

## Message 3

### Being Vitalized to Bear Remaining Fruit for the Increase of the Body

Scripture Reading: Rev. 3:1-2, 5, 14-18, 21; John 15:2a, 4-5, 15-16; Rom. 12:11; Matt. 18:19-20;  
Eccl. 4:9-12; Rom. 1:9; Mark 2:14-17; Col. 1:28-29; 1 Cor. 15:58

#### I. We need to overcome three enemies today—deadness, lukewarmness, and barrenness—Rev. 3:1-2, 14-18; John 15:2a:1

- A. These three enemies are mainly against good Christians, the brothers and sisters who are regularly attending the meetings.
- B. We have to realize that deadness, lukewarmness, and barrenness are our habitual, practical, and even fatal enemies:
  1. We need to overcome the deadness of Sardis—Rev. 3:1-2:
    - a. The Lord hates deadness; death is more defiling than sin—v. 1; Lev. 11:24-25; Num. 6:7, 9.2
    - b. Death is dirty to God because He is the living God, and it is the last enemy to be overcome by God—1 Tim. 3:15; 1 Cor. 15:26, 54; Rev. 20:14.
    - c. Therefore, we must all hate death and fight against it by functioning in the meetings in a living way.
  2. We need to overcome the lukewarmness of Laodicea—3:14-18:
    - a. Lukewarmness is an abominable thing in the eyes of the Lord—v. 16.
    - b. We may come to the church meetings, yet we may be somewhat indifferent; we may be proud of being moderate or mild, thinking that it is good to be neither too zealous nor too apathetic; yet according to the Lord's word, we must be hot.<sup>3</sup>
    - c. Laodicea means to know everything, but in reality be fervent about nothing; in name it has everything, but it cannot sacrifice its life for anything; it remembers its former glory but forgets its present condition before God—v. 17.4
  3. We need to overcome the barrenness of the degenerating believers—John 15:2a:
    - a. If we do not bear fruit, beget some spiritual children, there is not much meaning to our church life; without fruit-bearing, there is no practical church life.
    - b. Barrenness is the biggest enemy that annuls the proper church life.
    - c. If we do not bear fruit, there is a danger that we will be cut off from the vine tree; this does not mean that we will suffer eternal perdition but that we will lose our enjoyment of Christ as our portion—vv. 2, 6.

#### II. As saints in the Lord's recovery, we desperately need to be vitalized; 5 to be vital means to be living and active—Rev. 3:1, 5, 14-16, 21; Rom. 12:11:6

- . Vitality is spiritual reality;<sup>7</sup> the reality of the high truths and spiritual riches is vitalization—3 John 3-4, and note 3:8
  1. Although many Christians in the United States are worldly, there is a remnant among them who have a spiritual hunger for reality, that is, for the Lord Himself; if we are not vital, when such seekers come to our meetings, they may feel that we differ from other Christian groups only in certain beliefs and practices and that we lack the ability to satisfy their spiritual hunger.
  2. The vitality of the saints, the spiritual reality in their daily life, will touch and convict the seeking ones and satisfy their spiritual hunger; vitality is the most convincing factor—cf. Acts 2:42-47.
- A. We should learn to be vital; we should not be passive:<sup>9</sup>
  1. It is a certainty that we have the light and the truth concerning the Lord's up-to-date recovery, which is very rich and very high; however, we have to humbly admit that we are not vital, not living or active to the extent that we are satisfied.
  2. We have to look to the Lord's mercy and grace desperately to get ourselves vitalized and to help others be vitalized; to be vitalized is our need today.

