

WCCC 2023

Brother Godwin Sun

**Have not been disobedient to the heavenly vision
(3)**

We gather once again in this way, but tomorrow we will end our meetings. Our hearts are longing that the next time we meet shall be in heaven.

Brothers and sisters, I oftentimes feel that it is not easy to preach, and it is even harder for your to listen. If the Lord returns now, we no longer need to preach and brothers and sisters no longer need to listen to the preaching. Our faith shall be made into sight. When the Perfect One comes, we shall know all things. How wonderful and how beautiful! May the Lord put such a strong desire within us. May His grace keep us.

Before He returns, while yet a little while, may He keep us that we should not slip or fall. That we may welcome Him with our best. We feel that these times in which we live are such challenges for us. These are great times of trial and constant change. The devil is using all his might these last days to harm the church of God. It is such a great impact we are facing.

May the Lord's mercy be upon all the messages we have heard, that we may have strength within to hold fast and be faithful till the end. That none of us may fall away. We must pray fervently and look to the Lord.

On the day He returns, when His kingdom comes, may we all enter His kingdom.

In these last days I feel that we are right at the gate of heaven. It is only a few more steps before we can enter. This is the last opportunity. May we not look lightly upon this, but on His abundant grace. We must have such a strong desire within us that we can do without the things of this earth in order to enter His kingdom.

May He deliver us from such earthly conditions. Let us not be too mindful of the things of this earth, having negative thoughts and grumbling over small things. Let us hold fast in this little while and strive diligently forward. May we not be ones with regret on that day.

The Lord's Word tells us that on that day should we fail to enter, there would be such great regret that there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. May the Lord deliver us from this condition. May we encourage one another. May His grace be upon us all.

Tomorrow after we depart, we do not know if we will have this conference again. We long for our Lord's return. In the first century, the saints would greet each other with "Maranatha" - O Lord come! After this conference, we must say, "we will meet in His kingdom".

Brothers and sisters, let us look to the Lord's grace. This evening we will continue to fellowship.

"Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision,
Acts 26:19

You are aware that this is the theme of my sharing. The previous 2 messages were only the preface. Tonight we will go into the main topic. Let us consider how we will not be disobedient to the heavenly vision.

Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, on the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the River Chebar, that the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God. On the fifth day of the month, which was in the fifth year of King Jehoiachin's captivity, the word of the Lord came expressly to Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the River Chebar; and the hand of the Lord was upon him there.

Ezekiel 1:1-3

In the twenty-fifth year of our captivity, at the beginning of the year, on the tenth day of the month, in the fourteenth year after the city was captured, on the very same day the hand of the Lord was upon me; and He took me there. In the visions of God He took me into the land of Israel and set me on a very high mountain; on it toward the south was something like the structure of a city.

Ezekiel 40:1-2

And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision; but a great terror fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves. Therefore I was left alone when I saw this great vision, and no strength remained in me; for my vigor was turned to frailty in me, and I retained no strength. Yet I heard the sound of his words; and while I heard the sound of his words I was in a deep sleep on my face, with my face to the ground.

Suddenly, a hand touched me, which made me tremble on my knees and on the palms of my hands.

Daniel 10:7-10

In verse 8 it says, "my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength". It is clearer in the English translation than the Chinese translation.

And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, "Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last.

Revelations 1:17

On the first evening I shared with brothers and sisters that this vision is spiritual seeing. This seeing is extremely important. God has given us spiritual eyes. Today, we need the Holy Spirit to do the revelation work within us. When the eyes of our spirits are opened, then we can truly see Christ. This is an important experience.

On the second evening, we shared that Paul shares that this is a heavenly vision. All the visions that Paul saw was heavenly - they had nothing to do with the earth. You cannot find these vision on the earth. We know the grace that God has bestowed on us today. That our Lord Jesus Christ came from above, bringing heaven to earth. He chose us, that we should be citizens of heaven. We know that our Lord Jesus has come to earth and though He took on flesh, within Him there is an "otherness" - it is all heavenly. The Lord did so, that we who are corrupt and of the earth may one day be brought into the heavens. Therefore He has given each of us this heavenly life, that transforms us daily. This is a mystery.

