

WCCC 2021

Brother Timothy Kwok

Perfection through the Cross (2)

Greetings, brothers and sisters. Thank the Lord we can gather once again before Him. I trust that brothers and sisters already know the theme of the conference – The Spiritual Reality of the Church. The burden given to me by the brother is on “Perfection Through the Cross”. Let us read the word of the Lord.

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

This is the theme verse of the conference.

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 2:20 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.

1 Peter 2:5 you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices that are acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

There are many more verses in the Bible we can read but I think I need to stop here. I will bring up other scriptures as needed when I share. Brothers and

sisters, when I was meditating on what I shared last time after I returned home, I felt I have not spoken clearly on many words that I ought to have said. But I feel this is the Lord's will and I should let it go.

What is my burden of sharing this morning? It is how the cross can be perfected in the Church. We know that God's work is of course on individuals, each one of us has received salvation and is saved. But we also know very well that God's work is not only on individuals because God's heart is towards the Church. The Church is the substance of God's work. The growth of each brother and sister is related to the Church. We have received grace from God, not only is it for us to grow individually, not only is it for the increase of our experience of the Lord, it is also for the Church.

Brothers and sisters, this is the work the Lord is doing in the last days. This glorious Christ is building His Church today. This is His Church. Every child of God is the subject of being built up by the Lord. But is He only building up individuals? We know it is absolutely not only for individuals but is for the Church. Brothers and sisters, our concept must be changed. When you go through some suffering, it causes you much pain and hardship, and thanks to the grace of the Lord that it comes to pass. Do you feel very satisfied and content after the suffering is over? Your suffering is not just for you to go through; it is for the Church. By the grace of the Lord, we received riches and power. And we thank the Lord for what we have received. Perhaps I had many needs in the past and now my needs are met. We bow down and worship God. But, dear brothers and sisters, it is not only about solving your individual problems, it is for the Church.

Dear young brothers and sisters, pardon me for saying this: Some of you ask, "What school should I go to? I can go to this university or that university. Which one should I go to? This school is very famous and seems to provide a bright future. What is God's will for me?" Brothers and sisters, you can choose different schools. But this is not only for the sake of elevating your position, where you go to school is also for the Church. I don't need to give other examples as we can understand them. What am I trying to say? If we are mindful of God's heart, if we are mindful of God's will, then we know our eyes cannot just focus on what we have experienced, we need to know that the building up of the Church is God's purpose. In the same token, when we speak of walking the way of the cross and taking up the cross to follow the Lord, we often say that taking up the cross to follow the Lord is your individual experience and learning. It is only when you take up the cross to follow the Lord can your spiritual life grow. We thank God that He has placed the cross in our life in order to fulfill His purpose. But brothers and sisters, this is not everything. Every experience you have with the cross has an inseparable relationship with the Church. Of course, we will go

through some hardship and suffering because of the cross, but there is a much greater goal placed before us.

We all understand the finished work of salvation on the cross. We know that the salvation accomplished on the cross has not only saved you and me. We all know this after listening to so many messages from WCCC. Without the cross, there is no birth of the Church. If the Lord had not given up His life on the cross and had not resurrected, the Church would not have come about on earth. It is true that the cross is for each of us to receive salvation and receive grace, but the cross is also for the building up of the Church so that the Church can come upon the earth.

The cross also pours out the work and the power of the Holy Spirit unto the Church. On one hand, when we experience the cross individually – we who have some experience before the Lord know – we suffer the pain of the cross in vain if we suffer without the Holy Spirit. How did the Holy Spirit come? The Holy Spirit came because our Lord was crucified on the cross. Therefore, we see this fact. What is this fact? All the works of God are for the Church. It is for all of us to live together before God and to manifest the reality of the Church. I truly hope the young brothers and sisters can take these words to heart. You, of course, have many thoughts about your future. It is also fine to have plans. But if you look at the tracks of our Lord's work and what He has been doing, you will understand these are not only for us individually. They are for the house of God, for God's Church.