3. To have the vital groups should not be taken as a kind of movement; to be vital, to be vitalized, is an extremely personal matter; it is only possible to be vitalized if you yourself are pressed by the Lord to pursue Him desperately and absolutely in this matter.
- III. **A vital group can come into being only by a saint who is desperate and absolute for the increase of the Lord's recovery; we must take the lead to be made vital:**
- A. We are vitalized through the absolute, clear, and thorough fellowship with the Lord continuously—1 John 1:3, 5; *Hymns*, #373, #426:10
    1. We should set aside times to seek deeper fellowship with the Lord, turning away from everything other than Him and contacting Him in the depths of our spirit; such deep and quiet fellowship enables the Lord to reach every part of our being so that we are subdued, broken, purified, occupied, and possessed by Him—Matt. 14:23; 6:6; Mark 1:35; Exo. 34:2-3, 29; *Hymns*, #784.11
    2. We need to maintain a clear sky with the Lord; this means that we need to always have a clear fellowship with Him—Ezek. 1:22, and note 1; Acts 24:16; *Hymns*, #373.
  - B. We are vitalized through confession of sins, transgressions, failures, defects, mistakes, wrongdoings, etc., hidden or manifested, before God and before men—1 John 1:7, 9; Psa. 51; Matt. 5:23-26; cf. Luke 19:8:12
    1. In order to rise up we need to make a thorough, fine, and detailed confession; we need to confess all the small things.13
    2. Everyone who has done this can testify that after a thorough confession they are filled with the Spirit within and clothed with the Spirit without.
  - C. We are vitalized through the absolute and thorough consecration of ourselves with everything to the Lord—Rom. 12:1; *Hymns*, #441, #445, #448, #471:14
    1. Consecration is to give ourselves as vessels to the Lord;15 consecration means to let Christ dwell in us by taking Him as our person—Rom. 9:23; 2 Cor. 4:7; 2 Tim. 2:21; Gal. 2:20; *Hymns*, #548.16
    2. We need an absolute consecration of handing ourselves over to the Lord and yielding our person to Him so that He can be our person.17
  - D. We are vitalized through the unceasing and desperate prayer—1 Thes. 5:17; Eph. 6:18; 1 Tim. 2:8a; *Hymns*, #255; cf. 1 Sam. 1:9-17:18
    1. Our reconsecrating ourselves to the Lord will bring us into a prayer life; no one can pray unceasingly without reaching this stage.19
    2. It is in this prayer life that we pray ourselves into the Spirit—the essential Spirit, the economical Spirit, the all-inclusive Spirit.
  - E. We are vitalized through the soaking of the infilling and outpouring of the Spirit—1 Cor. 12:13; John 7:37-39; Acts 1:4; *Hymns*, #267, #280:20
    1. There are two aspects of the Holy Spirit in relation to us; for our inward life God gave us the Holy Spirit as the Comforter so that He could be the Revealer, Leader, Supplier, and Maintainer of life within us; for our outward work, God gave us the Holy Spirit as power so that He could be the power, authority, ability, and skill of our work—John 14:26; Rom. 8:14; 2 Cor. 3:6; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8; Exo. 35:31; *Hymns*, #278.21
    2. The infilling of the Holy Spirit is for the growth of life; the outpouring of the Holy Spirit is for the release of what is within us.22
- IV. **Through intimate and thorough fellowship, through confession, through consecration, through prayer, and through our being soaked with the Spirit, through our laboring, and through our learning, we need to be vitalized; this is more crucial in the recovery today than it has ever been before; we all have a responsibility, we all have an obligation, before our Lord; we should pray, "Lord, make me vital. Make me vital today for the sake of Your move."23**

Excerpts from the Ministry:

#### ENDEAVORING TO THE VITALIZED

[a crucial matter that we] need is to be vital. We need the proper speaking, the proper prophesying, but we cannot be dead or lukewarm. We have to be vital, which means that we have to be living and active. The second point of my loving word to you dear ones is this: learn to be vital. You should not be passive.

Thank the Lord and praise God that we could have this big blending conference. In this short time, by His mercy and grace, we have covered six crucial points of the major items in His recovery. We believe that we are in the Lord's up-to-date recovery, and we believe that we are this recovery. But I feel very regretful to say that according to our present practical condition, we are not vital, not living or active to the extent that we should be. It is a certainty that we have the light and the truth concerning the Lord's up-to-date recovery, which is very rich and very high. However, we have to humbly admit that we are not vital, not living or active to the extent that we are satisfied. Because we are not vital, we deeply feel that our situation is not satisfactory to the Lord either. So we have to look to the Lord's mercy and grace desperately to get ourselves vitalized and to help others be vitalized. To be vitalized is our need today. Whether we pray or fast, whether we pursue by ourselves or seek with others, we must be vitalized. I believe that we have overcome many items of today's degradation in the churches, but we cannot escape the condemnation that we have tolerated and still are tolerating the deadness of Sardis and the lukewarmness of Laodicea. At the beginning of the messages given in this blending conference, I gave an opening word concerning this crucial matter, a matter of life or death. I do not know how much you have been touched by that short, opening word. If you have not been touched by that begging word, regardless of how much you would appreciate the following six messages, the outcome will mean nothing to you and to the Lord's recovery. Today the crucial point is that you have to be vitalized.

