

WCCC 1990

Brother Kaung

What the Spirit Says to the Church (4)

We will read two letters today. They are the letters to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.

Revelation 3: 7 – 22. And to the angel of the assembly in Philadelphia write: These things says the holy, the true: He that has the key of David, He who opens and no one shall shut, and shuts and no one shall open: I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an opened door, which no one can shut, because thou have a little power, and have kept my word, and have not denied my name. Behold, I make them of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews, and are not, but lie; behold, I will cause that they shall come and shall do homage before thy feet, and shall know that I have loved thee. Because thou have kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee out of the hour of trial, which is about to come upon the whole habitable world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. I come quickly: hold fast what thou have, that no one take thy crown. He that overcomes, him will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more at all out; and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven, from my God, and my new name. He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies.

And to the angel of the assembly in Laodicea write: These things says the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God: I know thy works, that thou are neither cold nor hot, I would thou were cold or hot. Thus because thou are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I am about to spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou say, I am rich, and am grown rich, and have need of nothing, and know not that thou are the wretched and the miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked; I counsel thee to buy of me gold purified by fire, that thou may be rich; and white garments, that thou may be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness may not be made manifest; and eye-salve to anoint thine eyes, that thou may see. I rebuke and discipline as many as I love; be zealous therefore and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and am knocking; if any one hears my voice and open the door, I will come in unto him and sup with him, and he with me. He that overcomes, to him will I give to sit with me in my throne; as I also have overcome, and have sat down with my Father in His throne. He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the assemblies.

These seven letters were received from the risen Lord by John when he was on the island of Patmos. According to history, we know there were these seven churches in Asia at the end of the first century. When our Lord was walking

among the seven churches, He discovered the condition of these churches. And He wrote the letters to them according to Himself. But we know from the perspective of prophesy, these seven churches represent the churches throughout the ages.

The church in Ephesus represents the churches at the end of the apostolic time. We see at that time the first love was lost. That was why the Lord called them to repent and to return. Our Lord is love. Without love, all things are vanity of vanities. Only love can satisfy His heart. Apart from love, nothing can please Him.

The church at Smyrna represents the suffering churches in the second and third centuries. In their sufferings, the Lord commanded them to be faithful unto death.

The church at Pergamos represents the churches from the fourth century to almost the end of the sixth century. At that time, outwardly there was a big change. The position of believers changed from one which was being persecuted to one which was welcomed by the world. And from that time onwards, the nature of Christianity was changed. In the beginning we can still see some who were faithful like Antipas. But because they were faithful to the Lord, they were martyred. Then we began to see that different heresy teachings slowly started to come into the church.

The church at Thyatira from the standpoint of prophesy represents the condition of the churches from the sixth century through the sixteenth century and till the present. And this is the condition we see in the Roman Catholic church. We see that the simplicity of God was completely lost. We see the complexities of man filled the conditions of the protestant church (Christianity). The people at that time talked about mysterious things but in fact, it was the depth of Satan. Those were not the mysteries of God. The mystery of God is revealed to babes. It is hidden from the wise. If one thinks he himself is wise, and he has the wisdom of men, then he cannot see the mystery of God. If one has a heart like babe in front of God, and humble before God, then the mystery of God will be revealed to him. So the Lord at that time called us to return back to the simplicity of the Lord.

The church at Sardis represents the church in the sixteenth century where the reformed church started. We see at that time in Europe, brothers were raised up to start the work of reformation. And we see that in the beginning, it was indeed God responding to the church in Thyatira. At that time, the focus was on an open bible because in the past, the bible was chained. Also, the bible was written in the old language, so the common people could not understand. But then at that time, we see the bible was translated into different languages. Also, at that time, in the sovereignty of God, the printing machine was invented. In the past, the bible had to be copied by hand. One could only copy a limited number if one does that by hand. And the price would be very expensive. Most

of the people could not afford a bible. They did not understand Latin or Greek or Hebrews. And they also did not have the qualifications to read a bible. Thus, the word of God was hidden from them.

But thank and praise God, when the reform movement started, one of the big changes was that the bible was translated into the native language. And because there were printing machines, the bible could be printed in large quantities. Many people could then read the bible. They could then have the ability to distinguish whether what they heard was the word of God or not. In the past, there was no way they could tell since they could not read the bible. During that time, the teaching was that people had to do good work to get saved and so they did not understand justification by faith. Martin Luther and some other brothers rose up and said it is justification by faith. Thus, one of the most important truths - justification by faith was restored. In the beginning it was indeed alive. But after a while, we see that it was in name only. There was no reality.

