

2018 WCCC
Brother Ted Peng
Sonship and Inheritance (1)

This time the assignment the brothers gave me is about sonship and inheritance. Both of these terms are used in Ephesians 1. And actually, they are closely related. I am thankful that for the last few sessions, the brothers have gone into Ephesians quite a bit. I pray this afternoon that the Lord will help us go into this matter of sonship. And tomorrow if God is willing, we will go into this matter of inheritance. Let us read a few scriptures.

Romans 8: 14 – 15. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you have not received a spirit of bondage again for fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

I would like to clarify that actually it should be the Spirit of the Son.

Galatians 4: 4 – 7. But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, come of woman, come under law, that He might redeem those under law, that we might receive sonship. But because you are sons, God has sent out the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father. So thou are no longer bondman, but son; but if son, heir also through God.

I would like to call your attention to ‘we might receive sonship’.

Ephesians 1: 4 – 6. According as He has chosen us in Him before the world’s foundation, that we should be holy and blameless before Him in love; having marked us out beforehand for adoption through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He has taken us into favor in the Beloved:

Genesis 17: 18 – 21. And Abraham said to God, Oh that Ishmael might live before Thee! And God said, Sarah thy wife shall indeed bear thee a son; and thou shall call His name Isaac; and I will establish my covenant with him, for an everlasting covenant for His seed after him. And for Ishmael I have heard thee: behold, I will bless him, and will make him fruitful, and will very greatly multiply him; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to thee at this appointed time in the next year.

This is about Isaac. Pay attention the phrases in verse 20 ‘as to Ishmael I will bless him’ and in verse 21 ‘but my covenant will I establish with Isaac.’

Psalms 89: 26 – 28. He shall call unto me, Thou art my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation; and as to me, I will make him firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth. My loving-kindness will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him.

This is about David and this is where the Lord Jehovah referred to David as His son. Note ‘my covenant shall stand fast with him’.

Hebrews 12: 5 – 6. And you have quite forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when reproved by Him; for whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives.

This talks about chastening.

Let us pray.

Lord, we have read Your words. We marvel at the wonderful intentions You have for us. Lord, in Old Testament time You have covenant with Your sons. And in the New Testament You gave us sonship. Lord, we really thank You and we praise You. Lord how You have esteemed us, way beyond what we can imagine. This afternoon, we pray that You will show us Your glory. Bring us to

Your intention. Give us a willingness to be Your sons according to Your sonship. Thank you Lord. In the name of the Lord, Jesus we pray. Amen.

Brothers and sisters, we have read many scriptures. I hope we can grasp the fact that in the New Testament time, the Lord has a deep burden to bring us into His sonship. In the Old Testament time as in the case of Isaac and David, the Lord gave us this matter called covenant, particularly the covenant as to sons. This sonship and this matter of being sons are very serious in the heart of God. In the English bible some translated it as adoption. Sonship and adoption are the same words. In the past, I just thought I am so poor, so the Lord just brings me in and takes care of me. But brothers and sisters when you really read it, it is not so. Adoption and sonship mean something very, very serious in the heart of God. Sonship in the heart of God is His expectation of what we should be. The Greek word of sonship means He establishes us as sons. In the culture or in the word itself, it means to set as sons. Whether we are borne by Him or not does not matter because He has set us as sons. In His expectations or qualifications, He has set us as sons. So today we will look deeper how the sonship evolved either in the Old Testament or in the New Testament.

When God said covenant in the Old Testament, His basic idea was that I will be your God. And the implication was that you have to see Him as your only God and no other God and no other heavenly father. And the other aspect was that He will provide. He was fully responsible for us. So that is what covenant means. If you read Genesis 17, the word covenant appears again and again. When we read about the story of Isaac, we see that when the Lord told Abraham that He was going to have a covenant with him, Abraham said 'I have no sons, I only have Ishmael. May Ishmael live before you'. And the Lord said, 'I am going to bless Ishmael but my covenant I will make with Isaac'. So brothers and sisters, you see a thing here. A covenant or sonship has nothing to do with flesh relationship. Both Ishmael and Isaac were born out of Abraham. But the Lord said My covenant I would make only with Isaac. Of course He would still

bless Ishmael. He would multiply and would be prosperous. But My covenant I make with Isaac.