To have the vital groups should not be taken as a kind of movement. To be vital, to be vitalized, is an extremely personal matter. It is only possible to be vitalized if you yourself are pressed by the Lord to pursue Him desperately and absolutely in this matter. After being vitalized, you should not have a gathering of many saints to promote or to push this matter as a movement. After being vitalized, the only thing you should do is to seek the Lord's leading concerning whom you should contact among so many saints. You should absolutely follow the Lord's leading and even His guidance to contact others and fellowship with them, not more than two or three at a time. You have to give your testimony of how you have been pressed by the Lord to seek Him in the matter of vitalization. You have to initiate a thorough and intimate fellowship with your contact, which will usher you and your contact into prayers of desperation, which will be honored by the Lord.

You should also lead your contact to make thorough confessions to the Lord and also help him to pay the price at any cost as you have done. By this way a small group that is vital, living, and active in the Lord's interest will spontaneously come into existence. When the number of such a vital group increases to ten or more, you should split it into two groups and charge every member to practice the vitalization along the same track as you have been doing all the time.

Since you have been vitalized and have raised up such vital groups, you should pray for the church and the leading ones. As the Lord leads, you should give testimonies in the church meetings but not in the way of condemning or of promoting or pushing. Avoid the thought to change the church's way of meeting and service. Do not initiate any movement of changes. Prayer is needed, but any thought for a radical change must be avoided. After you get vitalized, do not despise anyone, especially the leading ones, the elderly ones, and the ones who are used to rendering help to others. Do not look down on the weaker ones, the indifferent ones, and the ones who seem to be without any care for spiritual things. In conclusion, you should not expect to see that the church is altogether uniform and unified according to your view and practice. The church is not artificial by man's doing but organic in the growth of the divine life with the growth of Christ in the believers.

This is my burden in this concluding word. Please pay attention to these two matters. First, learn to speak. Second, endeavor to be vitalized. Speaking and vitalization are the crucial need among us today for the Lord's recovery. (CWWL, 1993, vol. 2, "1993 Blending Conference Messages Concerning the Lord's Recovery and Our Present Need," ch. 7, pp. 47-48)

### **THE WAY**

Now we want to see the way to be vitalized. Just as there are many ways to drive from Anaheim to Los Angeles, there are a number of ways to be vitalized. Here I am presenting a general way.

**To Be Stirred Up in the First Love  
for the Lord through Repenting Prayers**

Although we were unclean and evil sinners, God had compassion on us and chose us. As we consider God's compassions to us and meditate on the Lord's love in saving us, we will be stirred up in the best love for the Lord through repenting prayers. This will cause us to be vitalized.

**To Make a Thorough Confession to the Lord**

In our repenting prayers we need to make a thorough confession of all our failures, mistakes, wrongdoings, transgressions, trespasses, etc.

**To Have Close, Intimate, and  
Thorough Fellowship with the Lord  
and with the Seeking Saints**

We need to have close, intimate, and thorough fellowship with the Lord and with the seeking saints. To fellowship only with the Lord is inadequate. We must also be in fellowship with the saints. We need to get companions with whom we can labor. According to the example in the Bible, Daniel had three companions (Dan. 1:6). I would encourage you to get three companions. Do not ask the elders to give them to you. Ask the Lord to lead you to someone, making this one your companion in fellowship. Then you can get a few others. Spontaneously, you and your companions will be a very good small group.

The elders should not try to form the groups in an organizational way. That does not work. They must stir up the saints to be vitalized first. Once you get vitalized, you will have the deep sensation that you need companions. Then you need to follow the Lord's leading to gain some to join you to be a group. This will be an organic group, and eventually this group will be vitalized. Four saints grouped together are a sufficient number. Do not get more saints at this point. Instead, be vitalized to an extent that you would go fishing to get some new fish. When your organic group of four saints is vitalized, you will not need to hunt for more saints to join you. Instead, you will go fishing to get some new fish.