Today we see that this is the condition of the protestant church. It is like the condition of the church at Sardis. We become false. We have lost the sincerity before the Lord. So our Lord calls us to go back to His sincerity and warns us not to fall into man's hypocrisy.

Today we will look at the last two letters. According to the prophetic standpoint of the bible, we can say that Philadelphia was the brethren movement in the nineteenth century. We know that in the nineteenth century there was a great movement on earth. We called them the brethren movement in history. But if we read the official church history, one cannot find the brethren movement. However, we know in fact at that time, there was a great movement. At the beginning, there were only a few who did not wish to belong to any of the denominations. They wanted to have fellowship with all the children of God. And because of this reason, all denominations rejected them. So at the beginning there were only a few people in Dublin, Ireland. They gathered at a home to fellowship and to break bread to remember the Lord. And the brethren movement started at that time. They called themselves brothers. Many of them were highly educated and had degrees. And there were also people who were nobles with titles. But when they gathered together, they did not use their titles or degrees. They were just brothers to each other. They loved with a brotherly love. For twenty years, the brethren movement spread from Dublin to other parts of Europe. And this was the brethren movement. Regrettably, after twenty years, problems arose. This is not the subject of my sharing today. But in reality, Philadelphia did not start in the nineteenth century. If you look at the church history, from the first century to the twentieth century, you can see the brotherly love here and there. But from the standpoint of prophesy, we say that it started in the nineteenth century.

And the church at Laodicea refers to the church in the twentieth century from the standpoint of prophesy. In particular when our Lord will soon return, we see the lukewarm and the self-satisfaction condition. This is the condition of the

church at Laodicea. And this represents the condition of the church in the twentieth century.

This time we are going to look at these letters from the standpoint of spiritual condition. Even though you see that there are seven letters here, and each letter was written to one church, yet at the end of each letter, it said what the Spirit says to the churches. Thus we see that the churches throughout the ages encompass all the conditions mentioned in these seven letters. Therefore, what the Spirit said to the churches is what the Spirit says to us today. What the Spirit said to the church in Ephesus is also what the Spirit is saying to us today. What the Spirit said to the church in Smyrna, He says to us. What He said to the church in Philadelphia, He says to us. What He said to the church in Laodicea, He says to us. We need to listen to what the Spirit said to the churches. He who has an ear, let him hear.

We said that the church in Philadelphia and the church in Laodicea had a close relationship. In Philadelphia, it is brotherly love. Laodicea is the opinion of man. Thus, Laodicea resulted in the fall of the church in Philadelphia. Originally, it was Philadelphia. But when Philadelphia fell, it became Laodicea. We have to look at the two together but we will look at Philadelphia first. Among the seven churches, we see that Philadelphia was the only one that satisfied the Lord's heart. The Lord said to Philadelphia, I have already loved you. This was the only church where the Lord only had praises and no rebukes. It is because when He came among the churches, He found Himself in Philadelphia. He saw His position in Philadelphia. He saw His own character manifested in there. He saw that in there His glory could be revealed. So only this church could satisfy the Lord's heart. The condition of this church was completely conformable to that of the Lord.

And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: these things said the holy, the true; He that has the key of David, He who opens and no one shall shut, and shuts and no one shall open. Here the Lord revealed to the church in Philadelphia who He is. He said He is the holy. The translation of holiness, especially in the Chinese language, consists of two words – holy and clean. What is holiness? In our concept, it seems that we pay more attention to the clean and less to holy. What is the opposite of holiness? We know the opposite of holiness is not sin. The opposite of holiness is common. The opposite of sin is righteousness. Or the opposite of righteousness is sin. But the opposite of holiness is common. Of course, this includes our sanctified deeds. But the emphasis is pointed at the character. Our God is holy. He is not common. He is not ordinary. He is different from others. There is nothing that you can use to compare with Him. He is unique and none other. And He is the highest. Nothing can be at the same level as He is. This is our God.