So brothers and sisters, this covenant is not a flesh relationship. It is a spiritual relationship. It comes with promises. It has responsibilities. And it has representation. Dear brothers and sisters, we are all familiar with the term. When the Lord met Moses, He said, 'I am the God of Abraham, I am the God of Isaac, I am the God of Jacob'. God's idea was that anyone who saw Abraham, Isaac or Jacob, he would know they have a God. This is representation. So the Lord asked His Son to represent Him. And the Lord also asked His son to be responsible. All the spiritual blessings, and all the inheritance would be His responsibility. That is the basic idea of a covenant.

And that is also the idea of sonship today. The other thing is that when the Lord gave Abraham, Isaac He already had something in mind. One day when Isaac was old enough to carry the wood, Abraham had to offer Isaac to the Lord as burnt offering. We know the story. Abraham did that by faith. And the Lord gave Isaac back to him. From that point on, the Lord took Isaac as His own son. In terms of flesh Isaac was still the son of Abraham. But in spirit Isaac was the son of God. And the Lord said, all the nations of the world would be blessed by this seed.

Brothers and sisters, later when we come to Exodus 4, the Lord told Moses to tell pharaoh, 'Israel is my son, my firstborn, let him go so he can serve me'.

This is a tremendous statement. On one hand, the Lord said they would be my sons and Pharaoh was to let them go. They belonged to the Lord and did not belong to Pharaoh. And on the other hand, throughout the history of Israel, oftentimes they did not look like a son. But the Lord took them in as a son. Most of the people did not care. The Lord said I brought up my children. They rebelled against me. 'The ox knows their master, the donkey knows the master's crib. But Israel does not know me. My people do not consider'.

Brothers and sisters, but like in this hymn that our brother led this morning, there was still David, there was still Nehemiah. There were many people who still cared. They were no longer children, they were God's sons. Thank the

Lord. Over the generations, the Lord never gave them up. And this is our Father.

Now when we come to the time of David, the bible recorded David in a very wonderful way. The sonship is very explicit in Psalm 89. In the Old Testament time, the bible did not really mention any other person to be His son except David. No wonder David had the response to the sonship. We did not see much in Isaac responding to the sonship. The bible did not record that. We already know that Israel oftentimes broke the heart of God. But David, even in his youth this Jehovah God was always his father. When he was a shepherd tending the sheep, and the bears, lions and wolves came, David chased them out. He said 'the Lord Jehovah is with me'. When he fought with Goliath, he told Goliath 'you came to me with sword and spear, but I came to you by the name of Jehovah, the God of hosts'. After he killed Goliath, trouble came to him. Over ten years he was chased by Saul. When he had the second chance to kill Saul, he did not kill Saul. He said to Saul, 'if the Lord wants you to kill me, then just kill me. But if someone wants to kill me and drive me out of the inheritance of the Lord, I cannot accept that. I cannot accept to shed my blood outside of my Lord's presence'. All his life the Lord Jehovah was always there right in front of him.

When he became king, he immediately did three things. He took Jerusalem. He brought back the ark. And he told the Lord that he wanted to build the Lord a house. Jerusalem had been given to Israel but Israel was not able to occupy it for about four hundred years. The ark was in the woods for seventy years. And as to the Lord's house, the Lord said no one ever told me he wanted to build a house for me. For David what was in the Lord's heart and what the Lord wanted was always in his heart. What the Lord was thinking was what David was thinking. He might not fully understand but he wanted to know what the Lord was thinking. He wanted to feel the feeling of the Lord. He knew one thing and that was the Lord wanted to live among His people and wanted to talk to them. Thus in Acts 13 in the New Testament, Paul said the Lord said 'I have found David My servant. He is after My heart. He will do all My will'. Brothers

and sisters, I think when the Lord saw David, He really found a son who loved Him. He could see that David thought the Father's thoughts. And David's heart tried to feel what the Father feels.

Thank the Lord that one thousand years after David, our Lord Jesus came.

When the Lord Jesus came, He was all that the Lord wants in a son. This covenant is love, responsibility and representation. And all these were fulfilled in Jesus Christ and perfect in Him. As to love, people used to understand that the Lord has a requirement for His Son – the Ten Commandments. How hard and how troublesome are the Ten Commandments? To the Lord Jesus, the Ten Commandments are love. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind and all your might. What people thought as requirements, the Lord Jesus thought of them as love. We then come to this matter of responsibility. The day before the Lord Jesus was crucified, He had a prayer to His father. It is in the Gospel of John chapter 17. In the first part of the prayer, He said, Lord God what You have sent me to do, I have done it.