How His life transforms us, we cannot fully comprehend. But it is a fact. The Lord's life transforms us daily. Some may be transformed greatly, and others a little less. But one day when the Lord returns, we shall be transformed fully.

In 1 John he tells us, "dear brethren, we know not what we ought to be. But when He appears, we shall all be like Him". These words give us a great reminder that during this process of transformation, how much of the beauty of Christ is manifested within us has a great deal to do with the millennium.

God's revelation tells us that after this age is the millennium. That is the meaning of the kingdom. This kingdom of a thousand years will continue into eternity. There is a lot to be said about the millennium. Those who manifest more of Christ here on earth may be reigning as kings in the millennium kingdom for a thousand years, and then we shall enter into eternity. When we enter into eternity, all brothers and sisters will be like our Lord. Everything of the earth will vanish, and we will be filled with the heavenly nature.

Brothers and sisters, the saints who love the Lord throughout the ages and understand the scripture long to reign with the Lord in the millennium kingdom. I feel that there are some Christians who do not care about this at all. "1,000 years, so be it, I will just gnash my teeth and

get over it." Now, even when we have to gnash our teeth for a few decades on earth, it is so difficult. 1,000 years is not a small thing.

I want to remind us, that before the Lord returns, this is your opportunity and mine. He is forbearing with us. May the Lord open our eyes that we may see the importance of this matter. My dear brothers and sisters, the eyes of our spirit must be open that we can see more of heavenly matters, and may the Lord deliver us from the bondage of this earth.

In recent years I have seen conditions that saddens my heart. We who are heavenly citizens being troubled by little things on this earth. I am not even speaking of the pandemic. Even matters of election in this country have caused chaos in the church. We have forgotten that we are heavenly citizens, we are his peculiar people, separated from the nations. Brothers and sisters, how precious a position we possess! All the great men of this earth count for nothing. Why should we be troubled by such things?

Dearest brothers and sisters, we look to the Lord's mercy. Let us not be troubled by these things of this earth. While on earth may we long for His kingdom to come. Yes, we live in man's kingdom, but this is temporal. We must know that we live in a different world, and we battle and strive violently for that kingdom. The Lord says that He suffers those who take the kingdom by violence. If we do not exercise such violent diligence for His kingdom, while being so obsessed with this world, would not that be foolish?

Brothers and sisters, those with their eyes opened would not have interest in the things of this earth. How much we need the Lord's grace!

This vision showed Paul these heavenly matters.

Of course, when I say these things, it explains some of the uniqueness of these visions. We know that the true vision is a revelation of the eternal will of God. Even before the foundation of the world, even before time, God has devised a divine plan. It is a perfect plan according to the manifold wisdom of God.

Many times I feel we don't have sufficient words to express this. This is a grand plan, a great wisdom. Perhaps if I put it this way we may understand: this heaven and earth which God created; some scientific minds among us understand that this creation is so vast.

When David wanted to build a temple for the Lord, God might have found this amusing. Of course God loves David as a father loves his son. Even though the son does something that seems childish.

My younger son was very adorable and he loved his father when he was a child. He drew a picture of a house and gave it to me. I didn't rebuke him, but felt this warmth in my heart. I told him that I would live in this house. Of course I could not fit into this picture.

You might find this very childish. Truth be told, for David to build a temple for the Lord, is the same idea. Even God said through Nathan, "Heaven is my throne and earth is my footstool, what is the house that you should build for me?" But God accepted David's heart's desire. God is willing to condescend Himself to dwell in that temple. This is the story of love.

Dearest brothers and sisters, the scripture is full of words that tell us how great and vast God's plan is, and the will He has established for His own Son. Even the universe cannot contain this. May the Lord open our eyes.

When David wrote Psalm 8,

When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers,
The moon and the stars, which You have ordained,
What is man that You are mindful of him,
And the son of man that You visit him?

What is man? The work of His hands is this vast universe. We know that even this heaven and earth will one day pass away. In God's glorious eternal will there is a plan that will last for eternity. How much grander that is!

We know that God is merciful to us. We know that we are so finite and limited. We are unable to feel such grand things. We are also not interested in things that are too small. So God will use what we finite beings can comprehend. What is important is that God has already placed us in His will.