Brothers and sisters, today we almost lost our concept of the holiness of God. Yes, our God is a God that we can draw near to and love Him. But let us not forget that our Lord is the most holy one. Especially in the twentieth century,

we see among the children of God that the concept of the holiness of God is almost not there. On one hand, it can be said that it is good. On the other hand, it indeed is a shortcoming. We found that there is a condition of fear of God in the older generation Christians. Indeed, they are so fearful of God. We think maybe it was because their knowledge of God is not enough. We think that their concept of God is that God is one who is high up in heaven and we cannot go near Him. But they did have the attitude of the fear of God. Coming to our generation, we thank and praise God. We see that our God indeed loves us. He is our father. Our Lord loves us, He is our big brother. And because we are that close to Him, we have lost that attitude of fear of and respect to Him. When we gather before Him, we can put our foot up on the table. When we pray, we can say Jesus, Jesus. We do not call Him Lord Jesus. On one hand, it is good that we are close to Him. As we pat on the shoulder of Jesus, we say our brother. But on the other hand, we totally lost our concept that He is holy. We have lost a heart of fear and respect of God. For this reason, we let our lives and all things loose. We think it does not matter because God is love. It does not matter because the Lord will forgive me. So we let loose our life.

Dear brothers and sisters, we have to remember our God is holy. When you read the bible, you see the cherubim in heaven cry out all the time, day and night, 'Holy, holy, holy. The Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory'. Dear brothers and sisters, nothing can compare with our God. He is holy. He is unique. If we can see this, we can worship Him. Today there is a great shortcoming and that is we do not know what worship is. If we want to worship, we have to see that our God is that holy one. On the mount of transfiguration, Peter thought that Moses and Elijah could be compared to our Lord. But God is a jealous God. He said no. If you want to put Moses and Elijah together on the same level with our Lord, God would take away Moses and Elijah. He said, '*This is my beloved Son, in whom I have found my delight: hear Him*'. He is that holy one.

Brothers and sisters, the Holy Spirit is a holy Spirit. We know our Lord is holy. And because He is holy, He separated us out to be holy. Originally, we were in this world. We conspired with the world. But because He is holy, not only did He forgive our sins and cleansed us, He separated us out to return to Himself. Because He is holy, so He said you also should be holy. You should not be common. You cannot conspire with the world. You cannot mix with other things. You cannot put man on the same level as God. You have to worship Him with your whole heart and your whole soul because He is your Lord. He is your God. He is the most holy one. We can only prostrate and worship. We can only submit to Him in all things.

Dear brothers and sisters, in the church at Philadelphia the saints knew that the Lord is holy. So they separated themselves out. They totally surrendered to the Lord. In their heart, only the Lord is holy. Nothing can be equal with the Lord. All things are under the foot of the Lord. So the Lord is able to find Himself

in the church in Philadelphia. The Lord said, I am the true one. I am true. Our Lord is the true God. The Lord Jesus said I am the truth. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth. In here, what is the truth? The truth is not only that the doctrine is true. The meaning of truth in the original language is reality. Brothers and sisters, our God is the only spiritual reality in the entire universe. Our Lord is that spiritual reality. Only in the Holy Spirit can we touch that spiritual reality. All other things are false. The Book of Romans said, only God is real (true). All men are false. Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes, Vanity of vanities. All are vanities.

What is the reality? The reality is the eternal one. The reality is the one who cannot fade away. Reality is the one who is spotless. The reality is the one who last into eternity, and will never change. And that one is reality. All other things will pass away. The world and all things in it will pass away. They are temporal because they will pass away. So that is not reality. They are not reality because all were corrupted. They will decay. If we are to grab hold of the reality, we can only come before God because He is that reality. Only He can give us the reality. When we said all things that do not come from Christ, we are not pointing to the doctrine of Christ. All things that do not come from Christ Himself or that are not out of His life are not reality. Anything that is not the fruit of the Holy Spirit is not reality. They are all false in the eyes of God.

Whatever that is not from God cannot return to God in that day. Only what comes from God can return back to God. Only the things of Christ can return back to Christ; can be in union with Christ. It is just like Eve was united with Adam because Eve was taken out from Adam. Only things that are from the Holy Spirit can return back to God. Brothers and sisters, our Lord is that spiritual reality. That is why only when you touch Christ in life then can you manifest that spiritual reality. Everything else is vanity. Brothers and sisters, every day we try to grab onto something that are not there. When that day comes, you will see that a lot of things will be burned by fire. The praise of men and what men considered as success will not be able to go back to Christ on that day.

