

HWMR: CRUCIAL ASPECTS OF MATTHEW 5 THROUGH 7 (Week 5)

**The Kingdom People Having the Experience  
of Praying in Private to Contact Their Heavenly Father in Secret to Have Some Secret  
Enjoyment of Him**

Scripture Reading: *Isa. 37:31; Matt. 6:5-6; 14:22-23; Psa. 42:7; S. S. 4:12*

- Isa. 37:31 And the remnant of those who have escaped of the house of Judah will again **take root downward** and **bear fruit upward**.
- Matt. 6:5 And when you pray, you shall **not** be like the hypocrites, because they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners, so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, They have their reward in full.
- Matt. 6:6 But you, when you pray, enter into your private room, and shut your door and **pray to your Father who is in secret**; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you.
- Matt. 14:22 And immediately He compelled the disciples to step into the boat and to go before Him to the other side, while He sent the crowds away.
- Matt. 14:23 And after He sent the crowds away, He went up to the mountain **privately to pray**. And when night fell, He was there alone.
- Psa. 42:7 **Deep calls unto deep** / At the sound of Your water spouts; / All Your waves and Your billows / Pass over me.
- S.S. 4:12 A garden enclosed is my sister, my bride, / A spring shut up, a fountain sealed.

**Day 1**

*Matt. 6:5-6 - And when you pray, you shall **not** be like the hypocrites, because they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners, so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, They have their reward in full. But you, when you pray, enter into your private room, and shut your door and **pray to your Father who is in secret**; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you.*

- I. “When you pray, you shall **not** be like the hypocrites, because they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners, so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, They have their reward in full. But you, when you pray, enter into your private room, and shut your door and **pray to your Father who is in secret**; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you”—Matt. 6:5-6:
- A. We need the experience of praying in our *private* room and shutting our door; our Father is *in secret*, and He *sees in secret*; the kingdom people, as children of the heavenly Father, must live in and care for the **Father’s secret and hidden presence**.
- B. The kingdom people, who live in an emptied and humbled spirit and walk in a pure and single heart under the heavenly ruling of the kingdom, are not allowed to do anything in the flesh for the praise of men, but **must do all things in the spirit for the pleasing of their heavenly Father**.
- C. The effect of our praying in secret is that the **flesh and the self are killed**; if people in society and even in degraded Christendom are not allowed to make a show of their good deeds, they will not do them; the self loves to be glorified, and the flesh loves to be gazed upon.

D. We all need some **secret growth in life**, some **secret experiences of Christ**; we need to **pray** to

Of the nine messages in this training, two speak of prayer, and both are based on the Lord Jesus' teaching concerning prayer in Matthew 6. This indicates that if we are to live in the reality of the kingdom revealed in chapters 5 through 7 and to prepare for the coming of the kingdom, it is crucial for us to **establish a prayer life**. As particularly mentioned in Message 3, we need proper prayer. In such a proper prayer, we pray ourselves into God, aim at God's interest, and express God's will.

However, this message reveals that we not only need a prayer life, but even more, we need **personal prayer**. This is why the Lord said, "When you pray, enter into your private room, and shut your door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you" (6:6). This verse strongly emphasizes one thing; that is, **we need a personal, secret prayer life**. For Christians, prayer may seem commonplace. We often pray, but most of our prayers occur in meetings. We pray when we coordinate and serve together, and we also have some personal prayer when we experience significant events in our human life. But we must admit—and even many brothers who have served for many years also must admit—that we greatly lack this kind of personal, secret prayer, that is, prayers unknown by others and offered solely in the Lord's presence. (*The Ministry of the Word*, vol. 29, No. 10, chapter 5)

the Lord, **worship** the Lord, **contact** the Lord, and **fellowship** with the Lord in a **secret way**.

## Day 2

*Matt. 6:1* - But take care **not to do your righteousness before men** in order to be gazed at by them...

*Matt. 6:6* - But you, when you pray, enter into your private room, and shut your door and **pray to your Father who is in secret**; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you.