When Paul received this revelation, he made this known in the letter to the Ephesians. Those who know Greek are able to tell us that Paul has already used the highest adjectives to describe this mystery of the ages, now revealed to him. It is hard to express this with mere language. Paul actually writes halfway and has to turn to prayer for the Lord to open the eyes of the reader.

may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height— to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Ephesians 3:18-19

He writes of knowing the width and length and depth and height. We know that these attributes are quite abstract. How high is high? How deep is deep, is it unto the depths of hell? How long is

length and how wide is width? The will of God cannot be expressed with the mere language of man. Paul is straining to express this. The eternal will of man is beyond measure.

Even the building of the city that Ezekiel saw - that great city that needed to be viewed from a high mountain. That alone is large enough. But the holy city, the new Jerusalem that John saw come down on earth, is 4,000 miles in length and breadth and height. This is far beyond what the human eye can see. Of course we must understand that these descriptions are showing us in a small way the vastness of His plan.

Our God is a great God. The plan which He devises is not only a great plan, but the substance is full. It is very detailed and very fine. It is very accurate.

Brothers and sisters, when we see such precision we see how finite and minute we are. The eyes with which I see brothers and sisters aren't perfect, and my perspective of the condition of the church isn't right. It is not because the church is wrong, or what hardships it is going through. But when we see the church in the spiritual perspective, we are unable to express it in human language. In simple terms, what Paul saw was a universal man, whose head is the Lord and the body is the church.

Let us not belittle this as simple - it is just a head and a body. The richness of God is often hidden in simple terms for us. For example, you look at me, I am like you, with a head and a body, eyes, ears and feet. But the human body is extremely complex. Every tendon, every muscle, every bone, vein and arteries. It is very precise. Nothing can go wrong, even in the smallest degree. Anything that is even a little bit off results in sickness or even death.

Recently I was diagnosed with bronchitis. I have large lungs, but the air valve is very small. And having something wrong with even so small a part brings so much pain.

God's plan in Christ is also very fine in detail and precise because this is the work of God.

Oftentimes I encounter brothers and sisters who are scientists. They have two perspectives - one of their profession as scientists that demand very accurate data. Precision in science is very important. But when it comes to their belief in the Lord, they have a different perspective because they see their faith as a religion. As a religious person you have to be a good person. You sacrifice, you have good morals, and this seems like this is what is required of the Lord. So if you're a little bit not so good, it is fine. This is our moral perspective in the church.

This is wrong. The work of the Lord in the church is even more precise. The church is built according to Christ. Anything that is not of Christ is totally unacceptable before God, even if it is a little bit. This challenges our faithfulness in service. Our faithfulness is measured according to Christ. Are we faithful to that measurement?

If we have that perspective we will see how loose and bold Christians have become. We have put just anything we want in the church because we think it has to do with morals. We cannot corrupt the work of God. Paul knows this deeply and wrote “if anyone destroys this temple, God will destroy that man” (1 Corinthians 3:17). So this ought to bring us fear and trembling. When we serve the Lord it needs to be according to His requirement. We need to be very careful, and even then we could make mistakes. If we are bold and loose, we will make even bigger mistakes. If it is not of Christ, God does not want it.

It is very accurate and precise. All must be according to Christ. My dear brothers and sisters, we thank the Lord. That on this earth, as long as we serve and work according to the principles of God, His heart will be satisfied. He does not care about how big or small the work is.

When we see the history in the Old Testament as the Israelites came back from captivity, we see only the remnant returned. They had very limited resources. They rebuilt the temple, and it paled in comparison to the great temple that King Solomon built. When the young ones saw the rebuilt temple they rejoiced. When the older ones who had seen the previous temple saw the rebuilt temple, they wept.

But we know that God accepted the temple that Zerubbabel built as He accepted the temple Solomon built. Because those who returned from captivity built the temple according to God’s principles. If you read Ezra and Nehemiah carefully, you find that even though this group was small in number and resource-strapped, they followed the principles of God very carefully, and God was pleased.

