

# WCCC 2021

## Brother Timothy Kwok

### Perfection through the Cross (1)

We truly thank the Lord's grace that even though we cannot see each other in person, we can gather through the internet during this pandemic. I trust that brothers and sisters know the theme of this conference. The theme of the conference is the "Spiritual Reality of the Church". The burden given to me is "Perfection Through the Cross". I believe brothers and sisters are aware of this. Let's begin by reading the word of the Lord.

Let us read the theme verse of the conference:

*Colossians 3:11b But Christ is all, and in all.*

*John 19:30 Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.*

*Gal 2:20a I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.*

*1 Corinthians 2:2 For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.*

*Luke 9:23 And He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.*

There are, of course, many other verses about the cross. I have only chosen some of them to read with brothers and sisters. I will bring up other verses as I share.

Brothers and sisters, when we speak of the cross, I don't know how you feel about it. For me, to speak to you about the cross is very difficult because many of you are very knowledgeable on this topic. There are many writings about the cross by the brothers who came before us. They have written about the message on the cross very thoroughly and clearly. I don't think I can add anything to them. In fact, their sharing and writings have been my provisions and help. So today I am reviewing some of the fundamental knowledge on the cross with brothers and sisters. I am convinced that man's words are very limited and I can only ask the Holy Spirit to speak to the depths of our hearts.

Concerning the doctrines of the cross, oftentimes we think it is enough as long as we have a clear understanding of them. Dear brothers and sisters, there are many Biblical truths we ought to know about. And the truth of the cross is one of them. But in addition to having the knowledge of the cross, we also need to also put it in our daily experience. We ought to walk on the way of the cross. I know of some elderly brothers and sisters who may not be able to clearly explain the doctrines of the cross but they live in the reality of the cross. Sometimes we are not clear on this: it is one thing that we know in our head, but how to live it out is another matter. In order to help the younger brothers and sisters, I would like to give more examples today. For those who are more mature among us, you already have a very clear understanding of the doctrines of cross, and we will review them together before the Lord.

Brothers and sisters, we know that the Olympics games are being held currently during this special circumstance. I don't know if brothers and sisters like to watch these games. When I was young, I enjoyed sports very much. I paid much attention to these games and I watched them. During the games there were commentators commenting on the games, "These divers don't have good form. The runners are lacking something..." They provided a lot of information and they had much knowledge. But we know there is a huge difference: If you put a commentator in the field, it is quite possible that he does not even qualify to compete. And if he qualifies to compete, he will be eliminated right away. Does he not have the knowledge? Of course, he does. He knows how to run fast, how to jump high, and he knows how one can use their strength to throw something far. But does all this knowledge actually work? They sure can help but there is a difference. There is a great difference between an athlete and a commentator.

Dear brothers and sisters, we may have heard the teaching of the cross for ten, twenty, thirty, forty or even fifty years. Those who are sitting and listening in front of the computer now might even have heard the teaching for 60 or 70

years. The issue is how much you know. You can be a great commentator. You can say, "This brother is not walking well on the way of the cross. This Church is not learning the lesson of the cross well." You can provide many theories. But dear brothers and sisters, my question is, "Are you someone who truly experiences the work of the cross?" This is my burden towards the younger brothers and sisters.

My dear young brothers and sisters, after you have heard what I said, you can say that you have learned something, you can say that you have heard Brother Kwok sharing many doctrines today. Of course, I need to share the doctrines with you. But if you only keep them in your head, you can only be someone who is filled with head knowledge. You can be a commentator at best. You cannot be a runner in the track. You cannot be a soldier of Jesus Christ. You cannot be a hardworking farmer. Paul, in his old age, admonished Timothy. Paul told Timothy all the truth without withholding anything and he reminded Timothy not only to know about them but to live them out.

Let me return to my topic. Our theme is "The Spiritual Reality of the Church". Immediately we realize a truth: The Church is not a building. Strictly speaking, the Church is not just a group of people gathering together. People can gather and have all types of activities. But the most basic thing we ought to know is that the Church is a spiritual matter. When we speak of spiritual matters, the cross is an unavoidable way.

There is this central theme of the West Coast Christian Conferences throughout the years: The Eternal Purpose of God. Even the little children in Sunday School classes know about this. Because the Sunday school teachers have told me that even children under 10 years old talked about the eternal purpose of God. Brothers and sisters, what is the eternal purpose of God? This is a grand topic. I'd like to share what I know in some simple words. The eternal purpose of God is in the words in Colossians 3:11: But Christ is all, and in all. The eternal purpose of God has a focal point and the focal point is on Christ. I don't know if I can say this, apart from Christ, there is no eternal purpose of God. You can speak about many things, but if they are not in Christ, you cannot call them God's eternal purpose.