Brothers and sisters, I did not manage my time well yesterday. I was not able to share on one point and I would like to make up for it today. The Bible says, "Deny yourself." This includes the denying of self in the Lord and in us. When it is used to describe the Lord, it means He gave Himself up. When it is about us, it means we reject ourselves. There may not be a big difference yet there is a difference. We can see this when we read the New Testament. Paul mentions the Lord gave Himself up in two places. One is in Galatians 2 that we have read earlier: He loved me and gave Himself up for me. The other is in Ephesians 5: He loved the Church and gave Himself up for the Church.

Our Lord indeed is the best example. What does it mean by taking up the cross to follow the Lord? The Lord has shown us the best example – He gave Himself up. In Philippians, there are these words: He emptied Himself. Emptying Himself means pouring Himself out completely. It is not just pouring out a little but He has given Himself up completely. Paul used these words: He emptied Himself. Brothers and sisters, what does this world ask? We ask, "What do I get?" We all want to gain something. Why do you not come to the meetings? Someone has told me, "I didn't gain anything from the messages. I am not hearing the teachings I need from this fellowship. I didn't find love in this church. This church is lacking this and that. The content of the children's Sunday school program is not good enough. I can't stay here." "Every time I come, I want to get something." Brothers and sisters, this is the concept given by the world. Every

time we do something, even coming to the meetings, we ask, “What can I get?” I am not saying it is wrong because we do receive abundance grace when we come before God. But what was our Lord like when He came to the earth? If we read the Bible, we will see that every time when it mentions our Lord giving Himself up, He gives Himself up completely without withholding anything. Does the Lord not have any rights or any control? Of course He has all these but He gives Himself up.

What about our denying ourselves? It is to reject yourself. No one enjoys having opposition to their ideas and opinions. When you share your opinion while having a discussion with brothers and sisters, it is natural that you want others to accept your opinion. But your opinion is rejected at the end and you feel frustrated. Why didn't they accept my opinion? What is to deny yourself? Let me expound on this. I have my opinion but immediately I reject my own opinion. This is the basic meaning of denying oneself. The story of Gethsemane paints the clearest picture of the reality of the cross. The simple prayer from our Lord shows us the content of the cross so clearly. Father, is it okay if I don't drink this cup? – This is our Lord's will. He was thinking about this but immediately He rejected it. He said, “Not according to My will but according to Your will.”

Some ask, “What is the cross?” We can use many doctrines to explain it to you. However, if you really want to walk on the way of the Lord, our Lord is the best teacher and the Holy Spirit is our best tutor. Then we can walk on this way. How is the cross manifested and perfected in the Church? I think many brothers already know about the doctrine. We know there is a very important reason for us to gather in the Church. We are here to serve God. We are here to worship God. These are the important substances of our gathering. We want God to be served; in other words, we want God to be worshipped. But, at the same time, a very critical problem arises. Paul says that we worship with God's spirit, not with our flesh. It is because God does not want the flesh. What is the problem? Brothers and sisters, honestly speaking, all we have is the flesh. We can only come and serve God with our flesh. So many problems in the Church are brought about by man's flesh. We know that God would strike man's hand. We are all familiar with Uzzah's story. He wanted to protect God's Ark as if God's testimony was going to be lost, and man's hand was stretched out. He thought he had to help God. But because he used his hand of flesh, he was struck down by God.

We need to realize the Church is spiritual. If I ask whether the Church is spiritual or material, everyone would say she is spiritual. The Church is absolutely not this building and she is not a chapel. Simply put, she is spiritual. The substance of the Church is spiritual. What the Church expresses is spiritual. If everything about the Church is spiritual but things of the flesh are added into her, where is her spiritual substance? Isn't it contradictory?