Why have the brothers spoken about the church at Philadelphia so much these few days? It is a small church. It was a place with earthquakes, so the church isn’t a big church. Yet among the seven churches, it is the church that gave comfort to the Lord. He tells them “for you have a little strength” (Rev 3:8). Today we boast about how powerful our church is. Our Lord told them, “even if you have a little strength, you keep the patience my Word”. Their principles met the Lord’s requirement and they were praised.

This should greatly comfort us. Whether our church on earth is great in number or small, it needs to precisely follow the principles of God. Our eyes need to be opened. Brothers and sisters, the work of God is too great. God has entrusted such great work to such small people. According to man, this is too great a responsibility for us to bear.

In scriptures we see how when Daniel saw this vision he fell on the ground. His “comeliness turned into corruption” (“vigor turned into frailty” – Daniel 10:8 NKJV). Those who read the scriptures tell us that of all the people in the Old Testament, it seems that only Daniel is presented without flaws. We see flaws in Moses and David, and many who serve the Lord have shortcomings. But in the scripture it seems Daniel is a complete person.

When he saw this grand vision, he saw his own comeliness turn into corruption. So we can understand that natural man cannot receive the things of God. Not even someone as sanctified as Daniel. He cannot stand in the presence of God.

For many years we found this amusing. Many felt that when God opened their eyes, they received visions, and felt that they were the only ones that God had shown this vision to. I am not joking, some really claimed such things. They were so proud!

It was only later that I understood that if you truly have a vision, you cannot be prideful at all. If you are prideful, there is a question about what you saw. Not only Daniel, even John in Revelations 1 when he saw the vision of the Son of Man, he fell at His feet as dead. These moments are important. It is the hand of God.

Many times when we read the Bible, we focus on the vision but neglect the hand of God. You see in Ezekiel, a glorious scene of the whirlwind by the river Chebar was brought to Ezekiel. This was immediately followed by the hand of the Lord.

We know that the word "hand" appears a hundred times in Ezekiel. Seven times it is translated as the "Spirit of Jehovah" in some translations. Of course we feel that when the hand of God is at work, it is His Spirit at work. So in Ezekiel we read how the hand of God support him to see such visions. It is God's grace and mercy. We who are corrupt and weak, we are unable to bear such a glorious vision of God. So God's hand supported Ezekiel.

Seven times in Ezekiel this was mentioned. At the end when Ezekiel saw the holy city, the hand of the Lord was also upon him. The Bible tells us that the hand of God is behind all these visions.

This is also the case with Daniel. He fell down upon seeing the vision. God's hand was upon him and lifted him. This is the same with John who fell at God's feet as dead. It is by the hand of the angel he was lifted up.

This tells us that the Lord is able to open our eyes to see the vision, but this is not something our natural being is able to bear. Without the hand of God, no one is able to bear the weight of such great glory.

If we were to read through all the recordings of the hand of God at work in the scripture, we would not finish by daybreak. The hand of God speaks of the work of God. We know the hand of God is His mighty arm. It is powerful.

We thank God that behind the vision God gives is the hand of God and His great grace and mercy. Who are we? Without the hand of God, we are unable to receive such glory and vision. We know that it is by the hand of God He created all things. In the Psalms we read about His

handiwork, and how His hand is able to deliver us. Even in the hymn we sing about how His hand lifts us from the roaring sea.

We live in dangerous times. It is the hand of God which delivers us. Not only does His hand deliver, His hand also supports us. Without the sustaining hand of God, it is difficult for us to continue to the end. His hand also covers and protects us.

If our eyes are opened, we can see the hand of the Lord. And then we no longer need to fear anything. This is true throughout church history. So many children of the Lord are thrust into the most dangerous situations. The first century Christians went into Gentile lands, surrounded by such great danger. In Acts we see how the hand of God delivered Peter from prison, how His hand delivered Paul and Silas. Nothing else could save them but the hand of God.

In Ezra, the movement of all the women and children across the long and dangerous journey was covered by the hand of God. Ezra had the favor of the king at the time. Had Ezra asked for protection from the king, he would have sent armies. But Ezra had already prayed to God. And the people walked along the river, fasting and praying before the Lord. Thank God that it was the hand of God that protected them.