- E. We should pray much **yet not let others know how much we pray**; if we pray every day without telling others or letting them know about it, it means that we are healthy and that we are growing.
- F. The kingdom people must have some experience of **prayer in their private room**, contacting their heavenly Father in **secret**, experiencing some **secret enjoyment** of the Father, and receiving some **secret answer from Him**—v. 6.
- G. Any time we **exhibit ourselves** in our righteous deeds, we are not healthy; such an exhibition **greatly frustrates our growth in life**.
- H. Our **human life loves to make a display**, a public show, but **God's life is always hidden**; a hypocrite is one who has an outward manifestation without having anything within.
- I. We can **never** practice living a hidden life in secret **in our natural life**; it is possible only in the divine life, the life that does not enjoy making a show; if we are serious about being the kingdom people, we must learn to live by the hidden life of our Father.

There is no need to teach people how to receive the word into their mind. People do this spontaneously. However, not many Christians know how to receive the word as the Spirit. **The only way to receive the word as the Spirit is by prayer.** Regardless of how deeply we have received the word, it will not be life to us until we have adequate prayer. A person may hear the gospel and be very deeply inspired and moved by the Holy Spirit. However, if this person **does not pray**, he still **cannot be saved**. Regardless of how deeply this person is inspired, he still needs to pray; this is a principle. Many times we have been inspired by a good message, but we have neglected to pray. Therefore, after a short time the inspiration is gone. In order to keep the message that we have heard and been inspired by, **we must immediately** pray the message into our spirit. Then this message will be sown into our spirit and mingled with our spirit by our prayer. To pray makes a very big difference. (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1965, vol. 3, pp. 96-97*)

### Day 3

*Matt. 14:23* - And after He sent the crowds away, He went up to the mountain *privately to pray*. And when night fell, He was there alone.

*Luke 6:12* - ...He went out to the mountain to *pray*, and He spent the whole night in *prayer* to God.

## II. We need to learn from the **pattern of the Lord living a hidden life in His going up to the mountain privately to pray—14:23; cf. Luke 6:12:**

- A. The Lord did not remain in the issue of the miracle with the crowds (the miracle of feeding five thousand men, apart from women and children), but He went away from them to be **with the Father privately on the mountain in prayer**— Matt. 14:14-23:
1. The Lord compelled the disciples to leave Him in order that He might have more time to **pray privately to the Father**—vv. 22-23.
  2. He needed to **pray privately to His Father** who was in the heavens so that He might be one with the Father and have the Father with Him in whatever He did on earth for the establishing of the kingdom of the heavens; He did this not in the deserted place but on the mountain, leaving all the people, even His disciples, so that He might be alone to contact the Father.
- B. We should treasure three phrases—*to be with the Father, on the mountain, and in prayer*:
1. To pray with others is good, but **often we need to pray by ourselves**; when we pray with others, we cannot enjoy the Lord as deeply as when we pray to the Lord privately.
  2. Even the Lord Jesus told us that when we pray, we should **enter into our private room and shut our door and pray to the Father who sees in secret** (6:6); then we have the sensation of how intimate He is to us and how close we are to Him.
  3. We have to learn to leave the crowds, our family, our friends, and the saints in the church to go to a higher level on a “high mountain”; we have to be separated from the crowd and the earthly things, **to be with the Father privately and secretly** to have intimate fellowship with Him.

Because the building is the growth in life, it is important that we know **how to grow in life**. In this chapter I have the burden to share about this matter in a very practical way. Throughout the years we have greatly emphasized, perhaps overemphasized, the corporate aspect of the Christian life. We have laid great stress upon coming together to meet, to pray, and to read the Word. However, I am concerned that many, especially the young people in corporate living situations, do not have a **private time of prayer**. They have only the corporate prayer. I admit that no private time of prayer can replace the corporate time. The blessing, help, and life we receive in the meetings cannot be found elsewhere. Nevertheless, we need to remember that in the things pertaining to life there are always two aspects. In the Christian life there is the **individual side** and the **corporate side**, and neither can replace the other. **We must have both**. Furthermore, these two sides should be evenly balanced.