Brothers and sisters, we often have this wrong idea. We thought we could perfect her with the flesh. How did Paul rebuke the believers in Galatia? Foolish Galatians, you have begun by the Spirit, why are you now being perfected by the flesh? Brothers and sisters, do you think the Galatians are so foolish – we are not much better than them. We have truly begun by the Spirit. By the Holy Spirit, we can stand in our position. By the Holy Spirit, we have some growth in our spiritual life. But so often we are perfected by the flesh.

How is the Church's spiritual reality reached? If the Church is spiritual, and for the spiritual reality of the Church to be expressed, we need to deal with her greatest enemy. You must deal with the greatest enemy in order for the spiritual substance to unfold. Of course, we know that the greatest enemy is our flesh. For the spiritual reality of the Church to be revealed, the cross is the way that cannot be omitted. If the Church is spiritual, the work of the Holy Spirit must be very evident, isn't it? If the Church is full of the flesh, the work of the Holy Spirit cannot be manifested. We often say these words: The anointing will never be poured onto the flesh. When a priest received their holy ministry, they needed blood. The blood had to be placed on the priest first, then the priest could receive the oil. Using the word from the New Testament, our flesh cannot express the power of the Holy Spirit. Perhaps I can put it this way, if the Church is spiritual, then the Church can manifest the power of the Holy Spirit. If the Holy Spirit is manifested in the Church, we must get rid of our flesh; otherwise, the Holy Spirit will not be poured out upon people of the flesh. We have read 1 Corinthians 2:20. What does the Book of 1 Corinthians tell us? Thank the Lord, when I read 1 Corinthians again this time, I have a different feeling. This term in 1 Corinthians caught my eye: The testimony of Christ. It is true that the church in Corinth had many different problems. But Paul saw one thing: The Church is Christ's testimony. If the Church does not manifest Christ's testimony on earth, the Church has not fulfilled her function.

Paul said to the church in Corinth, "You have become rich. You have everything. You do not lack in any gift. Your knowledge is abundant. You know everything." In terms of gifts, they have gifts. In terms of money, they have money. If there is such a church on earth, would you like it? They have those who can preach, they have those who have gifts, those who can heal, those who can cast out demons and speak in tongues, they are filled with abundance. But Paul said these would not do. These are not the focus. Paul said the testimony of Christ needed to be confirmed in your heart. You need to live out the spiritual reality. That was the reason Paul said that he determined to know nothing among them. If Paul did not know anything, who would know? But Paul said he knew nothing except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. This was the only way to resolve the problem in the church of Corinth. It is not to give them answers one by one. It is not to give them solutions one by one. It is true that sometimes we need to offer help to brothers and sisters, we need to provide some answers and solutions. But in order for the church to manifest her spiritual reality, if the testimony of

Christ is to be confirmed in everyone's heart, Paul said, "I only have one remedy: I know nothing else except Christ and Him crucified."

Brothers and sisters, when we speak of service, we are often busy with this and that. When we think about service, we think about many works. But the Book of Exodus gives us a very good picture. God told Moses to say to Pharaoh, "Let my people go so they can serve Me." The people left and came to the wilderness. What did they do? What could they do? All they saw was the tabernacle placed among them. They knew how to serve Pharaoh in Egypt. They woke up and went to work every day, right? They went to the river Nile to find stubble and mud. They knew what to do. They made bricks, put them together and built. When Pharaoh said, "Come, serve me!" and they understood.

But now they were to serve God. "Let My people go so they can serve Me." Where should they do this? All they could see was the wilderness. Grass was scarce, there were many huge rocks, it was dry and hot. Where should I serve? What am I building? But we know service is to worship God and to draw close to God. It was different from serving Pharaoh. They never had to go near Pharaoh to draw close to Pharaoh. It was not necessary. But it was different as God's people. We need to worship Him. Brothers and sisters, true service is not external work. We think we are capable enough to do something. But the service God desires is not focused on what is external. What is important then? It is to worship, to come and draw near to God. Worship Him. Brothers and sisters, this picture has become very clear, isn't it?