From our perspective, God's eternal purpose is to let Christ be revealed through us individually. Using the very familiar words spoken by Paul in the Book of Romans: We need to be conformed to the image of the Son of God. Christ's glory and beauty can be displayed in our lives. This is the will of God

upon us individually. There is so much to be shared. I believe brothers and sisters, after all these years, have already had an understanding in this. And, of course, the eternal purpose of God is also upon the Church. God is to gain His Church. In the last days, God is doing this work both in individuals and in the Church, to manifest Christ in individuals and to manifest Christ's glorious testimony through the work of the Church.

All these are spiritual. None of these is external. Even our sanctification is the reality of spiritual life. We know some people are very educated, some have good characters, especially the Chinese emphasize on cultivating one's character. But, brothers and sisters, these are but external. We need to touch what is real. This is a spiritual matter. Our Lord, in these last days, is doing this work. He is to make His purpose working among God's people and in His Church.

Naturally, we will ask this question, "Through what way will God's eternal purpose be reached?" It is only through the cross can this purpose be reached. If the Lord wills, I will divide my message into 2 parts in the 2 sessions. Today, I'd like to share with brothers and sisters some fundamental understanding of the cross. The second message will be on how the cross is perfected in the Church. Some of the content may be repeated but I will share with brothers and sisters by the Lord's grace.

Brothers and sisters, when we think about the cross, we must have a basic understanding that the cross is not a remedy. If I understand the Bible correctly, God has prepared this precious salvation long ago in His glorious purpose. Many verses in the Bible remind us that God needs a way in order to give blessings to man and He needs to have an instrument in order for His purpose to be fulfilled: The life of the Son of God. I mentioned earlier about some of the content of God's eternal purpose. How do we reach it? There is only one way. Only the life of the Son of God can lead us to walk into the core of God's eternal purpose.

We know the story of the garden of Eden. We are so familiar with the story. Why would God place the tree of life before Adam? It is because God knows His purpose of creating man and He knows in order for His eternal purpose to be fulfilled, there must be a criterion: man has to choose the life of the Son of God. Man must eat the fruit of the tree of life. We know that the enemy started to do his work. He came to disrupt God's purpose. The enemy is very cunning and he is very evil. He knows if man gains the life of the Son of God, God's purpose will be fulfilled. Therefore, he brings what is the opposite of life. He knows what to bring in order to keep life from unfolding: death. If he brings death, it will

suppress life. He brings death to man. This is the wickedness of the enemy. He thinks by bringing death, God's eternal purpose will never be accomplished. But we know how wonderful God's work is. When the enemy brings death, God uses death to destroy death. This is something we cannot comprehend with our mind. How unsearchable is God's wisdom!

When the enemy brings death among men, when he thinks death will keep God's eternal purpose from being fulfilled, we thank God that the death of God's Son has resolved the problem of death. We are all familiar with the words in the Book of Hebrews, "So that through death He might destroy the one who has the power of death... and free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives. "

Brothers and sisters, man lives in the confound of time and space, and we have the order of what comes first and what comes later. In God's eternal perspective, He is not limited by time or space. I don't know if I can say this: When God has chosen us before the foundation of the world in Christ, God has His glorious eternal will towards those whom He has chosen. He knows that in order to reach this purpose one must have the life of the Son. He also knows that the enemy does not want this to happen and will for sure do the work of disruption. So what does our Father God do? Christ says, "Let me fulfill this eternal purpose." How does He fulfill it? We all know it. His death on the cross has released His life. Brothers and sisters, this is God's love towards us.

I wondered if you have thought about this. I am especially speaking to the young brothers and sisters. Life is filled with choices. It seems we have more choices when we are young. We don't have as many options as we grow older. But we still have choices. A simple example: you can choose to come to WCCC or you can choose not to come. This is your choice. Choice is a realization of love. If you love someone, you will give them choices. If you love someone, you will choose what they like. We see a choice on the cross. Our Lord Jesus Christ chooses to walk this way. Brothers and sisters, after you have listened to all the doctrines of the cross today, what is important is what choice you would make. I will have finished this message in about 45 minutes. What is important is what choice you will make after you have listened to the message.