But in the church at Philadelphia, the Lord found the spiritual reality. They despised all things outside of Christ. They pursued Christ Himself. What they experienced was Christ. What they knew was not only the doctrine of Christ. But they went from the doctrine of Christ into the living Christ. And this satisfied the heart of our Lord. The Lord said He has the key of David. He opens and no one can close. What He closes, no one can open. We know David here is symbolic because David was a king. David represented the kingdom. David represented the throne. He represented authority. So here it said our Lord has the key of David in His hand, because the son of David is the Lord of David. His hand holds the key of David. In a sense, it means that in His hand, He has the kingdom. The kingdom belongs to Him. The kingdom of God belongs to Him. He has authority. He can open the door to let people in. He can close the door, and then no men can enter into it.

It is our Lord who told us how we can enter into the kingdom of heaven. If you read Matthew chapters five, six and seven, He told us what kind of people can enter into the kingdom of heaven. For this kind of people, He will open the door of the kingdom of heaven for them. Matthew told us we need to use violence to enter into the kingdom of heaven. Only the violent ones can enter. Who are the violent ones? We always feel that violence is not a good thing. But this is a neutral word. It depends on how you use it. If you use violence on others, then it is not good. But if you are violent to yourself, then this is the qualification to enter into the kingdom of heaven. The Lord said one has to deny oneself. To deny oneself is to be violent to oneself. Who does not love oneself? Who is not mindful of oneself? But you have to deny yourself. Deny your opinion, your claim, what you like, your own rights and even your own life. The Lord said, whoever loses his life for my name's sake, he shall have life. And this is the meaning of violence to yourself.

Dear brothers and sisters, the Lord has this key. He has opened the door with this key. He said that if we want to enter into the kingdom of heaven, we have to seek first His kingdom and His righteousness. And He is pleased to give us the kingdom if we do that. Here we see in the church in Philadelphia, the people respected the Lord as their David. They respected the Lord as their king. Brothers and sisters, when our Lord comes to this earth, He comes to be king. The book of Matthew tells us that He is born to be king.

Today do we see our Lord Jesus as our king? We thank God that we know Him as our savior. But do you know when we acknowledge that He is our savior, we are the center. He is the one who comes to save us. But only when we see Him as our king, then He gets us. Today do we submit under His authority? Today do we live in the kingdom of heaven? If today we are under the rule of heaven, then when the kingdom of God comes down to earth, then we can be part of it. We can reign with our Lord for a thousand years. Here we see our Lord has the key of David in His hand. Men can close the door on earth. They can close the hall of the meeting hall. At the time when the Israelites had synagogue, they chased out the people who believed in the Lord. Man can close the door to the meeting hall. But the Lord said, when I open it, no one can close it.

Dear brothers and sisters, are you willing to enter doors into the synagogue or are you willing to enter the doors into the kingdom of heaven? In Philadelphia, there was such a condition. They truly exalted Christ to be their king. They allowed the Lord to have the absolute authority in them. Therefore, the kingdom was given to them. In the church in Philadelphia, there was the brotherly love. Philadelphia means brotherly love. Brothers and sisters, today we do not want to be brothers. We think it is not tasty enough just to be brothers. We want to be teachers. We want to be leaders and we can be satisfied. According to our nature, we are not willing to be brothers. We always want to be a head above

others. We always want us to sit up high and command others, no matter what condition we are in.

You know the Lord had twelve disciples. According to their upbringing, none of them was noble. According to their profession, most likely none was that noble. Fishermen were not noble. Tax collectors could make a lot of money but were despised by people. According to their educational level, they seemed to be people that did not attend school at all. That is to say, they did not go to rabbi school. Maybe among the twelve disciples, the most capable and the smartest was Judas. We could say these twelve people were nobody. Yet they did not want to be just brothers among themselves. The Lord said, you are brothers. But they were not willing to be brothers. They had followed the Lord for more than three years. But there was one lesson that they still had not be able to learn well. And it was that they were not willing to be brothers. They all wanted to be the one above all the brothers.