Brothers and sisters, throughout the twentieth century, people have been looking at Jesus' life through a microscope. Everyone has to agree that He had done everything that His father sent Him to do. The following day He was crucified. On the cross He turned to us and He said it is finished. Brothers and sisters, it is because of that you and I today are free from any bondage. We now come to this matter of representation. Apostle John had a very complete statement of Jesus being the representation. 'No one ever has seen God, but the only begotten Son in the bosom of the father, He declares Him.' Brothers and sisters, these days we have been brought into this matter of glory. The 2 Corinthians said the glory of God as glory appears in the face of the Lord Jesus. How can we see the glory of the Father? We look at the face of Jesus. If we are willing and humble, we can see the face of the Lord Jesus and now we can see the glory of the Father.

As to this matter of covenant, there is a very amazing phrase in Isaiah 42.

When it talked about the Lord servant, Jehovah said 'Behold my servant'. In verse 6, Jehovah said 'He is the covenant of My people'. This word in the

Chinese bible is translated as mediator. But there are dots under the character meaning this word is not in the original. The translation is just covenant. Thus the Lord Jesus is not only the mediator but He is actually the covenant itself. Covenant is a large word. But when the covenant has to do with sons, it is very specific – covenant with Isaac; covenant with David. In fact, today, it is embedded in sonship. Isaiah said that covenant is the Lord Jesus – He is the covenant with my people. What does that mean? It means that everyone, who just understands the covenant, will understand Jesus. If you will turn your eyes upon Jesus then you will see what God wants out of His sons – out of you and me. That you can see in Jesus. Also when you see Jesus, when you turn your eyes upon Jesus, you know one thing: this covenant can be accomplished in you and in me. That is what it means that He is the covenant with my people. Note that it is a covenant with my people. Brothers and sisters, if we are God's people, then He is our covenant. However, if we do not want to be God's people, then the Lord Jesus is not going to be our covenant. He cannot make us close to God. Our brother this morning made it so clear. We have to make sure that we are saved. So this is what the Lord Jesus is before His father. All that the covenant is and all that the Son is required to be, the Lord fulfilled and more.

Now what does Jesus mean to us? What is the significance of Him with regards to sonship and us? At the very beginning in John's gospel, it basically said the sonship comes to us through Him. In John's gospel chapter 1, it said He came to His own people and His own people received Him not. For those who believe in Him and His name, He gave them the right to be called God's children. And these people are not born of the flesh or the will of the flesh or the will of men, but they are born of God. Brothers and sisters, how wonderful this is if through the Lord Jesus we are really saved. Where does this heavenly life come to us? It comes to us through the Lord Jesus. Now we can be God's children. We are no longer born of the flesh. No longer born of the will of men. But we are born of God. Thank the Lord for that. Brothers and sisters, this is only the beginning. As our brother said this morning, at the end of the Gospel of John,

after the Lord was crucified and raised up He told Mary, go tell My brothers, that I am going to My Father, their Father; I am going to My God, who is their God. Thank the Lord for that. These disciples, after three and half years, there was a history. And then the Lord Jesus was raised from the dead. From then on, they did not depend on their own life to follow Jesus. The resurrected life of Jesus was in them. And the Lord Jesus said they are now My brothers. I am going to see My Father, their Father, My God, their God. So you see at the beginning of John's gospel, it is God's children. At the end of John's gospel, it is God's sons. This is what the Lord Jesus has opened up for us into sonship. It is children of God, and then sons of God. We have to thank the Lord for that. It is really glorious.

How does this thing become reality in our own life? That is the work of the Holy Spirit. We thank God that this great and wonderful idea is from God the father. It is an incredible intention of the Lord. And then it comes to us through our Lord Jesus. He finished the work on the cross and He made this possible for us. And then the Holy Spirit is going to lead us in our life. And the Holy Spirit will actually perfect us to be His sons. This is the story given in the epistles. We thank the Lord all these apostles encouraged us and opened up various experiences and instructions of God's words to us to make that happened.

There is one line in the epistles of apostle Paul. It helps us to be led by the Holy Spirit. I think it is because sonship is such a glorious thing that apostle Paul and apostle Peter sensed that there is something unusual about this.