I thank our Lord, He has proven His choice on the cross. He loves the Heavenly Father. He loves us. He has chosen the way of the cross. Brothers and sisters, what is the experience of the cross? If you love the Lord, if you love the Church, if you love brothers and sisters, the cross must be your choice. You can

face it or you can hide from it. We thank the Lord that He loves us and never forces us. He gives us a choice. Brothers and sisters, we thank the Lord that He has chosen the cross. He knows death is the way to destroy the devil, who holds the power of death. He knows only through this way can He release His life. He knows it is only through this way we can experience spiritual reality.

I am someone who often thinks of strange things. Let me set a scene before brothers and sisters. If God brings us before the glory of the universe one day, just like a child enters into a beautiful warehouse, and inside of it there is everything: the power of God, the glory of God, the means to govern the universe, many glorious things. And God asks him, "If you are to choose one thing out of the many things here, what would you choose? You can choose any and I will grant it to you." Possibly I might wonder if I want to have the authority to govern over the angels, or maybe I want God's power? What do you want? If I am wise, I will ask God for one thing that I don't deserve, "Can I have Your Son?" I don't want anything else but the life of Your Son because only by gaining Your Son's life can I enter into all riches. Brothers and sisters, this scene will never happen. But, we thank our God for He has already given this to us.

When I was young, I had a very limited understanding of the doctrine of the cross. Not to say that I know much today; I still have much that I don't know. When I was young, every time I thought of the cross, I thought of suffering. Every time I thought of the cross, my face was long. The cross was shameful. When someone mocked me, when someone yelled at me, then I considered myself carrying the cross. I was ashamed, I suffered so much and I had no joy. But gradually I came to understand all the joy and all the glory in life has a basis. The basis is that God's will can be fulfilled in me. We are often mistaken, thinking the happiness of life is when my will is fulfilled. What we consider as glory is when we reach the pinnacles of our lives. It is not the case, brothers and sisters. Do you know what the greatest joy in life is? It is when God has fulfilled His purpose of creating man on earth. That is the reason for our joy. What is the highest glory of man? It is not when you wear the cap of a PhD, nor is it praise from others. The greatest glory in life is when God has fulfilled His purpose in you. We know that the purpose of God is for man to be united with the Lord. Brothers and sisters, only the fulfillment of God's purpose is the reason for our joy and for us to gain glory. What does the Book of Hebrews tell us? Our Lord, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame. He knew the cross, on one side is shame, but as long as the will of God can be fulfilled, it becomes the joy set before Him. I hope brothers and sisters can grab hold of the basics correctly. After we have a correct understanding, then our path will be straight.

What is it that we want? We want God's purpose to be fulfilled in us. Therefore, the cross is the way to fulfill God's purpose. If you only consider the cross as a bitter part of your life, if you only see the cross as something unpleasant and causes you to be ashamed, this is not enough. We must know that it is only through the cross we can live a meaningful life. It is only when we experience the cross in our lives can we experience true joy and true glory.

When we speak about the cross, we know that the cross shows us two sides. When we first believe in the Lord, we only have a one-sided understanding of the cross. What do we see? We see the Son of God hung on the tree, His blood was shed and His life was poured out for my sake. He has become a substitute. We see the Son of God poured out His life on the cross for our sake. This is the first picture of the cross we see. But the picture of the cross is not just this. There is a second picture of the cross which Paul shows us in the Book of Galatians. What is this second picture? We see that on the cross, there is not just the Son of God, I am hung there also. Brothers and sisters, we need to see this second picture. Of course, in the beginning stage, whether it is when we share the gospel or when we share with brothers and sisters, we will often speak of the first vision of the cross. We see that He has died for us, He has become our substitute, He has taken up the curses of generations, He has brought us blessings, and He has paid up the heavy price of sin for us so we can come boldly before God. The cross also shows us the Lord dies on the cross and releases His life. This is the first thing that we see.

But more than this, we also see we are crucified with Christ on the cross. It is not possible for us to take part in the first aspect of the cross. There is no way for us to participate in it. But thank the Lord, He has done a marvelous work. We who have believed in Him, are all brought into Christ, and are crucified with Him together on the cross. My dear brothers and sisters, this is the experience of the cross in each of us. Romans 6 shows us very clearly of the greatest realization of salvation in our lives. We are no longer in Adam. We are in Christ.