**To Reconsecrate Yourself to the Lord**

After you get your companions in fellowship, you must learn to take the lead to reconsecrate yourself to the Lord. You may have consecrated yourself already, but you need to be consecrated afresh.

*In Presenting Your Body  
as a Living Sacrifice to the Lord*

To present your body means to give your body to the Lord as a living sacrifice. You have to sacrifice your body to the Lord. This is what Paul taught in Romans 12:1. You need to reconsecrate yourself in presenting your body.

*In Being Transformed by the Renewing of the Mind  
from Being Fashioned according to This Age*

First, you give your body to the Lord. Following this you should have your mind renewed from being fashioned according to this age (Rom. 12:2). The world is the satanic system, which is composed of many ages (Eph. 2:2). An age is a part, a section, an aspect, the present and modern appearance, of the system of Satan, which is used by him to usurp and occupy people and keep them away from God and His purpose. A number of years ago, men wore wide neckties. That was a current of that age. Later, they wore narrow ties; that was a current of another age. In the sixties, men began to have long hair; that was a current of that age. All the worldly people are fashioned according to the present age. In order to be vitalized, we need to be transformed by the renewing of the mind so that we will not be fashioned according to this age.

*In Not Being Slothful in Zeal  
but Burning in Spirit to Serve the Lord*

Our body needs to be presented to the Lord; our mind needs to be renewed, taken over by the Lord; and our spirit needs to be burning. This involves our entire being—body, soul, and spirit. We need to be persons who are fully gained and occupied by the Lord. We should not be slothful in zeal but burning in spirit to serve the Lord (Rom. 12:11). Then we will be vitalized.

### **To Be the Overcomers in the Church Life**

*In the Age of the Overcomers  
according to the Lord's Calling*

The church life is the right place for you to be an overcomer. But this does not mean that as long as you are in the church life, you are an overcomer. It is one thing to be in the church life. It is another thing to be an overcomer in the church life.

#### *As Today's Zion*

*in Today's Jerusalem (the Church Life)*

In the Old Testament there was the city of Jerusalem with Zion as the center. Jerusalem was built on a mountain range. Mount Zion was one of the mountains on which Jerusalem was built. Zion is the center, and Jerusalem is the circumference. The church life is today's Jerusalem; within the church life there must be a group of overcomers, and these overcomers are today's Zion. According to Revelation 14, the overcomers are standing on Mount Zion with the Lord (vv. 1-5). Actually, in typology the overcomers are today's Zion. Then in the last two chapters of Revelation, there is the New Jerusalem. Without Zion (the overcomers), Jerusalem (the church life) cannot be kept and maintained.

The High Peak, the Center, the Uplifting,  
the Strengthening, the Enriching,  
and the Reality of the Church, the Holy City

Zion is the high peak, the center, the uplifting, the strengthening, the enriching, and the reality of the church, the holy city. If there are no overcomers in a local church, that church is like Jerusalem without Zion. There are some churches like this today, so they are weak churches. A local church must have some overcomers, and these overcomers are the peak and the center of that local church. They are the uplifting, the strengthening, the enriching, and the reality of that local church. If you take away these overcomers from that local church, that local church becomes like a flat tire. The full-time training is for the producing of the overcomers. Once a church has some full-time workers as overcomers, that church is like Jerusalem with the peak of Zion. The overcomers as Zion are the highlight, the center, and the reality of the church.

To Consummate the Holy City (the Church) and  
to Bring In the Consummated New Jerusalem in Eternity

The overcomers as today's Zion are for the consummation of the holy city (the church). They are to consummate, to finish, the building up of the local church and to bring in the consummated New Jerusalem in eternity (21:1-2). In order to complete the building up of the Body, the Lord needs the overcomers, and the building up of the Body consummates in the New Jerusalem. This is why at the end of the Bible, in the last book, there is the calling for the overcomers. Today the way to become vitalized is to answer the Lord's call to be an overcomer.