Among us there is a **shortage** in the matter of **having a private time to contact the Lord**. Many simply do not have a private prayer life. Most of the brothers and sisters who are over forty-five or fifty do have such a private prayer life. But most of the younger brothers and sisters, especially those in corporate living, do not. I am very concerned about this, for it is a matter that affects their growth in life. If you do not go to the Lord directly and privately by yourself, your dealing with the Lord will not be very practical or detailed. (*Life Messages Volume 1, chapter 2*)

#### Day 4

*Psa. 42:7 - Deep calls unto deep at the sound of Your water spouts; all Your waves and Your billows pass over me.*

*Isa. 37:31 - And the remnant of those who have escaped of the house of Judah will again take root downward and bear fruit upward.*

#### Day 5

*2 Cor. 12:1 - To boast is necessary, though indeed not expedient; yet I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord.*

*2 Cor. 12:5 - On behalf of such a one I will boast, but on behalf of myself I will not boast, except in my weaknesses.*

### III. Psalm 42:7 says, “Deep calls unto deep”:

- A. Others can respond deep within to **only what issues from deep within us**; anything that is not from the depths will never reach the depths of others.
- B. If our life has no depth, our superficial work will only affect other lives superficially; only “deep calls unto deep”; the kingdom life is **a life in the depths**, a life that can “**take root downward and bear fruit upward**”—Isa. 37:31; cf. Acts 6:7; 12:24; 19:20.
- C. On the one hand, we need to allow **Christ** as the **seed of life to take root deep** in the soil of our heart as the good earth (Matt. 13:23); on the other hand, we, as living plants in Christ, need to take root deep in the soil of the all-inclusive Christ as the reality of the good land (1 Cor. 3:6, 9; Col. 2:6-7):

1. The **good earth** signifies the **good heart** that is not hardened by worldly traffic, that is without hidden sins, and that is without the anxiety of the age and the deceitfulness of riches; we need to daily allow the Lord to deal with these things in our heart so that we can grow with the growth of God—v. 19.
  2. Because we have been planted in Christ as the reality of the good land, we need to **take time to absorb Him** (especially in our times with Him in the morning).
- D. While the sower sowed, some seeds fell **beside the way**, some on the **rocky places**, some into the **thorns**, and some into the **good earth**; this shows us four different ways for man to receive the word—Matt. 13:4-8, 18-23:
1. The Lord Jesus tells us that among these different conditions, one is the **rocky places**; there is a little earth on the surface, but underneath there are rocks; when the seed falls into this kind of ground, it springs up quickly, but as soon as the sun comes out, **it withers because of the lack of root**—vv. 5-6.
  2. A root is growth that occurs beneath the soil; leaves are growth that occurs above the soil; in other words, **roots are the hidden life**, whereas **leaves are the manifest life**; the trouble with many Christians is that, while there is much apparent life, there is the **lack of a secret, hidden life**.
  3. The Christian who does **not have anything in the depth** of his being **has no root**; he will not be able to stand in the day of trial and temptation; may God work in us so that we can take root downward.
  4. To be **without root** is to be **without any hidden treasure**, hidden life, or hidden experiences; it is essential that some of our experiences remain covered; to uncover everything is to lose everything—cf. Isa. 39:2-8.

On the one hand, we need to allow Christ as the seed of life to take root deep in the soil of our heart as the good earth; on the other hand, we, as living plants in Christ, need to take root deep in the soil of the all-inclusive Christ as the reality of the good land. There are two kinds of “taking root deep” here. First, **Christ** as the seed of life **takes root deep in the soil of our heart as the good earth**. In this aspect, our heart is the soil, and our heart must be the good earth so that Christ as the seed of life can take root deep in our heart. Second, Colossians 2:6-7 shows us another aspect: **we, as living plants in Christ, need to take root deep in the soil of the all-inclusive Christ because Christ is the reality of the all-inclusive good land**. Therefore, we have two aspects of “taking root deep.” On the one hand, in order for the Lord’s word to take root deep within us, we must deal with and clear up our heart; on the other hand, we, as living plants, need to take root deep in Christ as the soil.