Remember the Lord Jesus said at the end of John's gospel, My Father your father and My God your God and you are My brothers? In the epistles of Paul, there is a very unusual term he used to talk about God. He said the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is in Ephesians chapter 1 and in 2 Corinthians chapter 1 and also in 1 Peter. In the past I thought these apostles are saying something very elaborate. Why do they not just say my God, but the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ? Thank the Lord for that. I think what they are saying is this: that the Lord Jesus knows how to serve the Father. The Lord Jesus knows how to love the father. And the Lord Jesus wants us to

serve the Father the same way. And the Lord Jesus wants us to love the Father the same way. So He said, My Father, your Father; My God, your God. Actually I think these apostles got that. So in their epistles when they talk about loving God, when they talk about serving the Lord, they bring us to a much higher level. It is unto the praise of His glory.

We come to this matter of being perfected by the Holy Spirit. The first time that Jesus introduced the Holy Spirit is in John's gospel chapter 14. There the Lord introduced the Holy Spirit as another comforter. The Greek word for comforter is 'parakletos'. We learn the word 'para' in geometry. It means parallel – two lines that never get away from each other. It goes from east coast to west together just like the track of a train. If the two lines of the track of a train go from Los Angeles to New York, they never separate. So it means that if you are track number 1, the Holy Spirit is track number two. He never leaves you. The Lord Jesus also said He will abide in you, right inside of you. As life goes on, when we are sad, He comforts. When we are low, He encourages us. When we have some funny ideas and want to do funny things, He will say no. When we do not know where to go, He will lead. How far will He lead us? He will lead us from San Francisco to New York and all the way around the world and forever. This is what the Holy Spirit does. Sometimes if we feel the Holy Spirit is not with us, it is because we put it in the closet and we do not want Him to walk with us. But if we want Him to walk with us, He will never leave us.

A few weeks ago, I heard a brother's testimony. He said the following week there was going to be a meeting in his workplace. He knew that something bad was going to happen to him. So he was very nervous. He could not get out of this matter. And that Sunday when he was sitting in the car, the Holy Spirit reminded him. 'Do you remember that we are heavenly people? We live a heavenly life.' Suddenly the burden dropped from the brother and that matter did not bother him anymore. And thank the Lord that when he attended that meeting the following week, nothing really happened. So the Holy Spirit is always with us. There was another younger sister. She is in college. Finals were coming. She felt that she was sorely behind. And her classmates told her

she spent too much time with her God. But the Lord told her to continue to go to Sunday worship. This sister even found the time and energy to drive an hour or so to Friday night bible study. And then finally she said you know I found more time, energy and focus to prepare for my finals. And I actually got a good grade.

Dear brothers and sisters, the Holy Spirit never leaves us. If we are willing to consciously go to Him and really depend on Him and take Him as our best friend, He will lead us on. And at the end, God's purpose in us will be fulfilled. I want to mention a couple more things about the leading of the Holy Spirit. John's gospel said the Holy Spirit lead us into God's truth. Brothers and sisters, we all have these following experiences. Before we believed in the Lord, the bible was a closed book to us. To me, that was exactly the case. I tried to read it and it did not make any sense. Then one day I was saved. From then on the bible became like letters from the father to me; especially like a love letter. This was when we were first saved. And then as we go on, sometimes we feel the bible is hard to understand. Somehow in the bible I feel that I want something to touch my heart. Everyone depends on the Holy Spirit to know God. We have to or otherwise it will not work. In 1 Peter 1: 11 there is a wonderful description. These prophets in the Old Testament time wanted to know when and in what manner something would happen. How did they know? They said they sought the Spirit of God. Even the prophets had to depend on the Spirit of Christ in order to know anything. Brothers and sisters, we have to consciously go to the Holy Spirit and ask Him to explain things to us. The Lord Jesus also said the Holy Spirit actually glorifies Jesus in us because He is going to tell us what the Lord Jesus did. What does that mean? It means that sometimes we feel that we are dry before the Lord. We know all the doctrines but we do not see the Lord's glory. I am very thankful that our brother this morning gave us a wonderful account of Nicodemus. He was so humble. Nicodemus knew there was something very important that he did not have. He could not touch God. So he came to Jesus to seek that. Dear brothers and sisters, sometimes we feel that other brothers and sisters can sing

how wonderful, how marvelous and their hearts filled with joy. Somehow it did not affect me. If we feel that there is a distance between us and the Lord Jesus, what should we do? Brothers and sisters, be like Nicodemus. Go to the Holy Spirit and said I do not have it. Go to the Holy Spirit and said I need it. Surely He will help us to touch the glory of the Lord Jesus.