When the Israelites came to the tabernacle – you will know if you read the Bible – there was a curtain. I know you have all read the Bible so I will not speak too much on this today. What do you see when you look at the curtain? If I have read the Bible correctly, you should see a pile of ashes on the side of the entrance of the tabernacle. Where did the ashes come from? The ashes were gathered from the altar. These ashes from the altar were to be placed at the entrance of the tabernacle. When the Israelites came to worship and serve, what was the first reminder for them? They saw this pile of ashes and were reminded there were sheep killed and sacrificed. As I understood it, when you come before God and serve Him, God reminds you that you are not there to do anything: Just look at the pile of ashes, there are so many who have sacrificed themselves for My sake. I have read biographies of many spiritual giants. They have done many great things that I admire and I hope that God would also use me. But, brothers and sisters, you will be afraid when you read these biographies. Of course, you admire their accomplishments and how God has used them. But when you see how they have placed themselves in the hands of God and lived for Him without holding anything back, you know you cannot measure up. There are so many of these stories. Who can serve God without passing through the altar? Who can serve God without letting the cross do the work of carving in their life? When a person is to approach the tabernacle, the first thing they see is the altar, which is a type of the cross.

Today, we cannot place an altar in the meeting place. We will not place a physical altar in the midst of our gathering but the spiritual reality has never changed. The cross is always a symbol of the Church. When I was little and my teacher said, "Timothy, can you draw a picture of a church?" And if I only drew a building, that would not be enough to show it was a church. There would be no difference between this building and other buildings. You must add a cross on top of the building. After you have added a cross on top then people know it is a church building. The cross should be a symbol of the Church. But of course the external one does not count. This external one does not have the reality.

Let me give you another example. When you travel to a place you have never been to and you want to find a place to worship on Sunday, you will of course go find a building with a cross, right? You will not go into a building without a cross because you don't know what they do in there. These are symbols on earth. But, dear brothers and sisters, if the cross is a symbol in the Church, then the spiritual reality of the perfection of the Church must have the cross.

When we serve and worship God, the first thing we see is the altar and we see the reality of the cross. When we speak of the cross, we are reminded of the story in Genesis 22. The story of Abraham offering up Isaac. We are all very familiar with this story. When Abraham brought Isaac up the mountain, he said to the servant he would go worship in the mountain and return. Isaac was carrying the firewood on his back and walked hand-in-hand with Abraham up the mountain. Isaac said to his father, "Father, we have the firewood and the fire. Where is the lamb?" Isaac had seen Abraham offering up sacrifices since Isaac was little so he knew and said to his father, "There is firewood. There is fire. But what about the lamb? Where is the lamb?" And his father gave this very simple answer, "Son, don't worry. God will provide." Isaac was someone who had learned his lessons so he did not ask further and just followed. Brothers and sisters, we know, of course, the altar foreshadowed the cross. But what is my question today? It is the question Isaac asked, "Where is the lamb?"

Where is the lamb? Brothers and sisters, the altar is placed here. The firewood is here. The fire is prepared. Where is the lamb? Is it not the case that the spiritual reality of the Church needs to be perfected? Are we not using much energy and thoughts to build up the house of God? We can have a beautiful building and we can come up with many methods. We think about how to care for the young people, how to care for the children, how to care for the elderlies, and we have plans and actions. These are all good. We have the fire and the firewood. But we need to ask this question: Where is the lamb? Brothers and sisters, we can speak of many doctrines regarding the cross in the house of God, but who is willing to be that lamb to be placed on the altar? Using Paul's words, "Therefore I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship." Brothers and sisters, this is the story of the cross. This Lamb of God willingly placed Himself on the altar. This Lamb, who was

foreknown by God before the foundation of the world, seemed to have no other destination. He came to the world to His only destination – to be placed on the altar. This was the way for our Lord to walk on. Brothers and sisters, this also ought to be the way for the Church today. I have said this before, the Church is composed of the sum of all brothers and sisters. It is not composed of us individually but of a group of brothers and sisters. If the Church is to have the reality of the cross, then each of us is to let the cross do its work in our daily living. Paul reminded us to be a living sacrifice placed on the altar.