The hand of God also helps us in so many ways. It sustains us through life. This is so precious.

neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand.
John 10:28-29

Not only do we understand by the letter of the Word, we can rest in peace all our days, regardless of the circumstance.

God's hand is also a disciplining hand. When we are in error, his disciplining hand is upon us.

It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.
Hebrews 10:31

When we sin, when we are wicked, we must fear the hand of God. He is righteous. He will judge.

Dear brothers and sisters, thank the Lord that the Bible also tells us that His hand is very skillful. So today He leads us with His skillful hand. How wonderful!

Each one of us has a corrupt nature. We are very scheming, and many times we try to run away from God. We think of many ways to escape the work of God.

Brothers and sisters, may we know the hand of God. Whichever way we choose to run away, we cannot escape His hand. Remember the account of Jonah? He was in the sea and swallowed by the big fish. And after he was spat out from the belly of the fish he then understood the heart of God. He leads us with His skillful hand. Of course He loves us. All He does He does in order to bless us.

Brothers and sisters, today as we follow the Lord, we know bits and pieces. It is not enough. What we need to experience more is His guiding hand. This is my experience through the decades. It seems like I know some of the truth in the Bible. But when I look back at the days past, it is entirely by the skillful hand of the Lord.

The hand of God is a precious truth. Today, we live by His guiding hand. His hand is behind the vision, and He will be responsible for them. He may allow you to see, but He alone is responsible for it. He is not showing it to you and then standing on the side waiting to see if you will keep to it.

God is always initiating. He is never passive. He is not reacting to the work of the enemy. He is not cleaning up the mess after we made our plans. He is not passive. His hand is always at work. We thank the Lord that it is by His almighty power He upholds all. He is then able to give us these visions. He is not afraid that these visions will crush us, because it is His hand that sustains us.

We are blessed, and we thank our Lord.

Let us return to Acts 26. Paul is before King Agrippa and says, "O King Agrippa, wherefore I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision." Paul was one with a heavenly vision, and he understood the severity of being disobedient to the vision.

What does it mean to disobey? Paul saw. If he disobeyed, it would mean that he disobeyed despite knowing. This is very serious. In these years God has entrusted these truths to us. Let us remind everyone. You hear the preaching, and God has entrusted His Word to you.

Let us not be joyful and just thank the Lord for His Word. His Word will not return void. He will settle accounts with us according to the Word that we have heard. That is why it is difficult to preach, but even more challenging to hear the Word.

Yes, we who preach have the responsibility to preach accurately. This is a great trial. We cannot preach our own words on the pulpit, or give our own opinion. God will judge us according to our spoken world.

But if we are faithful in delivering His Word to His people, those who hear must also be accountable. God dearly loves us, do not be afraid. We are blessed if we are able to hear the Word of God. But we must take note of this - we cannot be disobedient to the vision.

We have a measuring stick today. If the way you walk is different from what you have seen, this is a fearful thing. You have been disobedient to the vision. So we serve the Lord according to what He has opened our eyes to see. We can only be faithful to what He has shown us.

Today many things attract us Christians. We must follow the Lord carefully. This matter about being disobedient despite seeing is a fearful thing. Of course if we are blind and ignorant, we may make more mistakes.

We see so many children of God doing whatever they want according to the flesh. We cannot be as those who are ignorant. We long for the Lord to open our eyes. We desire for Him to open our eyes and give us vision. But we must be faithful and loyal to what He says to us and shows us.

If we have a vision today and a heart's desire to follow after the Lord, He knows our weakness. Many times the circumstances pressure us into compromise. The condition of the church today is one where the church is under great pressure.

Our natural emotion is also to be feared. We need the Lord's mercy. We thank the Lord that behind the vision is the hand of God. If we do not live under the guiding hand of God, not even the strongest will stand.

We see Paul's experiences, and he is able to say that he was not disobedient to the heavenly vision because of the mercy of God upon him. This is by the protecting hand of God over Him. Were it not for God's hand, he would fall. We know that ever since God revealed Himself to Paul, Paul had served faithfully. He was ambitious when he was young and held on fast to the truth. When he saw hardship in the Galatian church, he was so angry and wrote about Peter's failings in his letter to the Galatians. Not only did he rebuke Peter, Paul wrote it down.

