeemed saints as the letters**. It is in this way that the congregation of the Lord knows how to go on. (*Life-Study of Exodus, chapter 126*)

Day 5

1 Corinthians 1:9 - God is faithful, through whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Ephesians 5:8 - For you were once darkness but are now light in the Lord; walk as children of light

2. Normally the twelve stones in the breastplate were under the shining of the Urim; suddenly a piece inscribed with a certain name would become dark; this **darkening** of a particular stone was **God's instant speaking**:
 - a. Paul's Epistles and the seven epistles of the Lord Jesus to the seven churches in Asia (Rev. 2—3) were all written according to this principle; they were **written according to the negative situation** of the churches, not according to the positive things found in the churches.
 - b. Paul wrote 1 Corinthians according to his reading of the **negative situation** at Corinth, but although his writing was based on the negative things, in this Epistle he **ministered positive things**—the riches of Christ—to the church—cf. 1:9.
 - c. The saints in Corinth became the letters used by Paul in the spiritual typesetting of his Epistle; in the same way, in a local church the leading ones need to **seek the Lord's guidance** by reading the actual situation and condition of the saints.
 - d. The problem among Christians today is that because there is so much darkness, there

is no way for God to expose the darkness; in order for the darkness to be made known, **there must first be the shining of the light**; God speaks through things that become negative in the midst of the shining of the light—cf. Eph. 5:8-9.

- e. By reading the negative situations in this way, we come to **know God's leading**, His judgment; then in our locality we will know what God wants us to do, and we should then **follow His leading**.
- E. The **breastplate** is the building up of the Body life and the means for us to know God's will concerning His people; **by much and thorough prayer**, we can experience the reality of the breastplate; then we will receive the Lord's judgment of what we have to do or what we must not do; we will know the Lord's way, and the whole church will go on according to the judgment given by the Lord.
- F. The elders need not only the Bible and the Holy Spirit but also the brothers and sisters as the alphabet; this means that they need to **bear the brothers and sisters before God** and **read the condition** of every brother and sister before God; in this way the elders' meeting will become the watchtower of the church, and the elders will know what God wants them to do and what God's present will is in the church life.

Day 6

Colossians 4:2 - Persevere in prayer, watching in it with thanksgiving,

Acts 6:4 - But we will continue steadfastly in prayer and in the ministry of the word.

III. The leading ones, those who minister the word in the church, should **take the lead to have a prayer life**; they need to “persevere in prayer, watching in it with thanksgiving”—Col. 4:2; Acts 6:4:

- A. Whether the church is living and fresh and enriched depends on this one thing—that we are **being filled continuously** with the Spirit; in order to be filled continuously with the Spirit, we need to be those who are **willing, empty, and praying**—Phil. 2:13; Matt. 5:3, 8; Luke 1:53; Eph. 5:18.
- B. The wisdom, understanding, knowledge, and skill for the noble work of building up the church must be **God Himself** as the **Spirit to us**; only the Spirit of God can build His own dwelling place through us—Exo. 31:1-3; Zech. 4:6.
- C. Because the elders are **short of prayer**, they are **short of the Spirit**; it is when we are fully condemned in our prayer under the shining of the light of the Lord's indwelling presence that we receive wisdom and the real understanding of the Lord concerning the situation, concerning people, and concerning the church.
- D. If all the saints in all the churches **persevere in prayer**, the recovery will be **greatly enriched and uplifted**; furthermore, the saints will enjoy the **Lord**, His **presence**, and His **instant and constant anointing**; all day long they will enjoy the **smile of the Lord's face**, and the **living person of Christ** will become their experience and enjoyment.

Although the battle raging in the universe is between God and Satan, another party is involved. This third party consists of **God's chosen and redeemed people**, the ones who will actually decide the outcome of the battle. If we take sides with Satan, God will lose, even though He is almighty. As the infinite, all-powerful Creator, God will not lower Himself to fight against one of His creatures. Thus, it is necessary for another of God's creatures—man—to fight against Satan. In a very real sense, **God needs us**. Without us, He would not have a way to carry on the battle against Satan. He must maintain His status as the Creator. For this reason, He needs us to carry on the actual work of warfare.

In order to fight on God's side against Satan, **we need to persevere in prayer**. This perseverance is needed because the course of the whole world is **away** from God. To pray is to go against the current, the trend, in the fallen universe. Persevering in prayer is like rowing a boat upstream. If you do not persevere, you will be carried downstream by the current. No doubt, to persevere in this way, either in rowing or in praying, requires a great deal of energy. The entire universe is under Satan's influence and is **contrary** to God's will. Hence, there is a strong current in the world in **opposition** to the will of God. As those who take sides with God, we find that the whole universe is **against** us and, in particular, against our prayer.

Many of the experiences we have with respect to prayer day by day prove that Satan opposes our prayer in every way possible. For example, a telephone call may come just when you are at a very important point in your prayer. You have prayed yourself into the Spirit, and you are touching the heavens. Then, at that very moment, the telephone may ring. You may answer the telephone only to learn that someone has dialed the wrong number. Your praying spirit may be seriously damaged by the irritation this causes you. When we try to pray, we may also be disturbed by our children, by callers at the door, or by any animal pets there may be in the house. Because there is **so much resistance** to our prayer, we definitely **need to persevere in prayer**. (*Life-Study of Colossians, chapter 65*)