

PURSUE CHRIST AND ACKNOWLEDGE HIM IN ALL WAYS (1)

WCCC 2013

Brother Kwok Hin Wong

Revelation 2: 4, 14, 3: 1 - 2, 11

But I have this against you, that you have left your first love.

But I have a few things against you, because you have there some who hold the teaching of Balaam, who kept teaching Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, to eat thing sacrificed to idols and to commit acts of immorality.

To the angel of the church in Sardis write: He, who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars, says this: 'I know your deeds, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. Wake up, and strengthen the things that remain, which were about to die; for I have not found your deeds completed in the sight of My God.

I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, so that no one will take your crown.

We thank the Lord that He has gathered us before Him so that together we have a clear pursuit. Through His words 'as long as it is called today', the Lord reminded us what we need to be. This is the theme of this conference. This theme is very appropriate for God's children in this age. In this conference, I am to share on "Pursue Christ and Acknowledge Him in All Ways." This seems to be just two short phrases but in fact they are related. That is to say, as children who have received grace from God, what is our pursuit before God and what is it that we need to hold fast to. This seems to be a simple topic. But in fact it is a very solemn request. If we pay attention to God's work among His people from the Old Testament to the New Testament, we can see this is the direction that He has led those who seek Him. I will share with brothers and sisters my understanding of this topic. We found there are many young people in this year's conference. Perhaps among the young people, quite a number of them are attending this conference for the first time. But for those who have previously attended these conferences, what we share might have been shared by brothers in the past. We look to the Lord for mercy. May He renew us if we are repeating what have been shared before. Also, for those who are attending the first time, they may find the sharing fresh because they have never heard these

sharing before. Whatever the situation, we ask the Lord to give us an awoken spirit so we can understand how He speaks to us.

What Are We to Pursue with All Our Strength?

Brothers and sisters, we clearly see that we need to pursue with all our strength. But what are we to pursue? Of course, we pursue what God wants us to gain. And what is it that God wants us to gain? It is not easy for us to understand in an instant. For those who have already believed in the Lord for some time, this may not be difficult to see. But to those who have just believed for a short time, it may cause some confusion.

We often encounter this scenario: brothers and sisters were very zealous towards the Lord when they first believed. Regrettably, their zeal did not last long. Slowly their zeal became dim. Why would something like this happen? Simply put, when we first believed in the Lord, we thought what the Lord gave us was just the tiny bit that we heard in the gospel meeting. Since we already had the tiny bit, what else is there for us to pursue? This thinking affects quite a number of God's children. So after they believed in the Lord, they went through a short time of being zealous for the Lord. Then slowly their zeal became dim and stayed dim for a long time. But we thank God that the grace of redemption He gives us is not just limited to the tiny bit that we heard in the gospel meeting.

Brothers and sisters must have remembered that when we first believed in the Lord, we held firmly onto God's promise of 'will not perish, but have everlasting life'. We will think since we have already believed in the Lord and we already have everlasting life and will not perish what more is there ahead of us? Thank the Lord that it is not just a little bit, but a lot more. So much more that we can say there is plentiful before us. If we do not continue to go forward and enter into what God has destined for us, the loss is ours. It is because God has already finished the arrangement that He has intended for us. He is waiting for us to enter into His glory step by step. And if we hold fast, go forward and yet cannot see the glorious will of God, we will also feel that there is no point in holding fast to what we have. We will also think what else do we lack?

God's Counseled Will

Thus when I fellowship with you on this topic, I cannot but go back to God's original counseled will for us. I will not go into the details. I hope brothers and sisters will always go back to the

counseled will that God originally had for us. To put it clearer, it is ‘why does God create man?’ I just need to point out the bible verses and brothers and sisters will immediately understand. In Genesis chapter 1, God clearly pointed out to us His purpose for creating man. This is a very serious and important matter. What are recorded in the thick bible that we read today are almost entirely about how God fulfills the original purpose of why He created man. We cannot treat this matter as just an ancient story and as if it has nothing to do with us. Brothers and sisters, it has a very intimate relationship with us. What did God proclaim when He created man? In Genesis 1:26 ‘God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the heavens, and over the cattle, and over the whole earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth’.

In this proclamation we see the purpose of why God created man. God has a request. He wants to express something through man. And what does He want to express? He wants the man He created to express Him. Simultaneously, He wants the man He created to manifest an authority. Through this authority, man is to represent God and govern all things. To put it in a condense way, God wants man to manifest His glory and to express His authority. This is the purpose of God’s creation of man.

God did not say since I spent six days creating all things, if I do not create man, it did not seem adequate. That was not what God meant. We clearly see that the creation in the first five and half days was to prepare for the creation of man. If we can return to the original purpose of why God created man, then we know the appearing of man on this earth is a great thing. Later on we will talk more about how God wants man to express His authority and to manifest His glory. Regrettably, our forefather was not able to follow God’s heart in this matter. Thus our forefather fell. And we as his descendants fell into that fallen state. We lost God’s glory in that fallen state and we lost the authority that God wants us to express. And every one of us fell into the constraints of time. In Genesis, we can clearly see how God put man in that glorious position and how, through man, God manifested His authority. We also see how man fell and lost that authority. Forgive me for saying this; this seems to upset God’s glorious heart desire. But we thank our Lord. Even though God’s glorious purpose has been interrupted, yet God has not given up this arrangement.

The fallen state thoroughly altered man’s position. Originally, man was to express God’s glory, but now the fallen man became God’s adversary, opposing God in everything. The fallen state

led man to a situation where man surely will die. Thus we do not see a man in that time that lives until now. Then did God forsake His original purpose of creating man? We thank our God that He has not given up. Even though it brought great difficulties to God, yet God did not forsake His original arrangement. After man fell, God did one thing. God revealed a salvation. What does that mean? He prepared a salvation to restore man from the fallen state back to His original purpose. Not many of us come to understand this when we first got saved. Just because we have not come across in contact with this mind of God does not mean God stops working on this. From the third chapter in Genesis till the end of Revelation, it recorded how God recovers His original purpose of creating man and how the recovery was arranged and carried out.

The Way of the Execution of God's Plan

We thank our Lord. When we come to pay attention to the original purpose of God and to the reason why we have to hold fast and what the direction is, and the purpose of our pursuit, I felt that I am compelled to review with brothers and sisters the purpose of why God created man. When we see this arrangement that God has for us, we can see that the things that God did in the Old Testament time and in the New Testament time are connected. In the past, some people had said God had to use the New Testament way to save man because man in the Old Testament time would not listen to God's way of salvation. And that is why the bible is divided into the Old Testament and the New Testament. Brothers and sisters, I can tell you that you are wrong if you look at it this way. Where is the error? It is not that God's way failed in the Old Testament and God had to use the New Testament to substitute the Old Testament. Rather these are the steps God had to go through for the execution of His plan. Man fell and became God's enemy, just like Satan who stands in opposition to God. When God restores us, the first step He needed to do is to let the fallen men know themselves. And how can we know ourselves? After man fell, we thought there is nothing that we cannot do. We no longer pay attention to whether there is a God or not. So God used the entire Old Testament to make man realize there is no future if he does not have God. Man needs to know how far he has fallen from God if man wants to return to God's side. And how can man know how far he has fallen from God? Thus, God did numerous things in the Old Testament.

One of the very big things that God did was to call out the people of Israel through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. After the Israelites were called, God gave them the Law. God let them see that

if they listened to God and lived according to His words, then God would build them up to be a nation. If the nation could be built up successfully, God's words clearly show that He would then take back the entire earth. We can see this in chapter 19 in Exodus. What was the purpose of God giving the Law to the people of Israel? It was to make them into a nation and through this nation take back the entire earth. At the end of what God told the Israelites, He said a very important sentence which was 'for all the earth is mine'. At that time, few people could understand the meaning of that sentence. Even for us who are in the New Testament time, if it is not for the mercy of our Lord, we will also need to ask what that sentence means. Whether man understands or not did not hinder God from revealing His heart desire to us. God said, 'I am going to get back this whole earth; but I need to gain some people first'. They are those who know themselves and will not act according to their wants. These people will learn to pursue, seek and manifest based on the Law.

Thus, we who are in the New Testament time do not think that we have nothing to do with the Old Testament. Even though there is not a direct relationship, yet if there is no Old Testament, how would we know what the New Testament is? How do we know what the New Testament is about? Today, we all know that in the New Testament, God treats us with His grace. It seems that God was not able to bring man out with the Law, thus God switched to grace to lead us in the New Testament. This understanding might seem to be more accurate. But in fact, it is still not accurate. God did not use the time in the Old Testament to show that the Law in the Old Testament time failed. Rather, through the Old Testament Law, God shows that the problem is not the Law, the problem is man.

Does man have a future then? Is there a way that man can go? Can man escape the power of death? From the outside it seems there is no way. Thank God that when man feels there is no way, He reveals His grace. It seems as if God is telling us this: just to let you know when you think there is no way, I have mercy to open up a way for you. We thank our Lord. And this is how we received salvation through grace in the New Testament. What is salvation? Salvation enables us not to perish and gives us everlasting life. But this is not the complete salvation. We always think that it is very important that we do not perish, because if we perish then we have nothing. But with regards to God's will, 'not perishing' for us is just the beginning. Just like 'having eternal life' is also the beginning of returning to a normal relationship with God.

In the revelation of God's will of salvation, He does not want us just to stop at being 'not perished but have everlasting life'. God wants to bring us back to His original purpose of creating man through this point. And thus this draws our attention to how we can enter into God's grace of salvation. Thank and praise our God. Because of the revelation of the New Testament grace, we have been brought into this step already. Through the manifestation of His grace, God uses us, who have received His grace, to build up His church. And through this salvation, God deals with the power of darkness. Thus we who have been saved enter not only into the salvation, but also enter into God's glorious, eternal will. Thus He leads us forward step by step. We cannot stay at just being saved. We have to go forward. And how far do we go? We go forward until God's will is fulfilled.

God's Will

How is the will of God fulfilled? We thank God because He will not do something and not tell us about it. I found one very precious thing and that is before God does anything among us or on this earth, He always proclaims His purpose. He will first let us know what He wants to do. Last night, Brother Sun fellowshiped that 'you need to know the vision, and without vision there is no way to go'. Why do we need to see the vision before we start walking the way? It is because God always reveals what He is going to do and how He is going to do it before He does anything. This morning Brother Kaung brought us before the throne of God in his fellowship. What is the use of God's throne? God's throne is where God's glory, authority, wisdom and powers are displayed. This clearly shows us God has more than enough power, authority and wisdom to fulfill whatever He has said or whatever He lets man understands. So when we see what God wants us to express, we do not need to consider how it can be accomplished. Rather we look at who is going to accomplish it and the basis for what that person has said. We thank and praise our Lord. He completely expresses the will of His Father. On what basis do we stand before God? Does God accept us based on our high moral conduct or our good work? Definitely it is not so. Everyone who can come before God is based on one thing and that is the entire experience of the Son of God became flesh on earth. Our Lord expresses God and He came to fulfill what God wants to do. Especially during His last days on earth, He utterly resolved the difficulties man had before God.

Brothers and sisters, how do we come before God? Do we come before Him just as sinners whose sins are forgiven? Of course we have that component. But it should not be just that component. At the minimal, we need to see that when we come before God, He no longer condemns our sins. That is one thing. The other thing is that God also gives us the adoption as sons and the position of sonship. We must ask on what basis we receive that. Definitely it is not because of our own qualifications, but it is through Jesus Christ. We thank God that through His Son we also became sons. Positive wise, there is no problem of us being the sons. But the Son of God, who is our assurance for us to come before God, does not want us to be just the sons. He is to work in us so that just as how He is the Son of God, we are to be completely like Him as the sons of God. Thus, we are not only saved through our Lord, but our entering into the glorious abundance of God is also through the Son of God.

Our Pursuit Before God

Through the Son of God, we became sons. Not only just sons but also we will become the likeness of the Son of God. And this has to do with our pursuit of God. What are we pursuing? Why do we have to pursue? Thank our God that because He has put us into the fact and arrangement that Christ is our entire grace, apart from Christ, we have nothing. You can know the bible very well. But if you do not have Christ, then you do not have a relationship with God. We can see a lot of this kind of situations on this earth. Many theologians are very famous among men. Their theologies are based on the theory of their research and not based on what God said. So they have status among men. But their relationship with God is not reliable. Since we are already in His grace, what else do we have to pursue? Why do we need to hold fast to what we have before God? To answer this, we have to go back to the arrangement of God's eternal will.

In the Old Testament, God told the Israelites 'I am going to make you into a nation. I am going to take back the earth'. In the New Testament, is God going to keep what He had told the Israelites in the Old Testament? He is to some extent but not just that. In the New Testament we, who have received grace from God, to what extent of the glory and abundance of grace are we going to receive? In the Old Testament time, God clearly said He will get back the earth. Just looking at the New Testament, it seems that God did not say what He is going to do. But this is not true. In fact, in the New Testament, God has clearly spoken to us of what He is going

to do. The Lord said, 'I will build My church upon this rock'. Why did the Lord speak these words? God uses the matter of the building of the church to eliminate death and to abolish the influence of Hades on man. This saying is higher than what God said in the Old Testament 'I am going to take back the earth'.

The Lord's teachings in the New Testament did not just stop at the annihilation of the power of Hades. What else did He tell us? In the first chapter of Ephesians we can clearly see one thing. He is going to have all things in the fullness of time to be summed up in Christ. To put it more clearly, it is to have all things on earth and in heaven, through what Christ has done, to be brought before God without any interference. Brothers and sisters, this indeed is a great thing. God is going to bring heaven and earth from a disharmonious state with God to a state of one with God. This is one thing that we who believe in the Lord will not think about. Our not thinking about it does not mean God is not going to do it. God is still working on it according to His own will. And how is He going to fulfill it?

How God Fulfills His Will

In the first chapter in Ephesians, we see one thing that causes us to say, 'God, it is indeed great, magnificent, glorious and generous that you put us into this grace'. What did God say in Ephesians? God said, 'the fact that all things are to be summed up in Christ is to be realized in us who are the first to hope in Christ'. Brothers and sisters, do you understand the meaning of these words? This is the glorious fulfillment of the will of God. God is going to fulfill it first on those who are the first to hope in Christ.

Through this fact, God brings His eternal purpose from a few to the whole universe. And this brings out what the brothers shared and mentioned: the New Heaven and the new earth. May the Lord through the help of the Holy Spirit make us move from a state of satisfaction with just being saved to being drawn to pursue to gain Christ. This is because Christ is the foundation of the fulfillment of the glorious will of God. And Christ is also the foundation of the recovery of the original purpose of God's creation of man.

Now we have to go back to the theme of our conference 'as long as it is called today'. Thank the Lord that in His Son, He built us, who are the first to hope in Christ, into His church. Then through the influence of the church, the perfection of the work of God will be fulfilled. And we need to go back to the church when we come to talk about this matter.

The Ones Who Are The First to Hope in Christ

In the beginning of the Book of Revelation, we see that the Lord spoke a lot of things to the church. In chapters two and three we see the Lord speaks to the church directly. Of course that also includes chapter one. In the first chapter the Lord clearly speaks of who He is. Then it tells us how our Lord governs, leads and captivates in the church. I will not be able to share fully on all the words that the Lord spoke to the church in such a short time. But I will share on the purpose of our Lord's words to the church so brothers and sisters can encourage each other. If we are to look at how the church is to bring about the first step of the glorious will of God, then we need to see how our Lord leads the church. We can never fully understand all the things that God wants to do. But we thank the Lord that He always reveals the things He wants to do. This becomes our vision and the understanding of our pursuit. So we cannot but need to pay attention to what God at that time spoke to the church through John. Those words are important because they were the experiences of the church and also relate to the purpose of the building up of the church.

In the Book of Revelation, the Lord sent out seven letters to seven churches. How do we understand these seven letters? We thank the Lord that even though the Lord sent out the seven letters to the seven churches at that time, yet the letters are not just for the seven churches. They are for all the churches. As long as it is a church, she should listen to what the Lord said in those seven letters. Maybe there are differences in the interpretation of these seven letters among brothers. But we are sure of one thing and that is the seven letters tell of the seven different spiritual conditions of the church. Simultaneously, we also admit that in these seven letters, God speaks of the experiences that the church has gone through in its history. No matter whether it is the condition of the church or the stages of the church history we see a common purpose. Even though the commentaries always argue about the differences, yet we should not argue, but should take note of what our Lord said in these letters and what His guidance is. We just mentioned that these seven churches represent all the churches. These seven letters do represent the progress of the church history, especially the four latter letters. We see a fact there. The Lord said, 'You need to pay attention to this matter until I come'. This shows us these seven letters are also a book showing the different stages in the church history. It is not only about the seven churches in that period but it is also the seven stages of progress of the church history.

Now we need to focus on what the Lord really said to the church in these letters. Because the letters speak to all the churches, thus we cannot say that this is just history and has nothing to do with us. Since our Lord is speaking to us and also to all throughout the history, we have to pay attention to the purpose of what He said in the seven letters. Brothers and sisters do not think that the condition our Lord points out in these seven letters to each church relates only to that particular church. Our Lord here is speaking to all God's churches throughout history. Today, maybe you are in a certain condition. But you might be in another condition as time passes. So you cannot say that you do not need to pay attention to what God said to a certain church since you are not in that condition now.

The seven letters tell of the condition of the seven churches. We need to ask what the purpose of the Lord is when He points out the condition of a particular church. Similarly, today what the purpose of the Lord is when He asks us to look at the different conditions of the churches. We are not going to pay attention to what phase we are at in the church history. What we need to pay attention to is the purpose of why God speaks to the church. Regardless of whether our Lord speaks to us from the historical or the spiritual perspectives, the purpose of why the Lord speaks to us is very clear. If brothers and sisters can be free from being limited by history or the condition of the churches, then we can easily see the purpose of why our Lord speaks to the church.

There are praises in the seven letters of our Lord. But there are more rebukes. Thank the Lord that to the churches that He praised, He still has requests. If we are familiar with these seven letters in the Book of Revelation, we will know the churches that the Lord did not reprimand are Smyrna and Philadelphia. But the Lord still lays out His requests after He praises them. And what are these requests? Are these requests the same as those that are directed to the churches that the Lord rebuked? Even though the wording seems a little different, yet the purpose is the same. And what is the purpose? To all the churches, whether they are being praised or being reprimanded, the Lord has a very clear request to them: there is a necessity for overcomers among them. Of course, there have to be overcomes in the churches that the Lord reprimanded, but how about the ones that the Lord praised? Do they need to have overcomers? Yes, He still asks for overcomers. This leads us to pay attention to a serious problem. At least when I, myself understood this, I truly said, 'Lord, You really do have mercy on us so that you cause our hearts and minds to become the same as yours'.

We always have a certain feeling about the churches that the Lord reprimanded. For example, we think that since the church at Ephesus lost her first love, then this means she lost the fullness of the Lord's life. Thus whatever she did has no value before our Lord. So it is right that she has to be reprimanded and that she needs overcomers. The church at Pergamos and the church at Thyatira, in our opinion, look bad. How could they use so many other things to take the place of the Lord? They were still considered religious organizations from the religion perspective and the things they use to substitute the Lord were religious things. But being a religious organization does not necessarily mean she is in the Lord. Thus we think that these two churches need to be rebuked by the Lord and that they need to have overcomers. As to Sardis, the Lord said, 'for I have not found thy works complete before my God'. So church like this really needs overcomers. Well, the church at Laodicea is worse. From history standpoint, the church at Sardis recovered the truths of God that have been buried for a long time. But God said yes, there was recovery of the truths but not one of them was complete. Thus there is still a lack. So there has to be overcomers among them. The church at Laodicea substituted man for God. Thus her fall was worse. How can there not be call for overcomers among them? But there is one interesting fact. The church at Smyrna has offered a lot for the Lord, even their lives; and the Lord did not say anything bad about her. Yet the Lord still said she needs to have overcomers. When it comes to the church in Philadelphia, our Lord said, you do have many things to be praised. However, the Lord said one sentence; you have a little power. You have power but the power is little. You hold fast pretty well but still have not reached the degree that the Lord asked for. Thus there is also the calling for overcomers in the church in Philadelphia. The reason I shared all these is to ask brothers and sisters to pay attention to one thing. God is to lead the church to a point that the church becomes a reality to those who are the first to hope in Christ.

The Summing Up of All Things in Christ

What will be the result of this reality? It will be the summing up of all things in Christ. If the Lord has led us to such a high demand, then when we read these seven letters, we know the demand of the Lord for us is even higher. Today we need to pursue Christ. We need to hold fast to the fact that Christ is all that we are to pursue. Everything has to be according to Christ. That is what God asks of us. In the Book of Colossians, it is very clearly seen that through what Christ has done, God reveals that He is the beginning of all things and He is the conclusion of all

things. To the children of God, He has shown that through the death and resurrection of His Son, Christ is the origin of our life and He is the Head of the church. Regardless of which angle we look at it; from God's creation or from His salvation, God has determined His Son to be the Head of all things. And based on the fact that He is the Head of the church, Christ is then the purpose, pursuit and way of the church.

Overcomers

Even though the seven letters talk about the seven conditions and seven stages of the church, and regardless of what the condition or the stage the church is in, we cannot lose sight of what God is waiting for from the church. What is God waiting for? He is waiting for overcomers. Who are overcomers? We cannot define overcomers. Only God can gauge who are overcomers. From these seven letters, we can see that regardless of the condition of the church, if there are things that led us to forsake Christ as our pursuit or content, then God will call people out. And no matter what the condition at that time is, these are the people who hold fast that without Christ there is no way; without Christ there is no truth; and without Christ there is no life. Thus we need to notice that the Lord said in the letters: you need to hold fast to what you have till I come. This leads us to pay attention to the purpose of these seven letters.

The purpose of the seven letters is not to lead us to see the outside things. Rather, it shows that God is waiting for the church to grow into the stature that God wants. Why does the Lord speak such stern words? It is because without overcomers, the growth of the church will have many hindrances. This leads to another question. Many brothers and sisters today already paid attention to the realization of the many signs pointing to the Lord's return. When the Lord reminded us 'as long as it is called today', does that mean our Lord is coming back soon? When the Lord spoke those words, the Lord's return was not quite as imminent. But today when we speak about 'as long as it is called today', and also about our preparation to meet the Lord, it seems to draw us closer to the time of the Lord's return. But the problem is this. The children of God have waited more than two thousand years for the Lord to return. And today, the Lord shows us His return is near. But He still has not returned. Have we thought about asking the Lord, 'Lord, why have You not returned? How long do we still have to wait?' Should the answer be from the Lord or from us? Maybe we feel that the Lord should answer so we will know what to do. But if the Lord really does answer, the answer may not be what we expect. I

think the Lord will say, 'It is not that I do not want to return. But you are not ready yet, so how can I return?'

This answer may not be too far from reality. The Lord said, 'you need to hold fast to what you have until I come. If you cannot hold fast, how can I return?' Why does the Lord need to wait till we can hold fast before He returns? From the perspective of God's will, what will the Lord do when He comes? He is going to take the church as His bride. Today is the bride ready? How will the bride be when she is ready? The bride is to be completely like our Lord. The Lord said when He appears in glory, we will be with Him in glory. If we have not grown to be more like the Lord, why would the Lord return? If He returns, He cannot find His bride.

This is a fact. There is another fact. When the Lord comes, He is going to establish His kingdom. Before the Lord establishes His kingdom, He needs to gain a mature church. If the church has not reached the maturity that the Lord wants, the church cannot be completely in glory when the Lord returns. Then how can the Lord bring in the kingdom? Brothers and sisters, these are the facts. We asked, 'Lord, we have waited till now. Why have you not returned?' The Lord will turn around and say, 'How can I return when you are not ready?' This is my thinking but I am sure this is not far from the facts.

The Church Matures

Brothers and sisters, we all wait and hope for the Lord's return. But the Lord shows us that we still have not grown to maturity. This draws out a problem that we need to pay attention to. How does one define the maturity of the church? How is the maturity of the church measured? Maybe we never think about this question. Can we give an answer for God and say the church is mature now? We thank God. As we have mentioned before, God always speaks about something before He carries out anything. He never finishes something and then tells us about it. He demands the church to grow to maturity and so He tells us how to measure the maturity of the church.

The Lord's words show us there are two very important conditions in the maturity of the church. These two conditions are related to the church and to our Lord. Then we can see why the Lord tarries in His return. The first thing is stated in Romans 11:25. Before His return, the Lord has to see that the fullness of the Gentile has come in. This is related to the preaching of the gospel.

We are lacking in preaching the gospel. Maybe we need to ask ourselves how we can know

what the fullness of the Gentiles is. Brothers and sisters, we should not bother ourselves with such questions. We are not qualified to determine the fullness of the Gentiles. God is the only one who determines what the number is. We do not need to know but God knows. He sees that the number of saved has not been fulfilled, so how can His Son return? The shortfall of the number of saved is also related to the maturity of the church. God already determined that when the church reaches maturity, the number of the saved has to reach a certain point.

The second condition also has direct relation with the church. It is stated in Ephesians 4:13. The church is to grow 'to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ'. Not only the saved has to reach a certain number but the spiritual condition of the church has to grow to the measure of the stature which God wants. This causes us some difficulties. How do we know when the fullness of the church reaches the stature of the fullness of Christ? When we look at the churches on earth today, we see they are all creating problems for the Lord. How can the fullness of life be brought about in the church?

We can see that in the seven letters, there is always the mention of overcomers. Why does the Lord emphasize 'he who overcomes' in the seven letters in Revelation? Now we have some understanding of why He does that. Everyone in the church can exert their effort to cause the fulfillment of the number of saved. We just need to persist in spreading the gospel and one day the number of saved will be reached. But if we want to see the fullness of Christ, we feel that is a difficult matter for us. The church is in such chaos. How can it be brought to the fullness of Christ? We thank the Lord because in the seven letters, He pointed out what the overcomers had in the seven churches. Or we should say what all the overcomers had throughout the history of the church have become the fullness of the church. Whatever the portion that they received from the Lord became a part of the fullness of the church. Why did the Lord mention overcomers in every single one of the seven letters? There is a secret here. God uses the overcomers to bring the church into fullness.

Maybe we have some doubt again. Overcomers are the few in numbers. Can they really bring fullness to such a big, universal church? We thank God that He would never talk to us about things that He would not do. He definitely will do what He has said. Then how does He do it? Brothers and sisters, I will give you an example and you will understand. How do you hear the gospel? Even though everyone's experience is different, yet there has to be someone who preached the gospel to you. And because of that you gradually came into God's presence. Now

you are saved. Your life has started the spiritual pursuits and learning. How would you know how you should grow in your spiritual life? How can you have the assurance that this way of pursuit of the Lord will lead to the fullness of Christ? I know among you there are many who are named Paul or Peter or John. Do you know them? You said today we all know them. How do you know them? It is from the bible. We are receiving the Christ that they had received in their lives. And through the Christ they manifested, we can gain Christ and His fullness. From this we can understand the matter of what the overcomers had become what the church has.

Brothers and sisters, the standard and requirements of spiritual fullness are set by God. They are not decided by us. So do not be disturbed by these matters. What we need to pay attention to is that today, we hear the Lord calls for overcomers in the church. Are we willing to be overcomers in our time? We thank the Lord because He already spoke to us. He is working according to His eternal will and then He will bring all things back to Christ. Our Lord has a reminder for us. We, who are the first to hope in Christ, should be overcomers and should wait for His return. We look upon our Lord.

Even though my sharing is limited and not complete because of time, yet the Lord has mercy on us. May He draw us and let us know what we are pursuing today and the purpose of our pursuit. May we never just stop at the point where we will not perish but have everlasting life. We should go forward. May the Lord have mercy on us.

Prayer:

Dear Lord, we thank You. We cannot but admit that we are so lacking when we come before Your presence. What man can understand from Your words is sparse and limited. But we thank our Lord because You are a God who speaks to man. You have never hidden Your words and not revealed Your words to us. We hope our Lord speaks to the depth of our hearts, beyond man's words so as to enlighten us. We will pursue what You are waiting for so we will be gained by You. May we indeed know that our pursuit today is according to Your heart's desire, so You can gain all the glory and we can appear in glory with You. We thank our Lord. Listen to our prayer. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.