There are two ways before us today. We can either choose to be vitalized or choose not to be vitalized. I am presenting these two ways before us. Which way will we take? Are we going to be vitalized or not? We have to make a resolution. In Judges 5:15 Deborah said, "Among the divisions of Reuben / There were great resolutions in heart." We have to make a resolution to be the overcomers, the vitalized ones. An overcomer overcomes anything that replaces Christ or that is against Christ. In the Bible there is the age of the overcomers, and there is the calling for the overcomers. Furthermore, there is a way for us to be vitalized so that we can be the overcomers. (CWWL, 1993, vol. 2, "The Training and the Practice of the Vital Groups," ch. 1, pp. 272-275)

## References and Further Reading:

1. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1993*, vol. 2, "The Training and the Practice of the Vital Groups," ch. 1.
2. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1991-1992*, vol. 3, "Fellowship Concerning the Urgent Need of the Vital Groups," chs. 2, 4, 6, 25.
3. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1993*, vol. 1, "Southern California Elders' and Co-workers' Meetings," ch. 8.
4. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1993*, vol. 2, "1993 Blending Conference Messages Concerning the Lord's Recovery and Our Present Need," ch. 7.
5. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1989*, vol. 3, "The Exercise and Practice of the God-ordained Way," ch. 25.

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1 All points in this Roman Numeral come from the following source, unless otherwise noted: CWWL, 1993, vol. 2, "The Training and the Practice of the Vital Groups," ch. 2, pp. 277-279.

2 CWWL, 1968, vol. 2, "Growing in Life and Serving the Lord for the Building Up of the Church as His Testimony," ch. 3, p. 363.

3 The Conclusion of the New Testament, msg. 408, p. 4166.

4 CWWL, vol. 50, "Messages for Building Up New Believers (3)," ch. 45, p. 786.

5 1993 Blending Conference Messages Concerning the Lord's Recovery and Our Present Need," ch. 7.

6 CWWL, 1991-1992, vol. 3, "Fellowship Concerning the Urgent Need of the Vital Groups," ch. 25, p. 580.

7 CWWL, 1993, vol. 1, "Southern California Elders' and Co-workers' Meetings," ch. 8, p. 191.

8 CWWL, 1993, vol. 1, "Southern California Elders' and Co-workers' Meetings," ch. 8, p. 188.

9 1993 Blending Conference Messages Concerning the Lord's Recovery and Our Present Need," ch. 7.

10 CWWL, 1991-1992, vol. 3, "Fellowship Concerning the Urgent Need of the Vital Groups," ch. 25, p. 590.

11 CWWL, 1961-1962, vol. 3, "Fellowshipping with the Lord for the Mingling of God with Man," ch. 1, pp. 340-341.

12 CWWL, 1991-1992, vol. 3, "Fellowship Concerning the Urgent Need of the Vital Groups," ch. 25, p. 590.

13 CWWL, 1985, vol. 5, "The Way to Practice the Lord's Present Move," ch. 2, pp. 437-440

14 CWWL, 1991-1992, vol. 3, "Fellowship Concerning the Urgent Need of the Vital Groups," ch. 25, p. 590.

15 CWWL, 1971, vol. 1, "The Meaning of Human Life and a Proper Consecration," ch. 5, pp. 163-167.

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- 16 CWWL, 1971, vol. 1, "The Meaning of Human Life and a Proper Consecration," ch. 6, pp. 175-178.
- 17 CWWL, 1971, vol. 1, "The Meaning of Human Life and a Proper Consecration," ch. 8, pp. 189-190.
- 18 CWWL, 1991-1992, vol. 3, "Fellowship Concerning the Urgent Need of the Vital Groups," ch. 25, p. 590.
- 19 CWWL, 1991-1992, vol. 3, "Fellowship Concerning the Urgent Need of the Vital Groups, ch. 24, p. 570-571.
- 20 CWWL, 1991-1992, vol. 3, "Fellowship Concerning the Urgent Need of the Vital Groups," ch. 25, p. 590.
- 21 CWWL, 1932-1949, vol. 3, "Crucial Truths in the Holy Scriptures, Volume 3," ch. 27, pp. 462-467.
- 22 CWWL, 1963, vol. 4, "Experiencing Christ as the Inner Life," ch. 4, p. 301.
- 23 1993 Blending Conference Messages Concerning the Lord's Recovery and Our Present Need," ch. 7.