Paul was in the Gentile home where Peter was. The Gentile family had invited both Peter and Paul into their home. Then some from James came and Peter hid. Barnabas saw Peter run and also ran. This greatly angered Paul. Paul, filled with righteous anger, would not be disobedient to the truth and rebuked Peter to his face.

We know that Paul is not a coarse man. He is not a rude man like some teenagers today. He respected Peter. On that day he stood up and rebuked Peter because Peter had been disobedient to the basic truth of the gospel. In Peter's heart there was still the separation between Gentile and Jew. Christ had already removed that dividing wall. Paul admonished Peter greatly.

Paul said, "Would I rather please man or gain God's heart and please God? If I wanted to please man, I would no longer be a servant of God." This was young Paul. He was stout of heart and stood very firmly.

I see many young brothers and sisters who are similarly absolute and firm. I, too, was like that when I was young. Since I gave my life to the Lord I must be absolute. When I stood and spoke to the young people, I spoke with a lot of power and reason, being logical in everything I said. Then I realized that no young brother and sister wanted to fellowship with me. They went to another brother who might not have been as gifted. They stayed away from me because I came across as so holy and righteous.

Paul would not allow any of the truth to be twisted. He spoke even stronger words. "For if I build again those things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor." (Galatians 2:18). We know that Paul had departed from Judaism, and had put down all the things of Judaism. He was pointing to Peter who was rebuilding the things which he had destroyed.

Paul is absolutely correct. When Paul was about to return to Jerusalem in Acts 20, he found the elders in Miletus. Paul spoke a lot to them there. Paul was still very strong. He knew that harm would come to him in Jerusalem, and reaffirmed that he was willing to give his life for the Lord's sake. The brothers and sisters wept together with him.

Now he came to Jerusalem. He shared about the issue with the Gentiles. The elders there, including James, listened, unmoved. Then James stood to speak.

"You see, brother, how many myriads of Jews there are who have believed, and they are all zealous for the law; 21 but they have been informed about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs."

Acts 21:20-21

James knew of Paul's condition. This was a dark day for the church in Jerusalem, that one who was so reverent towards God would speak such words, asking Paul to listen to them.

Paul had already served two to three decades among the Gentiles and was clear about the heart of God. But now in Jerusalem, Paul who was bold and courageous was unable to utter a word. James and the elders in Jerusalem told Paul,

Therefore do what we tell you: We have four men who have taken a vow. Take them and be purified with them, and pay their expenses so that they may shave their heads, and **that all may know that those things of which they were informed concerning you are nothing**, but that you yourself also walk orderly and keep the law.

Acts 21:23-24

How frightening is this! That you should listen to us (the Jerusalem elders) and prove that everything we have heard you doing among the Gentiles is false. This courageous Paul did not respond with a single word.

The next day, Paul brought this group of Jews to the temple to make their vow. But at this time, those who opposed God in Asia returned to Jerusalem. When they heard that Paul was in the city and even brought Greeks into the temple, they caused a riot among the people, stating that Paul had defiled the temple. There was such a great uproar and they even wanted to kill Paul. We know that it was the centurion guard who saved him.

It was at this time Paul was awakened. This is the hand of God. God's intervening hand. If God had not intervened, it would have been a great failure for Paul. So Paul has a very deep impression to never disobey the heavenly vision.

Brothers and sisters, even for those as bold and courageous as Paul, those even as zealous not to hold on their own lives, will fold under great pressure. Not even Paul thought he would compromise. Paul was ready to come back to Jerusalem to be a martyr.

Brothers and sisters, It is not easy to be a martyr.

We know that in the Bible the word "witness" has the same root word as "martyr". You use your life to be His witness. Under our own circumstances it may not mean having our lives physically taken. But we must have such conviction that to be a witness is to be a martyr. It is the same word.

The martyr in Chinese, is to proclaim the Word of God. To be willing to keep the Word of God at the expense of one's life. So the Word of God is a command. What is a command? In Chinese, the word "command" (命令) is to keep and execute the order at the cost of one's life. To use your life to keep the Word.