Every time when we speak of the message of the cross, we need to know this is not just an objective truth. Not only do we need to see the Son of God hung on the cross, we also need to see we are also hung on the cross. This is the vision we need to see. That is why in Galatians 3:1, Paul reminds the brothers and sisters in Galatia, "You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified?" Paul, through this picture, reminds them not only has Christ died on the cross for them, they are also crucified with Christ on the cross, "it is no longer I who live". Paul asks,

“Has Christ’s crucifixion been portrayed before your eyes?” If you have not seen this, forgive me for saying this, you have become the foolish Galatians.

We need to see Christ who has died for us. This is a glorious blessing. This is the most glorious substitution. But this is not complete. What do we need to see? We need to see that we have been crucified with Christ. Here, we see a very important principle. What is the cross? Earlier we read John 19, a passage that is very familiar to brothers and sisters. This Lamb of God was hung on the cross. Countless numbers of lambs have been placed on the altar throughout generations but have not been able to bring it into completion. Only the Lamb of God says, “It is finished!” It is not only finished at that particular segment of time; all of the eternal purpose of God throughout all generations has been finished at this moment. If this is the meaning of the cross, if we are to let God’s purpose be fulfilled in us, there is no other way, you can only die. When I was young, I thought the cross only meant suffering. I wonder if your understanding is the same as mine when I was young. Let me tell you this, we do suffer day and night, we suffer much. Your boss makes you suffer, your son makes you suffer, your daughter makes you suffer, even those you don’t know make you suffer. Therefore, you say that life is full of suffering. But, if the cross is only suffering, the cross is too cheap. It is not the case.

No. The cross is connected with God’s purpose. Without God's purpose, your suffering is not the cross. Everyone has different kinds of suffering and everyone has a different capacity for suffering. Some would complain greatly even if they suffer just a little. Others suffer a great deal and do not make a sound. Each person’s capacity to suffer differs. But here is the point: if you connect suffering with the cross, it is not complete. The cross must be connected with God’s purpose. I don’t think I need to describe this further. I believe we all know about it. It is not that you have done something wrong today. You have indulged in your flesh, or you are mean to someone, and the cross is given to you in return and you suffer. This is not correct. The cross is connected with God’s purpose.

As I mentioned in the beginning, there are many choices in your life. You can choose your way. You can choose what you like. When someone irritates you, you can choose to give them a hard time immediately and to yell at them immediately. You can react based on how you feel inside. This is your personal choice. But you have another choice. “God, what is your purpose? What would you like to do in my life?” Brothers and sisters, this is not the same. This suffering then has a true meaning in our lives.



When I was young, every time I suffered, I would say, “The cross! The cross!” Day and night, I would bear the cross. Later, I began to understand the cross is not just to cause suffering, there is something even worse: the cross is to put you to death. You might say, “It is hard enough to suffer!” No. The cross has only one purpose. The cross is to put you to death. It is not enough just to suffer. Suffering will not be complete. The cross is to put you to death. Our Lord was hung on the tree. This is a suffering incomprehensible in man’s mind. The cross is not only when our Lord shed His blood and suffered. He was to die on the cross on our behalf so we can have life and then we can have power. He could have been hung on the tree continuously and not die because He is the Lord of life. The Lord said that no one could take His life. There is no one in the universe who has the power to take our Lord’s life from Him. We know that our Lord was hung on the cross for six hours. When our Lord said, “It is finished”, He offered His spirit to God and gave His life away.

Dear brothers and sisters, the cross is not just to make us suffer. If you can only see suffering, even if you suffer for a year and continue to suffer, the cross is still not effective in your life. Then what? You need to die. You might think, “Isn’t it all over if I die?” But it is only when we die, we have a beginning! Paul’s description of this mystery is so perfect. He shows us this picture in Romans 6. He said that sin works together with our old self, and we become a factory of sin because of their working together. This factory is not manufacturing anything else but sin. It produces unrighteous acts continuously. What can we do about it? There is only one way. Since sin has entered the world through one man, I have become a factory of sin. And sin has entered into me causing me to produce sin unceasingly. What is the solution? It is useless that I continue to suffer; the old man has to be put to death. After the old man is dead, the body of sin is done away with, then the factory can no longer operate.