When we speak of the spiritual reality of the Church, we know the enemy is not happy about it. The enemy often puts the taste of death in God's household. If you have some service before the Lord, you have this experience. How do we get rid of Satan's work so we can have the vitality and aroma of life? Paul said it very clearly. Our Lord has risen, but He had died on the cross for us before His resurrection. How can God's household be protected and not let the enemy deliver harmful things into His house? We know that the cross is our best protection. But this is not the only problem. There are two other matters that cause the greatest harm to the Church. One is individualism; the other is the world. They cause much harm to the Church today.

When I was serving in China, some elderly brothers told me they missed the church during the most difficult times in China. They said that there was much suffering during the Cultural Revolution. It was extremely difficult during the period of the Cultural Revolution but the presence of the Lord was so clear. Nowadays, they have everything but the world has entered into the church. It seemed they have lost the substance of the Church which they had before. The enemy attacked the Church by adding persecution onto the Church. But persecution did not create too much of a problem. It is true that brothers and sisters suffered under persecution, but the Church was able to grow. However, it is different if the world comes inside the Church. Brothers' and sisters' hearts are gradually assimilated by the world. What they want is the things of the world and the spiritual reality of the Church is lost.

Facing these two problems, how does the Lord help us? We are reminded of 1 Peter 2. This fisherman by the sea of Galilee was able to speak these words that were beyond what a fisherman could understand: "You also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices that are acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." Here are two spiritual matters. One is "a spiritual house" and the other is "spiritual sacrifices". These two are the spiritual substances of the Church. These two spiritual substances are the countermeasures against the enemy's destructive works towards the Church.

What does it mean by "being built up as a spiritual house"? I think brothers and sisters understand it very well without any detailed explanation. We are like living stones. These stones are alive. It is difficult for us to comprehend that these are stones yet they are living. But when you come, you will be built up. To

be built up means you need to submit to the arrangements. You cannot tell the worker you don't want to be placed here and you rather be placed there. "There is too much weight on me on the bottom. Can you put me on top so others can see me?" You cannot make all these requests. You are being built. In the same way, we can understand that not all stones are usable. You have sharp corners and cannot be fitted with other stone. The worker then chisels here and there with a hammer. Oh, it hurts. These are living stones and they hurt. But as you are being chiseled and chiseled, the stones are fitted together. Brothers and sisters, if you emphasize individualism, you can never be built up. You cannot become a spiritual house. You can only be a stone left all alone on the ground. But that is not the case. Peter told us we are all like a group of stones coming before God and we are built up to become the glorious dwelling place for God. God can live there. This house is a spiritual house. The material of this spiritual house are the living stones. This house can be built because of the work of the cross in every one's life. Dear brothers and sisters, we cannot be built up if the cross is not truly doing the work of carving in the Church. We cannot become the dwelling place of God.

In terms of objective truth, God dwells in the Church. But, in terms of our experience, in terms of the Church's testimony, and regarding the manifestation of Christ's glory, we need to be built up. I believe brothers and sisters who attend the WCCC already know much of these and I will not repeat them. We see the picture of the Book of Revelation from afar. That perfect spiritual house. Dear brothers and sisters, if you want the spiritual reality of the Church to manifest Christ's testimony, the work of the cross is essential.

The second matter: "To offer spiritual sacrifices that are acceptable to God." Ever since the temple was built, God required His people to offer their sacrifices in the temple. People could, of course, have their private altar. It was permitted for someone to have their own family altar. But as a corporate, as the nation of Israel, they could not build another altar somewhere else. The altar must be at the temple. In other words, the experience and the reality of the cross cannot be separated from the Church. I have spoken about this much today and I believe you understand this. Peter reminds us that the altar must be placed at the temple.