Because we have been planted in Christ as the reality of the good land, we need to **take time to absorb Him** (especially in our times with Him in the morning). Colossians 2:7 speaks of us having been rooted and being built up in Christ. In Message 51 of the Life-study of Colossians, Brother Lee says that he previously thought the building up mentioned in this verse referred to being built up with the saints. However, he later discovered that the building up here does not refer to the corporate building up of the Body as mentioned in Ephesians 4:16 but rather to **being built up individually**. This involves our being rooted in Christ, absorbing all the elements of Christ as the living soil, and then growing in life; this growth is the building. Brother Lee emphasizes that we must first be built up individually before we can be built up corporately. He uses the construction of the meeting hall in Anaheim as an example. Building requires a vast amount of timber, indicating that each tree must first grow on its own, absorbing all the riches of the soil, in order to become usable lumber. Only then can the wood be further processed and put together to be built up corporately (p. 441). This absorption of the riches of the soil in order to grow and be built up individually requires us to spend time with the Lord (especially in the morning) to absorb Him. (The Ministry of the Word, vol. 29, No. 10, chapter 5)

## Day 6

*S.S. 4:12-13 - A garden enclosed is my sister, my bride, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed. Your shoots are an orchard of pomegranates with choicest fruit; henna with spikenard.*

### IV. In order to live a life in the depths, it is necessary to have **direct and intimate fellowship with the Lord**; Song of Songs 4:12 says, “A garden enclosed is my sister, my bride, / A spring shut up, a fountain sealed”:

- A. At this point in her spiritual progress, the Lord’s loving seeker has become a **garden for Christ’s private satisfaction**.
- B. She is not an open garden but an **enclosed garden**; all that she has is for her Beloved’s delight and for no one else.
- C. If today’s believers would **close up** a little more and **seal up tighter**, their work would become more prevailing.
- D. May the Lord grant us grace and do a deeper work in us through the cross so that we may **strike deep roots and live a hidden life** in the depths to fulfill God’s requirements and satisfy His heart.

I would like to repeat the four words emphasized at the beginning of this message: We need to establish a **personal, affectionate, private, and spiritual** relationship and fellowship with the Lord. Brother Nee says, “All the spiritual principles are contained in this section. It foreshadows all subsequent experiences. The lessons that follow are not new; rather, they are old lessons repeated in a deeper way” (*The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, vol. 23, “The Song of Songs,” p. 11*). This insight is extremely valuable. We may have thought that having personal, affectionate, private, and spiritual fellowship with the Lord is merely the first stage of the Song of Songs for us to be drawn **to pursue Christ for satisfaction**. This is not the case. It is a foreshadowing, a principle, and each subsequent stage requires a deeper learning of the same principle.

In Song of Songs 1 the **lover** is brought into the inner chambers by the king. In chapter 4 the lover becomes a **garden enclosed**. Brother Nee says that this garden “can contain trees, but the purpose of the trees is not for the wood. It can have fruit, but its goal is not the fruit. Its attention is on the flowers; the flowers are there for beauty and for pleasing the eyes” (*The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, vol. 23, “The Song of Songs,” p. 72*). This garden is purely for the **pleasure and satisfaction of the Beloved**. We need to have fellowship with the Lord to the point that we become a garden enclosed, a spring shut up, and a fountain sealed. Not only do we have fellowship with Him, but all kinds of riches grow from within; all these riches are for Christ to enjoy. Therefore, we should encourage one another to be more enclosed and more tightly sealed. Regarding many outward things, we should exercise to be more tightly sealed. **If our garden is more enclosed, Christ will be able to enjoy us more so that He can enjoy His lover as His garden enclosed, spring shut up, and fountain sealed.** (*The Ministry of the Word, vol. 29, No. 10, chapter 5*)