Dear brothers and sisters, we are like them. We are not willing to be just one of the brothers. Even if we were to be brothers, we want to be the big brother. And the sisters are the same. Sisters are also brothers. There is a true story. Brother Watchman Nee said to another brother, you go tell the brothers. And that brother asked, you want me to go tell male brothers or female brothers. What he said was reasonable because we are all brothers; the life inside us is the life of a son. Regrettably, we are not willing to be just brothers. And we also are not willing to love one another. We want all to love me. But if you ask me to love others, the price is too high. We are not willing to love others. According to our nature, there is no such thing. When we talk about loving each other, it is just talk. In our nature, we all want others to love us. But when we are to love others, we are very stingy. And this is not something we can do within our natural self. We need the life of Christ in us to do this. Only the work of the cross on us will make us be willing to be just a brother and to love one another.

You know when Paul was Saul, he was persecuting the Christians. On the way to Damascus, he was blinded. And in Damascus while he was fasting and praying, he saw a man came in and laid hands on him. The man said, Brother Saul. He called Saul 'brother', and this was the most beautiful music to Paul's ears. The man knew Saul was the enemy of the church. Yet he came in and laid his hands on his head to be united with him. You are my brother and I am your brother. I do not know how Paul felt inside himself at that time. Sometimes kids call me grandpa. Maybe it is because of my white hair. But what I like to hear most is Brother Kaung. I remember when I was in Hong Kong, there was a little boy who did not know how to call me. I told him to call me brother Kaung. So they all called me brother Kaung. And that name is truly sweet. Dear brothers and sisters, let us be brothers. Let us not be enemies. We have one father. We have one and same life in all of us. We have the same Spirit. We believe in the same Lord. Why is it that we cannot be brothers? Why is it we cannot love one another.

There were two verses in the bible that were very precious. One is John 3:16, *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes on Him will not perish but have life eternal.* The other verse is I John 3:16 *Hereby we have known love, because He has laid down His life for us; and we ought for the brethren to lay down our lives.* Dear brothers and sisters, wherever you see the chosen willing to be brothers, and wherever you see the brothers loving one another, the heart of the Lord is satisfied, because He sees Himself among this group of people. If we love our brother, we serve our brother. If we love our brother, we will lay down our life for the brother. It is not that we can do this, but it is the Lord in us who accomplished it. The church in Philadelphia indeed could satisfy the heart of our Lord. This year I have a very deep feeling in me. In the church we talk about authority, authority and authority. But we seldom see love among us. Today the church fell for a reason and it is that we are not willing to be brothers. We all want authorities. We grab at authority and leadership. This is not the church. This is just a society. The church is love. The church is love among brothers. This is the character of Philadelphia.

There is another characteristic of Philadelphia. The Lord said, you have just a little power. Dear brothers and sisters, today the ones we want are those who are powerful. If we have a lot of power, then we can do great things. In our thinking, everything has to be big. The bigger the better. The bigger the more successful it will be. But here it tells us that the Lord said, you have a little power. You do not have a great power. You have a little power. But this little power is from God. Today in the church, a lot of great powers are the result of the soul, of oneself, and from man himself. People want to do great things for themselves and they think only big things can show success. In Zechariah 4:10, the remnants of Israel returned to Jerusalem. They rebuilt the temple. But the people rebuilding the temple were limited in numbers. Most of the Israelites would not return. They also had only limited money. They had only limited materials. When they were rebuilding the temple, the more they looked at the temple, the more they were discouraged. They said even after they rebuilt it, this temple could not compare to the temple that Solomon built. But the word of God came to them and said, do not despise the day of the small things.

Today it is the day of small things. The Lord called His church a little flock. When our Lord was on earth, He was humble. You could not hear His voice on the street. The church on earth is like a little mustard seed. But today, we want big things. And for the purpose of big things, we bring things into the church other than the power of the Holy Spirit. The Lord said, do not despise the days of the small things. This is my personal feeling. I believe before the Lord returns, do not expect to see big things. I am talking about the spiritual things. The Lord has His people hidden all over the place. And they prayed with a pure heart. Men cannot see them. The world does not know them. Even the people in the religious world do not know them. But they are there facing the Lord, and they have just a little power. And that little power is the one that destroys the

kingdom of Satan. The Lord said to Zechariah, do not despise the day of small things.

The one with the seven eyes. These are the eyes of Jehovah which refers to the eyes of the Lord. And when He saw the weight and measuring line in the hands of Zerubbabel, His heart was satisfied. In another word, reality. Reality will not be too big. Falsehood can be big. But what the Lord wants is the reality. That little thing is out of His power, and that can satisfy His heart. Not by power nor by might, but by the Spirit of the Lord.