The temple will not have any activities until there is a sacrifice placed on the altar. After the building of the temple was finished, after the building of tabernacle was finished, when all the services were about to begin, all the priests were standing there and ready to serve, something must happen first: the fire of the altar had to be lit and a sacrifice must be placed on the altar. If the altar was empty, there would be no actions in the temple. Of course, you can create some activities but we know that is not God's will. We know the fire on the altar is not fire of man; God does not accept common fire. The fire is from heaven. All activities are related to this fire. If there is nothing on the altar, how can the fire begin to burn?

Brothers and sisters, we often pray to the Lord and ask the Lord to revive His work. Lord, may you send down the fire of revival. We thank the Lord that we have this prayer. But is it possible that the fire is coming down but cannot find something to burn? The Lord says, "Fine, I will send the fire down but where can the fire go?" The altar is empty. It is not that the fire would not come down but it cannot find anything to burn.

Peter reminded us after this spiritual house is built up, we still need to offer spiritual sacrifices that are acceptable to God. Spiritual sacrifices are not sacrificing anything from ourselves; it is to offer spiritual sacrifices that are acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. What does God like? Your beauty, your money, your intelligence, your ability, or the way you work? You might say, "God, if You like this, I will give it to you!" No, there is only one that is pleasing to God – Jesus Christ. Only Him. Only He is pleasing to God. Brothers and sisters, what have you offered to God today? What is acceptable to God? It is the Jesus Christ in you. This is what God wants. We are mistaken today. We walk on the way of the world. We want to learn the way of the world. We say that if I offer this then God will be pleased. Look at this beautiful church I have built. This church building is second to none in the whole city. God says, "I don't want it. This is of the world." You might say, "I will care for brothers and sisters in this way. We will organize some groups. Isn't that pleasing to you, Lord?" God says, "I don't want it. This is of the world." What God wants is actually so simple yet also is such a high requirement. Only Jesus Christ, God's Son, is acceptable to God.

Brothers and sisters, what can you offer? I often joked that we cannot bring an ox or bring a sheep today, but we can burn my car, burn my computer, or burn my cell phone. God, You are happy, right? These are what I treasure and I will burn them. Today, we do not have any oxen or sheep. No, brothers and sisters, these are not what God wants. You know that any ox or sheep that is burnt on the altar, it cannot have any blemishes, spots, or illness, correct? Whatever you can get from the world today, they are all wrong. They are blind, lame, or missing an ear. They are all defected and you want to offer them on the altar. You tell God, "God, this is what I am offering. Is this good enough?" No, brothers and sisters, these are not spiritual matters. These are detestable to God. Our hearts are so heavy because of the conditions of the Church today. It seems we have nothing to offer to God except things of the world – the flesh of man, the wisdom of man and the ability of man. Peter told us to offer spiritual sacrifices that are acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Sooner or later, you will discover when you tell God that you are willing to offer up yourself as a living sacrifice (you think you are so great), God will say, "Why is this blind and lame sheep here? He is full of illnesses and he wants to offer himself? Go away!" You think you are so wonderful that you come and offer yourself as a sacrifice so God has to accept me. You are mistaken! What can please God? Our righteousness is but filthy rags. Our best deeds are not at all pleasing in God's eyes. But who are we today? We have been clothed with Christ and come before God as a new

man. Dear brothers and sisters, this is the work the cross is doing in the Church. Without the work of the cross, we will not be able to bring spiritual reality to the Church.