These are the two facts accomplished on the cross. One being, of course, our Lord taking up our sins on the cross. Two, we have died with Him in Christ. Brothers and sisters, this is so joyous. We have already died. Because Christ has died and we have died with Him. We said that the cross is to put you to death and this proves we have already died with Him. By faith, we appropriate the reality of this death in our lives. Paul spoke about the Gentiles and the Israelites in Romans 11. This is, of course, an explanation of a truth. But what is behind this truth? He likened us as a wild olive. How could this wild olive be grafted on the good olive and partake of the fatness of the good olive? The good olive tree is the will of God. Here is the good olive and we are the wild olive. The wild olive cannot bear good olives. In Romans 11, Paul said that the wild olive needs to be cut down. If you don’t cut down the wild olive, the good olive remains the good olive and the wild olive remains the wild olive, and the two cannot be united. There is only one way: to cut down the wild olive. If you were the wild

olive, you would say, “Am I not dead if you cut me down?” You cut off the branches of the wild olive, will the branches not die? Is it not true that the branches of the wild olive can no longer bear wild olives after you have cut it down? The wild olive branch produces wild olives. If you fertilize it, it will bear more wild olives. What is the solution? Cut it down! After you cut it down, all is gone, it is dead. It is wonderful. Graft it onto the good olive tree and it will bear good olives. Brothers and sisters, this is a choice.

If the wild olive says, “No. I don’t want to be cut off! Give me a better solution so I can bear good olives. Teach me so I know how to bear good olives.” Let me tell you, it will not work at all. There is only one way. You tell the gardener, “I have no way. All I can produce is wild olives. I will let you cut me down. Cut me down and let me die. And graft me onto the good olive.” From that moment on, all the fruits you produce are good olives.

Brothers and sisters, we often have this misconception. Just like Nicodemus, “Teacher, please tell me how to enter the kingdom of God. I am almost there. I just need a little pointer. I will be able to enter if you just teach me.” And we all know what the Lord said to Nicodemus, “Dear sir, if you are not born again, you cannot even see the kingdom of God.”

Brothers and sisters, death is the only way for us to live the life of a saint. Death is the only way to reach God’s eternal purpose. Even our Lord fulfills God’s eternal purpose through death. What about us? How does our Church live out the spiritual reality? How does the Church let God’s purpose manifest? We may use many methods. We are filled with the world’s ways and man’s knowledge. All these are useless. There is only one way we must walk on: the way of the cross – you are willing to die. This death is not for you to force yourself to die or to kill yourself. But we are to appropriate the perfect salvation accomplished by the Lord on the cross by faith. In Christ, we count ourselves dead. It is no longer I live, but Christ lives in me.

When we read the Gospel of Luke, there is a passage we are very familiar with. I have to confess that I have read this passage for so many years but I still do not fully understand its meaning. A group of people followed the Lord Jesus and the Lord said to them, “Do you want to follow me? “If anyone wants to come after Me, he must take up his cross daily, and follow Me. “ We all know the Lord’s cross. We know how the Lord carried His cross. So, what is our cross? What does it mean to take up our cross? We are no longer living like two thousand years ago. There is no more cross today. What does it mean by taking up our cross? Of course, we know this is not something external, this is spiritual. You might say that you don’t understand what it means to carry your own cross. Thank the Lord, when I was seeking before the Lord, the Lord gave me a reminder. We know the circumstances in those times. Let us return to two thousand years ago in Judea. If someone was to be crucified on the cross, the Roman soldiers would not carry the cross for him. Whoever was going to die, he had to carry the cross. The cross at that time is not like the beautiful little cross some sisters

wear on their chest. It is not like that. I would not go into detailed descriptions on what it was. But one thing we must know, it is not something you can hide. When you say you are going to carry the cross out of your home, you are making a proclamation: I am going to die. Every time you see someone carrying a cross on the road from afar, you know his ending. This person is about to die. He will not be able to hide it. Perhaps there are many people surrounding him, or maybe he is all alone. Regardless, this is a sign, this is a symbol declaring to those around, "I am someone who is going to die."

Brothers and sisters, what does it mean by taking up your cross? It means you have made up your mind, you have determined to walk this way and declared you are someone who is willing to die. This is such a real lesson for us to learn. Is this our learning? You might say, "It's too much to die. I can't do it." But the words of the Lord are so clear. You can follow or not follow me. You can allow God's purpose to be fulfilled in your life or you can just follow what you like and not let God's will be fulfilled in your life. But if you are to follow Me, I am sorry, then there is only one way. You have to declare to the whole world, I have died. I am going to die.

These words also gave us a very special reminder. This is your daily experience. Truth be told, we feel okay if we just need to carry the cross once in a while. But it is not easy to carry the cross daily. What is daily? Maybe we can understand it this way: this has become your habit. Every day you wash your face and brush your teeth. You do these every day. And you don't need to be reminded. When you get up in the morning, do you need to think about washing your face? Do you need to remind yourself you need to brush your teeth in the morning? No one has to remind you and you don't need to remind yourself. These have become your habit. They are something you do daily.