Paul had such great ambition. And James would cause such a powerful person as Paul to fall, using such simple words. God showed Paul that by himself, he would be unable to keep the vision.

If Paul is unable, we definitely are unable. We need to depend on the hand of God. Without the hand of God, we cannot keep it.

In this conference we talk about holding fast. How do we hold fast? By the hand of God! For not even Paul could keep it without the hand of God. What God has committed to us is important. We must open our eyes to see the glory. We must have a firm purpose. We need a firm direction

and way to follow the Lord. This is very important because it pertains to the prize to come and God's pleasure.

May the Lord gain us as His vessels today when we see such glory. But let us humble ourselves before God and commit ourselves into His hand. Let us pray, "Lord, without your hand we are weak as water. We are weak as if dead. May your gracious hand hold fast to me."

My dear brothers and sisters, today we see how Paul, in that most urgent moment, awakened. This shows us one thing - that Paul lives in the hand of God.

One difficulty we have today is that God has spoken to us and He has opened our eyes. We may have heard, but we have not awakened. We can see how precious Paul's pursuit was. When the hand of God appears, Paul awakened immediately. He knew immediately that he was wrong, and he was strengthened again. He spoke to the centurion and asked for permission to speak a few words. He stood on the platform and spoke against those who opposed him. He spoke of the will of God, and how God led him to the Gentiles. After he finished, the mob was in an even greater uproar.

But the power of God was upon Paul, and he was not afraid of those who opposed him. He faithfully preached what was entrusted to him. We know that as a result he was imprisoned in Rome. We know how greatly the vision was made clear and expanded to him while in prison, where he wrote the four important prison epistles.

Those who have vision tell us that the vision is a living thing. It is not something dead. The vision will continue to expand, because God is too great. When we see the work of God it expands without end. If we follow the Lord faithfully, the Holy Spirit will continue to expand our capacity and open our eyes even wider, and we will see more and more of the will of God until we enter eternity and the Perfect One is come. In the process, we need His grace and mercy.

So as we follow the footsteps of Paul we depend upon the grace of God. My dear brothers and sisters, Paul's spirit was able to be turned because he had a tender spirit. If we have a hard spirit, we would not be turned even if we heard His Word. If the light of the Lord comes upon us, and we know what we have done is wrong, we need the courage to deal with it. We need courage to once again return to God. May God give us this tender heart, this tender spirit, to be corrected by God.

We know that David had committed great errors in his life, and even frightful sins. But David was meek for God's use. He was unique in that he was able to be corrected by God. He was adjustable unto the Lord. We must be one who is adjustable by God. God is not afraid that we will err, but concerned that we will not be adjustable. We must learn to be obedient. We thank the Lord for His grace and mercy unto us.

When Paul was awakened, we saw that he was obedient to the end and faithful unto death. He was martyred for the Lord. When he stood before King Agrippa, he said, "I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision". Paul knew clearly that without the hand of God, he would have fallen greatly. That day before the King, he spoke with firm confirmation that it was thanks to God that he was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.

Brothers and sisters, we are in the last days. Many in the generation before us had their eyes opened. They held fast to the vision God showed them and they were faithful to the end. They were the protection for many brothers and sisters, but today they have passed. It is for our generation to rise up. In these dark days, may many eyes be opened to see His glory and His glorious will, and to follow faithfully. That we will have a strong desire to place ourselves in His hand.

We must pray, "Lord, hold fast to us with your hand, so that we may not fail or go astray." Under such constant attacks by the enemy, we need to pray that the Lord intervenes against all the attacks of Satan to protect His church and His people. May the Spirit of Truth bring truth into each one of us, so that on that glorious day we may meet each other in His glory.

Lord we know that before you return, you do not tarry but have forbearance for us. You know that we have not yet prepared well, so you give us opportunity. You have gathered us here and gave us your word. This is your great mercy. May it be that we not only hear these words, but may the Holy Spirit work and open our eyes within that we may see visions, that we may see your glory, that we may see your will. In these last days, may we have a clearer vision to follow you. May your hand be upon us that we may not slip and fall. We thank you that it is all your grace that we can live in your grace. We bring you all thanksgiving, glory and praise to you. Hear our prayer, in the precious name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen