

WCCC 2014

Minister of the True Tabernacle 1

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It is by the Lord's grace and mercy that this is the 28th year of the WCCC. I think I have been to most of them. For most of that time I was working with the young people. But I was very happy to sneak into the back of the room to hear my brothers shared the word of God. And again I am glad to be here.

In Hebrews 13, it says in verse 14 *'For here we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking the city which is to come.'* For 28 years we have been gathering together and pitching the tent. We have no home on this earth. This time we are in the Sonoma valley. We do not live here but we pitch our tent together. There must be some desire that draws us. Even as we sang these hymns tonight, the tabernacle is our consideration. And the tabernacle is a love story. God wants to dwell with men. This is what draws us together. In our Lord's heart, He has always desire our fellowship and love. And this tremendous love of God and His grace and mercy are shown by the tabernacle. Now in the scripture there is much regarding this matter. One of our brothers will be sharing on the Old Testament tabernacle and its pattern. Another one will share on Jesus as the realization of the New Testament tabernacle. And another will share on the better covenant as the definition of our life in this tabernacle. And yet another will share from Revelation the final realization of the tabernacle as it comes down in all her glory. Now what are left are the two verses that they gave me, and these verses are sort of post scripts or final thoughts. And actually it is not my choice. A brother said, 'here, you take this, I will take yours'.

And where do we find these two verses? We find them in Hebrews 8:1-2 *'Now the main point in what has been said is this: we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister in the sanctuary and in the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man.'* By the Lord's grace I want to share on one of these two simple verses 'the one true tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man'. And then tomorrow night, if God willing, I will share on 'we have

such a high priest'. Now we have sojourned to this place. We pitched our tabernacle and now we will just pray for the Lord's presence as we gather together in Jesus' name.

Prayer

Our Lord, we come to You, a great high priest. We worship and praise You that You came down to tabernacle among men. We see Your great love for us and this gathers us together. We are unworthy of such a gathering that You will place Your tent over us. But so have You chosen to do by Your grace. Now great high priest, we ask that You minister life to us tonight; that You will strengthen our tired body and renew that deep desire within our hearts to dwell in Your tabernacle all the days of our lives. Give us this heart as we gather together this week. In Jesus precious name we pray. Amen.

Some have been gathering for many years. Actually on this day forty years ago I met my brother Pong. We were both little children. And I also met my brother Stephen Kaung. At that time, forty years ago, I was a pastor at a church in North Carolina. But in my sojourn through life, I met my two brothers. And in the course of time I heard my brother Stephen Kaung shared light from heaven regarding the tabernacle. By God's mercy I saw some light. Since that time I found myself outside the camp sojourning in the tabernacle. We have been to a number of places. We have fellowshiped and lived among God's people in different towns. But we have never found our home. We have blessings together. Surely you have been in some assemblies of God's people where there are great blessings and life. But we have not found home. Our home is in heaven. We wait for our Lord. He is building His house. But until He comes and put the top stone on it, it is still in need. There are a number of you who are desire to build the tabernacle according to the pattern in heaven. We have come to many conferences to hear about this living way. Yet we are humbled by how little we have progressed. We made many mistakes. But the Lord keeps tabernacled among us. We pray that He would give us tonight a little insight into this true tabernacle which is above which the Lord pitched and not man.

In the timing of things I have been asked to share first. Now I want all of us to stand firm in believing that the Lord has said I will build My church. We believe the Lord Jesus loves us and gave Himself for us. And that He might present to Himself a glorious church not having spots or wrinkles. By faith we stand on this ground. What the Lord said He will do. And for us who are here upon this earth, the Lord desires to tabernacle among us. But we want to begin tonight with a directive word because it has been laid upon my responsibility to share on this matter of the true tabernacle in heaven.

And so tonight we want to begin by looking away from those things on this earth; instead, we need to realize what God has already done in heaven. Too often we focus on things that are around us on earth, even this earthly tabernacle of the church where we assembled. I think of the apostle Paul. He was writing to the Colossians. And the Colossians Christians were getting caught up in trying to be more holy. They were studying religious philosophy that they thought would make them more perfect. But to our brothers in Colossae Paul said, *'If you have risen with Christ, seek the things above where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on this earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ appears, we shall be like Him'*. What a focus Paul gave to these Colossians Christians. It is necessary to look away from these things on earth and look to heaven on what has been done. Now it is true we still live on earth. But sometimes we forget that we also live in heaven. The author of the Book of Hebrews is exhorting the Christians to enter into the Holy of Holies with the Lord. We may live in this earthly tabernacle but we have a place in heaven in the Holy of Holies with the Lord. And so before we take up on all of these matters of this tabernacle on earth, let us look at this true tabernacle in heaven.

First let me ask this question, what is a tabernacle? In Hebrews 8:2, it says *'a minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle'*. So what is a tabernacle? It is a covering. It is a tent. It is a defined place and is created for the purpose of fellowship between God and men. We have seen the tabernacle in the wilderness on this earth in the Old Testament. But notice what it says here - the true tabernacle that God pitched not men.

Until by God's mercy I began to see this, I thought the church was completely an earthly thing. And since I knew the church only as an earthly institution of God's people, I thought you just build that church according to the scripture and mature that church through the word of God. I never knew that the church is to correspond to the true tabernacle in heaven. I did not know that the church as the tabernacle has its heavenly origin.

Here in Hebrews 8:5, it says *'Who serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, just as Moses was warned by God when He was about to erect the tabernacle: for, 'See', He says, 'that you make all things according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain.'*' This is a most extraordinary thing.

Up on the mount of God, Moses saw this true tabernacle in heaven. Of course he only saw it as a pattern, as a shadow, as a copy. But that which he could see, he faithfully reproduced on earth. Now how precious it is that Moses could be such a faithful servant. As all the furnishings were constructed exactly according to the pattern, Moses had little idea that what he was doing was presenting in type our Lord, Jesus Christ. So faithful was his construction of the tabernacle that we can see Jesus when we look at its various parts. Now the church today is not just a gathering of God's people on earth. It is supposed to come from a correspondence of the true tabernacle in heaven. Although we are on this earth, although we are imperfect and we are sinners, the church on earth should so correspond to that in heaven that people can see Jesus in the tabernacle. This is why it is so important that we see something of this true tabernacle so we can faithfully live it out here upon this earth.

So here is the true tabernacle. The Lord pitched it. When did He pitch it? He pitched it before creation as seen in Hebrews 9:11. Here it mentions again this true tabernacle *'But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation'*. Now here we need to speak of a mystery. God is eternal. He built; He pitched this true tabernacle before creation. He created it eternally for fellowship. And from the beginning the Father and the Son have had fellowship in this tabernacle in heaven. It says it is a perfect tabernacle. It also says it is a greater tabernacle. The fact that the writer said it is greater shows there is some correspondence to the tabernacle here on earth. This tabernacle which has been pitched in

heaven is eternal. It is pitched by God. Love is there. Life is there. What does it look like? We cannot imagine its fullness. I think when we look in Revelation 4 we see a little glimpse. At least we see a few of the components of this true tabernacle. The first thing we see in Revelation chapter 4 is that there is the throne. It is always there in the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle. God is there. Then immediately around the throne there are four living beings. In the original version, it said there are 'the four living ones'. Because where God dwells, there is life; uncreated life. What is the covering? A tabernacle had to have a covering. It is glory. Glory covers this. And what is it you sense inside? There is a presence inside and what is it? It is Holy, Holy, Holy. It is fellowship. This has always been and always will be. It is an eternal fellowship of love. It has always existed and now exists in heaven.

Now here is where we enter into the mystery. In the fullness of time, our Lord Jesus came down and tabernacled in the flesh. And even though we did not fully realize it, those who look carefully at Jesus saw glory and life and grace. Jesus was the tabernacle here among men. Is that not wonderful? He not only came among us but He died and rose again. And when we look at Revelation chapter 5 we see something happens. Here is the tabernacle that always has been and always will be. It is living, it is holy, and it is glory. It is perfect and yet something has been added into that tabernacle that came out of history. Out of the midst of the throne of God came a newly slain Lamb. This Lamb of God died on the cross in a moment of history in this world. He rose again, and He went before the Father and He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty. And what He did while He was on earth was added to the true tabernacle in heaven.

What can you add to something that is perfect? It seems like you have everything. But in this mystery of the correspondence of heaven and earth, something was being added to what is already perfect in heaven. What is being added? He brought many sons to glory. And now the fellowship is even more wonderful, and more full of life. The angels broke out in worship when the Lord Jesus took the scrolls. So here is the true tabernacle. It always has been and always will be. And right now, things are being taken from this earth and added to this true tabernacle in heaven until it becomes the New Jerusalem. We are down here on earth. We are spreading the gospel. Praise God; some people got saved. Immediately some

living stones go into this true tabernacle. There are some saints going through sufferings; yet they hold onto the Lord faithfully and some precious stones are now added to the true tabernacle going into the New Jerusalem. So do you see something of this mystery? It is very important what goes on here on earth. Why? It is because everything that is touched by the life of God goes into this true tabernacle.

Let me mention two angles of this mystery. The first regards our Lord, Jesus Christ. As the Son of God, He has always been fellowshiping with the Father in the true tabernacle. In Hebrews chapter 1, the author has been careful in laying this foundation that the Son of God eternally has been in the heavens with his Father. But here is the mystery. Our Lord Jesus came down to earth and tabernacled among us. He learned obedience as a man by the things that He suffered. He died on the cross and rose again. And then He went back up to heaven as the Son of Man in glory. It is Son of God and Son of Man all glorious at the right hand of the Father. Do you see that? The Son of God always has been, and always will be. But Jesus also became the Son of Man that He might bring many sons into glory in this fellowship in the true tabernacle.

Now here is the second angle of the mystery. We are down here on earth, pitching the tabernacle, trying to build as best according to what we understand. Even though it is an imperfect model, yet everything that we do by the life of God finds its place in the true tabernacle. Everyone who is saved, everyone who is sanctified finds correspondence in this true tabernacle. Every good work and every treasure in heaven is added onto this true tabernacle. So we read in Ephesians 2:19 that here on earth there something is going on. There is a house being built; a temple being built. It says *'So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and are of God's household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit'*. So this passage said we are being built and we are growing. And this is by the work of God and yet at the same time it is already done.

It is important that we understand where our starting place is, if we are going to be faithful in building the tabernacle of God on this earth so that He can dwell with us. It begins by understanding what has already

been done in heaven. Now we want to look at this matter of the building because we have the perspective given to us through history. The Lord loves us as His church. But we are all humbled by the history of the church and by the history of the assemblies which we have been involved. Why is the bride not ready yet? For twenty-eight years the burden here was to share on the eternal purpose of God and of the testimony of Jesus. Yet we still struggle in this matter of being the true tabernacle that corresponds to the one in heaven. We see through church history that the church has gone up and down in its reality. But often we have not known why. When Hebrews chapter 8 talks about the true tabernacle, it is talking about the reality of the tabernacle. Where do we find the reality of that tabernacle in heaven here on earth?

This is the way I would like to picture it tonight – the Lord’s faithfulness. Now it said our Lord has gone into heaven and sat down at the right hand of the Majesty. We will speak more on this fact that He is interceding for us tomorrow night. Now let me touch on just one matter that our great High Priest is doing. Through the history of the church we have seen times when the Lord has recovered some of that true reality of the true tabernacle. Our Lord is the great High Priest. He shines that golden lampstand from heaven and we see reality. We cannot explain why He does, what He does but we know that He is at present faithfully interceding for His church. And He wants to recover reality, holiness, life, and glory even here on earth. And so the Lord Jesus our High Priest revealed Himself on earth. And when He reveals Himself something of His reality becomes part of the tabernacle. Let me explain it in a very simple way. We all know that the reformers including Martin Luther, John Calvin and John Knox were raised up at a time when the church for the most part was dwelling in the shadow and darkness. We remember how our brother, Martin Luther, one day saw that he has been justified by faith alone in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. And he began to preach ‘saved by grace’ alone. And the light of the gospel shone in Europe. Most of northern Europe saw this gospel and many people were saved. Now if we can put this in terms of the tabernacle, it is as if Martin Luther had recovered that brazen altar of sacrifice in the outer court. This doctrine of salvation by grace which had been laid in the shadow for centuries in the church came to brilliant light as we saw the sacrifice of Jesus given on our behalf. We know in the

sixteenth century there was this great recovery of this gospel and many people were added to the tabernacle through the ministry of these reformers. Then two centuries later came our brother John Wesley. He was helped by some Moravian brethren to understand this gospel of salvation by faith. But John Wesley and those people in England with him saw something even more. He saw the Lord not only saved us by grace but would sanctify us by the Holy Spirit. And so in those days, there was a measure of this recovery of the sanctification by the Holy Spirit and the holiness in the Christian life. And so in terms of the tabernacle it can be said that John Wesley recovered the truth, the reality of the laver beyond the brass altar. And then a century later, we know the Brethren began to gather together and the Lord showed them light from heaven. And it was as if they recovered some of the articles in the holy place inside the tabernacle. They discovered the preciousness of fellowship around the word of God like the table of showbread. They would gathered together to study the bible. Usually some brothers would open up and lead the time. But they would practice what they called 'bible reading' which meant all brothers and sisters could fellowship in the light of the word of the bible. And they began to understand all brothers and sisters can participate in the Lord's table and all brothers can administer the Lord's table without being ministers. And in those days the Brethren received great light from heaven. Up until that time, the church had lost the vital understanding of the second coming of the Lord. But these brothers and sisters gathered together began to believe that the Lord would be coming soon. And the Lord shed light on the prophetic scripture which had been lost to the church in the most part. It is as if they have recovered the lampstand because they have discovered revelations in the word of God.

Now from these moments of recoveries that we all know about, we should learn two lessons. One, recovery can happen only when there is light from heaven on reality. When men and women see the truth, they manifest the reality of the body life of the church when they gather together. We can talk about doctrine all we want, but when saints are living in the reality of these things, the fellowship is so precious when we are together. Jesus said in the gospel of John '*I am the light of the world. He who follows after Me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life*'. Now Jesus was not just

talking about His earthly days. He is our light. There is nothing more precious than walking in the light of life. How wonderful is the tabernacle when the lampstand is burning brightly with Jesus.

The second lesson that we learn from these history of recoveries is that there is a cost in maintaining this fellowship as we walk in the light. When people recovered something of truth, they usually had to pay a price. They walked in the light and had fellowship with one another. But this meant obedience. It meant confessing their sins. It meant maintaining the unity of the Spirit. Walking in the light is a humble life.

So when we look at this history of recovery, we see that men eventually became proud of what they knew. And what was light became doctrine and what was doctrine became tradition. So we see that you can learn the truth about something. You can teach a doctrine; but not practice the reality. If you look carefully at the wineskins of most denominations in this Christian world, you will see in these wineskins most of them began as some light from heaven. They saw the truth regarding baptism, but now all we see is the wineskin. But where is the light? It is a shadow thing because in that tabernacle, there is still some shadow of the truth and so this brings us to our own humbling truth.

The best of God's people, even when they saw light from heaven, were only able to build a shadow of that which is in heaven. We need to be humble about this. We can be very satisfied with where we are at. But surely it is far below what the Lord desires. The scripture said we see through a dark glass. What we have seen is only a shadow – something that is true which has a correspondence in heaven. But it is only partial. We need to see more.

You remember that Jesus met that blind man and laid His hand upon him and asked him, now do you see? He said I see man walking as trees. Now we see the tabernacle. But it is blurry. There is still more things to see. We need a second touch. When we look back at the reformers we can see from our perspective now because as we come to the last days, the Lord is recovering things that are ours if we will see them. So when we look at Martin Luther, he recovered this matter of justification by faith. But he still retained other things that were in shadows. The Lord's table was still sacramental superstition and baptism was still child baptism. Things that were only partially seen. Now, we believe the Lord going to return very soon. But if He tarries, perhaps for one hundred years, people at that time will look back on

us and say, Oh they saw something but they did not see this. Now we look back on history and said look at that.

That is why we need to ask a question. Have we seen the reality of what the Lord has already done in the church from heaven? We pray the Lord will give us much light this week. It is so wonderful that we can study this matter of the tabernacle together. We need a spirit of wisdom and revelation to see the reality that the Lord has. Now if we see something of the reality, are we willing to walk in that light? Think of this dear Hebrews whom the author wrote to. How the Lord was speaking to them about seeing Him and His heavenly work and ask them to draw near to the Holy of Holies. But they have to be willing to go outside the camp in order to follow Jesus. That was a high price for these Jewish believers to pay. And we must meet our Lord outside the camp of any kind of denomination, outside of any kind of movement and understanding and any kind of tradition that will hinder the reality in our midst. So I make this statement. There is something very precious to be seen regarding this tabernacle and the High Priest in heaven. Do we want to see it? And if you are here and if you have been someone who has seen something in the past, do you desire a second touch? Even now before the Lord Jesus comes back, there may be yet something more that He wants to recover out of reality and add to the true tabernacle. What further things does He want to recover? Maybe something the younger generation will see. It will not be some novel and some strange doctrine. Whenever there was recovery, all that happen was that what was written in shadow in the scriptures came alive and we see the reality. In Revelation our Lord Jesus graciously came and stood among the seven churches in Asia and shone the lampstand. Shall we ask Him to come in our midst and light the lampstand? There may be exposure, there may be correction. There will surely be repentance. And there will be life. How we desire His life. There cannot be anything more precious. Though we walk on this earth in an imperfect earthly tabernacle, yet the life of Christ in our midst is our consolation. So as we go through this wonderful time of ministry, let us not come with spiritual satisfaction. Let us come with spiritual hunger. Only the Lord can shed His light upon us. And we pray that as our dear brothers come up and share with us, the Lord will shed His light and give us life.

Prayer

Lord, we have tasted and seen that You are good. We have touched Your reality from the heavenly court. And we long to dwell in Your courts to inquire of the Lord and to meditate in Your presence. We ask as we come together this week, You will open our eyes. Touch us with reality, restore the tabernacle, and revive Thy work. In Jesus precious name we pray. Amen.

West Coast Christian Conference