The Holy Spirit also teaches us how to pray. I should say He teaches us what to pray. Let us take a look at Romans 8: 26. This is very important. It is not a matter of how to pray. It is a matter of what to pray. We do not know what to pray. This is what it said here. We think it is a matter of how to pray and then we think about the matter. We think that should it be in the morning or evening or when no one is around. But the key to the matter is what to pray. What do you want the Lord to do? So it is a matter of what. Romans 8 here said the Holy Spirit uses His groaning to intercede for us according to God. What it means is that the Holy Spirit who dwells in us will teach us what to pray. It gives us a hint and it is according to God. According to God means according to the will of God. The verse after this is 'that all things work together for the good of those who love God, to those who are called according to God's purpose'. And the verse following right after said 'to be conformed to the image of His Son'. Thus this is a matter of purpose. The Holy Spirit teaches us what to pray according to the purpose of God. Finally He will conform us to the image of Christ. The key thing is what to pray.

Allow me to give you a little of my experiences for the last two years. Two years ago right after the conference I was diagnosed with prostate cancer. To me I always thought that this was someone else's problem and not mine. I never thought I would get cancer. For a few days I waited before the Lord to understand what this means. Somehow the Lord touched my heart to ask Him for one thing. The Holy Spirit told me to ask the Lord for one thing. I said to the Lord, if you want to take me, I will be happy to go with you. But if you want to keep me here, you have to give me the energy to be able to serve you as before. Thank the Lord He took my fear away. Two months later I went in for surgery. After the surgery the doctor discovered that I had another cancer. And

it was in the bladder. It suddenly seemed that I just got over one storm and another storm came. That night when I was in the hospital before the Lord, the Lord showed me Psalm 103. 'My heart blesses the Lord. Forget not all His benefits. He has forgiven all my iniquities. And heal all my diseases'. At that time healing my diseases should be the most important thing. But what struck me was not that. What struck me was that He has forgiven all my iniquities. Brothers and sisters, iniquities are against God, complaints against God. The Lord saw my heart. And He has forgiven all that. And I know one thing. He would never leave me. Whether I live or whether I die, He will not leave me. Four months later I have another operation on the bladder. When I saw the pathology report, I thank the Lord that it is all free of cancer now. And I felt that I am like a brand plucked out from the fire. The Holy Spirit led me to Zachariah 3 – about the brand plucked out from fire. Joshua and the others came back to Jerusalem. Altogether forty-five thousand people came back. And then there was this picture of Satan, Joshua and the Lord. And Satan was accusing Joshua, saying 'Look how dirty you are. You people come back and you are useless'. Joshua did not say a thing. And the Lord Jehovah said two things. He said I have chosen Jerusalem. Is this not a brand plucked out of the fire? What does it mean that He has chosen Jerusalem? Jerusalem is my purpose. Jerusalem will be restored to glory. This person that I have pulled out of the fire is for the glory of Jerusalem. I thank the Lord that He spoke to my heart. I do not know what will happen the next day. But no matter what from then on I live for the glory of God. Brothers and sisters, He set me free from all these things. Disease is not a problem. Sufferings is not a problem. Inconvenience is not a problem. I have to live for the glory of God. It is so beautiful, so liberating. So, the key is what to pray. What do you want out of the Lord? That is what you pray. When we so pray, He will for sure answer. Now if we ask the Lord to let us to be promoted three times next year, He will for sure not answer because that is not according to the will of God. If that happens, you have to be really careful. You have to come back to the Lord. You need to say to the Lord I am sorry that I asked for this foolish thing.