There are other characteristics of the Philadelphia church. They kept the word of the Lord. And the word of the Lord here is the word of patience. You see how patient our Lord is. He was rejected by people when He was on earth. But He prayed, Father, forgive them. Today on His throne, He has power and authority. But when He was on earth, men despised Him. And He did not send thunder. He has such patience. Dear brothers and sisters, today those who keep the word of the Lord, and who pursue after the spiritual reality have to be patient on earth. They will be despised by people. They will be considered by others as narrow minded. And they will also suffer much persecutions. Dear brothers and sisters, today is the day to keep the word of endurance. He who endures to the end shall be saved. They have not denied the name of the Lord. They considered the name of the Lord to be precious. They surrendered and prostrated themselves before the name of the Lord. It was not just to proclaim His name and that was it. They truly prostrated before the name of the Lord. The Lord was honored and exalted among them. This was Philadelphia

Dear brothers and sisters, no matter where or when, particularly in this age, it is Philadelphia if we can love each other with a brotherly love, if we can pursue the spiritual reality and not the outward greatness, if we do not pursue to do great vain things, if we are willing to follow the Lord with humility, and walk the way of the cross. This is known by God.

But before long, Philadelphia fell and became Laodicea. Laodicea is the fallen Philadelphia. Originally brothers loved each other. Now they did not want to be just brothers. They became individuals. In another word, it was man who wanted to project himself. When you talk about brothers the Lord comes out. But when you talk about individual, it is man who comes out. And each one of us wants to come out. It is I, I and I coming out. When I come out, my opinions come out. What represents a person the most is his opinion. The thing that is hardest to deal with in a person is his opinion. When one's opinion has been dealt with, then that person has been dealt with. You just try it.

So now you see the condition has entirely changed. It changed from brotherly love to everyone's own opinions. What was their condition? They said we were rich. We have attained wealth. We have everything. We lack nothing. Their real condition was that they were poor, pitiful, naked and blind. Philadelphia represents the spiritual reality. Laodicea represents obsession. These people

were obsessed. They were obsessed to an extent they did not see their own condition. The condition that they saw in themselves was entirely opposite to their real condition before God. But they were there still thinking so highly of themselves. And this was obsession. Dear brothers and sisters, when you meet a person that is obsessed, there really is nothing you can do. Why? Because he thinks that he has everything. He thinks he lacks nothing. In such a person, there is nothing you can do.

Why have they fallen into such a condition? It is because they were proud. It is the so-called spiritual pride. They were proud of their spiritual condition. On one hand you cannot say they have nothing to boast about. Because in the past, they did have the experiences of Philadelphia. In fact, those experiences should lead us to be more humble. But if you use those experiences to exalt yourself, that is obsession. When they are obsessed, then there is no way out. Do you know where pride comes from? Pride comes from self. Where does 'self' come from? Self comes from Satan. At that time, the archangel turned into Satan because of pride. So today in every self, there is that nature of pride. Some are proud of knowledge in the world. But the most difficult to deal with is one who has spiritual pride. Because when one becomes so obsessed, then there is no way out.

But because the Lord loves Laodicea, He still advises them. He said, you cannot see, but I see. I counsel you to buy gold, refined by fire, so you can be truly rich. They said we have gold and we are rich. We have the truth. All the truths are here with us. All the teachings are here. You cannot hear any of these teachings anywhere else in the world. But brothers and sisters, their gold was fake gold, not the real gold. It was the creed, the doctrine and rules. It was the dead letters and words. They laid hold of the dead letters, and they dug into the dead words, as if to say, we are the canonical ones. We kept the word of the Lord. Were not the pharisees like them? In them there was no living faith. They did not have fellowship with the living Lord. And the so-called creed were just objective things. They got those things from the hearing of them. They did not have the subjective fellowship with the Lord.

This living faith has to go through trials. They had to pay a price. But they were not willing to pay the price. They thought what was handed down to them from the previous generations belonged to them. Dear brothers and sisters, this is obsession. If we want to pursue spiritual reality, we have to pay a price. If you do not pay a price, you will not get the gold refined by fire. The Lord said, you shall go buy the white garment to put on; to cover your nakedness. They were like Adam and Eve. They covered themselves with clothes made out of the fig leaves. But when the Lord came, they said we were naked. Dear brothers and sisters, they were proud of their righteousness, thinking that they were better than the rest. But before God, they were naked.