Brothers and sisters, "daily" is very meaningful. I have watched a documentary. Inside a valley, there is only one rope as the only route connecting two spots. If you go on this route, you will hold onto this rope to walk between the two places. When I saw it, I wondered how people could walk this way. It was too difficult. But in the documentary, the men, women, the old and the young all walked this way. There was an elderly lady in her 80's who would just walk across without any issues, as if she was walking on level ground. The interviewer asked the elderly lady, "How are you able to walk over so easily?" She replied, "I walk this route every day. How can I not know how to do it when I walk on it every day?" Brothers and sisters, the experience of taking up the cross is also daily. If you do it only once a year, you can't do it. Some even only carry the cross once every three years, how can they be experienced? But if it has become your habit, if it is your daily experience, then it will be entirely different. You have become experienced. When it has become your habit, a temptation comes, when a difficult circumstance arises, you know how to react immediately. Just like the elderly lady, when she came across a dangerous situation while walking on the rope, she knew immediately how to react. We know immediately

we need to die. Take up your cross and follow the Lord daily. Brothers and sisters, this is our way.

Some might say, "I don't understand what my own cross is." I have my cross, he has his own cross, everyone has their own cross. When I was young, I did not understand it. I understood the Lord's cross but what is my cross? What is your cross? What is your own cross? The Lord has explained this. What is the cross of Christ? It is for God to fulfill His purpose in Christ. This is the cross of Christ. Isn't it right? We understand this. What is my cross? It is for God to fulfill His purpose in me. This is my cross.

My cross cannot be his. My cross cannot be so-and-so's cross. In every one of us who are called, God has His specific purpose in each one of us. Do not be like Peter, when he saw John, he asked, "Lord, what about this man?" The Lord already said to me that I will stretch out my hands and someone else will put his belt on me and bring me where I do not want to go. It is so terrible. This will be my experience. But what about my good friend, John?" So he asked the Lord, "What about this man?" How did the Lord reply? "If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you?" "What is that to you?" What was the Lord saying? Follow Me. Don't look at others. Brothers and sisters, do not look at this brother and see what cross he is carrying, or what cross is that sister carrying. Don't look at others. God has His purpose in your life. God is doing a glorious work in your life. We, who are rebellious and of the flesh, how can we fulfill God's purpose? That is why the Lord says, "Take up your cross." As long as God's purpose is fulfilled in you, this is your cross.

Someone says, "My wife is my cross. My son is my cross. My teacher is my cross." The cross is everywhere in his life. Perhaps this is the case; perhaps this is totally not the case. If all that you have experienced are not connected to God's eternal purpose, dear brothers and sisters, this is not the cross. This is not your own cross. We ought to be excited. We can embrace the cross. As I mentioned in the beginning, we can only rejoice when God's eternal purpose is fulfilled. Only when God's purpose is fulfilled can we receive glory. Only when we live out the true meaning of life, then our existence has true meaning. We need to know only the cross can reach the eternal purpose of God. The cross is not only knowledge in our head but the reality of our living.

Brothers and sisters, sometimes we feel the Lord is so far away from us as if we cannot find our Lord. When we are in sorrow, we ask, "Lord, where are You? Have You forsaken me and not care about me?" The Lord will call us, "Come, Beloved. I am here." As we look up, our Lord is hung on the tree for us. Brothers and sisters, we thank the Lord that we can see the glorious Lord seated on the high heaven and He governs over all things. In His staff of authority, we see His glory. But we see His hands are still the nail-pierced hands. We see He is wearing the glorious crown, and behind the glorious crown there are full of wounds. This

is the head that has worn the crown of thorns. This is the Lord who loves us and walks the way of the cross for us.

Dear brothers and sisters, if the Church is to have the spiritual reality, if you want to have true spiritual experience in your life, if you are to walk together with the Lord, I cannot think of another way. Because this is the way our Lord has walked on. We thank the Lord. This is not suffering. It does hurt. But when we see the fulfillment of God's purpose, we are filled with joy, we are filled with glory.

### **Let us pray**

Lord, how useless are man's words. May You speak to the depths of our hearts the words You want to speak. When the world is continuing to seek different methods, we want to be like Your servant and say, "I know nothing except Christ and Him crucified." Lord, bless Your Church. Use these feeble words to be blessings to Your Church. We pray in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.