The cross brings us many blessings. The first one: The cross lets us place Christ in the center of everything. Without the work of the cross, we will put ourselves in the center. Our likings, our decisions, what we own, what we can gain, these are the things we will pursue. But what is the reality in the Church? It is Christ as the center. Who is the one who truly follows the Lord? He has Christ as his center. Paul has these great words in the Book of Philippians: whether by life or by death – these are not important – that Christ be exalted in my body. Only when man can see Christ in me, this is the value and meaning of my life. If man can only see Paul, if man can only see Paul of the Benjamin tribe, if man can only see Paul as a Pharisee of Pharisees, this is not what Paul wants. Paul wants others to see Christ. Brothers and sisters, what does the Church want man to see today? The Church has to show Christ to man. For Christ to be exalted is the substance of the Church.

Without the cross, Christ cannot be exalted among men. The cross teaches us to practice our faith. Every experience of the cross is a lesson of faith. Yesterday I mentioned it is a fact that we have been crucified with Christ. But it is also our appropriation and experience of faith. Every time when we encounter something, we need to trust the wonderful work of God. We go through sufferings yet we trust God's purpose. We trust that God is the most gracious and the most beautiful. We pray to the Lord, "Not according to my will but according to Your will." Brothers and sisters, why would you be able to pray this prayer? It is because we have the faith to believe He is the Lord Who is all-knowing. We do not understand the way we have walked on. But by faith, we simply entrust and follow. Then, we will be able to walk in the reality of the way of the cross.

There is another very important matter. The cross is a story of love. How can we understand love? We have this heavenly Father who loves us so much to an extent that we cannot understand and fathom. How do You love me, God? How does God love the world? Show me. God said, "Alright. I will show you." While we are yet sinners, while we are still enemies, He hung His Son on the cross. This picture shows us the story of love. Brothers and sisters, where can we see God's love? We must look at the cross. Because of love, we have faith to entrust. How can we see love in the Church? Of course, we can have many external works. We can organize activities. We can treat our brothers to a meal. We can call someone to show our care. These can all be expressions of love. But, are these enough? No. If the reality of the cross is truly in the Church, love cannot be hidden. It is just like the cross that is between the heaven and the earth. The Son of God was hung on it and the love of God was manifested. If the cross is truly placed in the Church today, then God's love will become the riches of the Church. This is the manifestation of the spiritual reality of the Church.

There are many more words I can share but I think you already know them, may the Lord help us. It seems we do not have any other ways to go. If you want to come up with some external methods, they can never be the solution. Paul had these simple and direct words for the church in Corinth, "I know nothing among you except Christ and Him crucified." Only this way can we know the will of God. Only this way can we live in the will of God. Only this way can we say what Paul had said. This is such a glorious and joyful life. It is no longer I who live but Christ lives in me. Brothers and sisters, do you desire such a life? Or is your desire in something else? If you have this desire that it is no longer I who live but Christ lives in me, this will be our pursuit and our living. The glorious testimony of God and Christ will be manifested in the Church. The spiritual reality will be revealed in the Church. We ask the Lord to help us. We ask the Lord to speak to the depths of each brother's and sister's heart.

We ask our Brother Eric Wu to lead us to pray.

Lord, our hearts have this great desire before You: Whether by life or by death, Christ be exalted in our body. We desire this homeward way of the cross in our hearts. Even though we are living in a comfortable environment, we truly know that this is a fiery time and You are urging us onto this way of the cross. Only when we are willing to place ourselves on the altar can we bring forth the spiritual reality, and we will not use up the ground in vain. Lord, gain our heart and our being. Once again, we say that every one of us is willing to offer our bodies as a living sacrifice. May the cross build us, who are living stones, into the spiritual house. Help us to have such obedience and love to let You perfect the work of the cross in us. May we truly have the understanding and willingness to live in this homeward way of the cross so You can gain this glorious Church without blemish and Your Son can be fully manifested in us who are unworthy. It is not of individuals but of a body of testimony. May Your glory be praised through us who were the first to hope in Christ. We give all glory unto You. Once again, we thank You for speaking to the depths of our hearts. May Your testimony, through the cross, be manifested throughout all the earth. Thank you, Lord. Thank you, Father. To You be all the glory. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.