Only the Lord is our righteousness. There is nothing we can be proud of. We are the sinner of sinners. We are saved by His mercy and grace. He put the

righteousness of Christ on us, so that Christ will be our righteousness and that the life of Christ in us will be constituted in us. And it will become the righteousness of the saints. You know the bride put on the white garment of fine linen. And this is her garment for the wedding. What is that fine linen? That is the righteousness of the saints. What is the righteousness of the saints? It is not the right things you have done according to your natural state. But rather, it is the life of Christ inside you. He takes away the unrighteousness in you so that you can be righteous before God and God said you are right. And this is the garment for the wedding. You cannot go to the wedding naked. You have to put on the white garment. And that was cleansed by the blood of the Lord. It manifested the character of the Lord. It is constituted by the Lord in you. It is embroidered by the Holy Spirit in you. Then you can come to the wedding. All these you have to buy. You have to pay the price.

The Lord said you have to buy the eye salve for your eyes so that you can see. When you are obsessed, you are blind. You know obsession has to do with the mind. In your mind, you are obsessed. You cannot turn around. And you have this concept. And because of your obsession, your eyes are blind. You cannot see. When people see you from the side, they are clear. But you yourself cannot see. So the Lord said, you have to buy eye salve for your eyes. You have to hear what the Spirit says to the churches. You know you have to pay a price to listen to the word of the Holy Spirit. In the end times, people's ears grow weary and just like to listen to what they want to hear. But you have to pay a price in order to hear what the Spirit says. The Holy Spirit is like the eye salve which anoints our eyes so that we can see. But sometimes even if you are intrigued, it is no use and it is still be in vain. So the Lord said, whom I love I have to rebuke and discipline. Dear brothers and sisters, when one is obsessed, they will not listen to any advices. What did Proverbs say? You have to use a rod to strike a foolish child so that he can wake up for he just will not wake up. He is not awake, so you use the rod to wake him up. Dear brothers and sisters, today we see the rod of the Lord striking everywhere. Thank the Lord, some are awakened but many are still not awakened.

The Lord said, you need to repent. You have to lay down all your previous views. What is to repent? To repent is to change the mind. There has to be a change in your mind. Originally you have this concept, thinking you have lack nothing. You despised others. Now you have to see that you have nothing. Everyone is better than you. You have to humble yourself before the Lord. You have to humble before brothers and sisters. Dear brothers and sisters, the Lord said, I shall come. You know that the Lord is right outside the door. Your obsession already pushed the Lord outside the door. But when you repent, the Lord will come in to sup with you and to fellowship with you. Dear brothers and sisters, one who is obsessed has lost the fellowship with the Lord. He has lost the Lord. He grabs onto the things that are outside of the Lord. He closes the door on the Lord. But when we are awakened, the Lord will come in and will sup with us. Dear brothers and sisters, the most precious thing is the presence of

the Lord. The most precious thing is the fellowship of the Lord. It is enough to just have the Lord. Let the others have everything, let us have the Lord and that is enough. Dear brothers and sisters, the Lord is here. He is calling us. He calls us not to be obsessed. We have to return to the spiritual reality. In another word, when the Lord is walking in the church, what He is looking for is Himself. If He can find Himself, His heart is satisfied. If He cannot find Himself, one day the lampstand will be taken away. May the Lord have mercy on us.

Let us pray.

Lord, we thank and praise you because you truly love us. You love the church and you gave yourself up for the church. You have such patience and tolerance. You have so much grace, mercy and lovingkindness. We thank and praise you because your Spirit is still there calling us. You call us to return to yourself because you are our life and our way. You are our all. Our Lord, we thank and praise you for giving us the chance to be in your presence and that we can pursue you together. You said, seek and you shall find. So our Lord, we put ourselves into your hand. Lead us to walk the way before us, so that we can see you with boldness. May you gain a group of people on earth that love you with a pure heart. A group that is willing to be faithful unto death and to follow you to the end. Our Lord, we praise you and we thank you. We know your Holy Spirit is working on earth. You will have what you want. Your glory will fill the whole world. We worship you. In the name of the Lord, Jesus. Amen.