Lastly, I want to share about the necessity of chastening. Hebrews 12 said whenever the father receives the son, He will discipline him. We are all familiar with this. I will just give you an example of David. We have talked about what a difficult time it was for David after he killed Goliath and before he became king. It seemed to be an endless trial. He had no place to sleep. People were always after him. He went from cave to cave. He did nothing wrong. And all these things happened to him. He prayed to the Lord. He never complained to the Lord, 'Lord why do you let these things happen to me'. Psalm 61: 2 spoke to my heart. It said 'from the end of the earth I cry to the Lord, when my heart is overwhelmed: thou will lead me to a rock that is higher than me'. Dear brothers and sisters, I think this was David's constant prayer. When my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to a rock that is higher than I, even when I am at the end of the earth. Then later when He became king, everything that He then did was under the microscope. He made mistakes. He even sinned in a way that many of us did not do. And then there is Psalm 118:18. 'The Lord has chastened me severely. But He has not given me over to death'. Yes the Lord has chastened him severely. We know what happened after he sinned. The sword never left his house. And it was always punishment. 'The Lord has chastened me severely. But He has not given me over to death'. So you see two things here. It was the severe chastening of the Lord. And then there was also the mercy of the Lord. Sometimes I thought if I was David and was so severely chastened by the Lord, I would bid Him goodbye and go somewhere else. But here when David said He has not given me over to death, David has a thanksgiving in his heart. On one hand there was the severe chastening of the Lord. On the other hand, David depended on the mercy and love of the Lord. I found another thing that is very special. There are one hundred and fifty Psalms. Every time when sins, transgressions or iniquities are mentioned, oftentimes it said our transgressions, our sins and our iniquities. However, there are at least ten Psalms by David that said my transgressions, my sins and my iniquities. There is a difference between ours and mine. Ours is somebody else's business. Mine is my business – my transgressions, my sins and my iniquities. You can find

this in Psalms 25, 32, 38, 51, and 69. I count ten of the Psalms. Brothers and sisters, David did not let these things go. David did not let my transgressions go. He did not let my sins go and he did not let my iniquities go. Bring them to the Lord and ask: Lord take this thing away. I do not want these sins to be a veil between you and me. Thank the Lord for that. This is how David faced these things. And of course we are all familiar with a couple of verses in Psalm 139: 23 – 24 Search me, O God, and know my heart; prove me and know my thoughts. And see if there is any grievous way in me and lead me to the way everlasting.

This morning, our brother talked about the kingdom of the heavens.

Nicodemus wanted to know the kingdom of heavens. And the Lord Jesus helped him. In the gospel of Matthew, the Lord Jesus said, from John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heavens is taken by violence. The violence seized upon it. This violence is not against other people. But this violence is against myself. The violence is against my flesh. And that opens the way to the kingdom of heavens. Dear brothers and sisters, when you read the story of David, when we read his psalms, when we realize he kept saying, Lord my sins, my transgressions and my iniquities, he did not want any of these to become a veil between his heart and the Lord's heart. So he was doing violence to himself. He was doing violence to his own flesh. Thank the Lord. After many years, the Lord said, 'David is after My own heart. He will do all My will. And when he was on earth, he has served my purpose in his own generation'. David was a real son. I hope we can see from the Old Testament to the New Testament, the Lord wants covenants with us. The Lord wants to give us sonship. He wants us to be real sons according to the sonship. He wants us to be real sons in the likeness of our Lord Jesus. He wants to conform us to the image of His son and let His Son lead us into glory. He will lead many sons to glory.

Brothers and sisters, what shall we do? I pray that the Lord has given us an urge to seek to be His sons according to sonship. Let us pray for ourselves and for each other. We pray that we can be conformed to the image of the Lord

Jesus Christ. We pray that we will obey the leading of the Holy Spirit and not only just obey but obey with thanks. We do not obey with grudges; we obey with thanks. And also when chastening comes, we pray that we can accept. Not only accept but accept with thanks. And when chastening comes, we do not want to say to the Lord, You are chastening me again. We thank the Lord that His chastening is good for us. There is no correction more effective than His chastening. We also pray that we can take up the responsibility of a son. And like our Lord Jesus, like David, we have to think our Father's thinking. What is He thinking? What does He want? What is His burden? What is His burden for you and for me. What is His burden for His own church? That ought to be our thinking and our burden. We also need to feel the Father's worries, the Father's sadness. If there is something in me that saddens His heart, I have to know. I have to ask the Holy Spirit to tell me and to help me to know that I have saddened the heart of my Father. Not like what Isaiah said in the beginning 'my people do not consider'. Have the burden of His burden. Do the work which is His work.

And finally, with regards to His representation, the Lord said 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob'. When we go out, when we go home, when we go to school or to work, the Lord is a God of you and a God of me. We represent Him.

Let us pray.

Lord, we thank You and we praise You. Lord, when we see what You have done and what You have wanted in all these generations, we see how fervent Your heart is to have us as Your sons. You want to have us walk Your ways, to think Your thinking, and to be burdened with Your burden. Lord, we pray that You have mercy on us. Give us a willingness to yield ourselves to You. To yield ourselves to our Lord Jesus Christ. To yield ourselves to Your Holy Spirit so that You can indeed lead us on. Then we can be real sons according to your sonship and to satisfy your heart to the praise of Your glory. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.