

Banners for 2009 Thanksgiving Conference

**The prayer of the age is the prayer
of the church as the Body of Christ,
the prayer that exercises the authority of Christ
as the ascended Lord and Head of the Body,
for the fulfilling of God's economy.**

**God wants man's will to be joined to Him and be one with Him
so that man may express and echo His divine will
back to Him in prayer for His good pleasure.**

**To pray in the name of the Lord requires us to abide in the Lord
and to let Him and His words abide in us
so that we may actually be one with Him.**

**As the members of the Body of Christ,
we cooperate with Christ in His ministry of intercession,
carrying out His intercession in our prayers of intercession.**

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**Outline of the Messages
for the Thanksgiving Conference
November 26-29, 2009**

GENERAL SUBJECT: THE PRAYER OF THE AGE

Message One

The Central Goal of Prayer and the Prayer of the Age

Scripture Reading: Acts 2:36; Eph. 1:19-23; 3:19b-21; 4:22-24; 5:27; Matt. 16:18-19

I. The central goal of prayer is for God to have a glorious church; this prayer is according to the ministry of the age and the vision of the age:

- A. The particular recovery and work that God is doing in one age are the ministry of that age, the ministry that ministers the vision of that age—Prov. 29:18a.
- B. Today we can be in one accord because we have only one vision, an up-to-date, all-inheriting vision, the vision of the eternal economy of God—Acts 26:19; Eph. 1:17; 3:9.
- C. The central goal of prayer is the goal of the eternal economy of God, the goal of Christ having a glorious church as His counterpart for His satisfaction—5:27; John 17:23; Eph. 1:23; 3:19b-21.
- D. Christ as the High Priest is caring for us and praying for us according to God's need, God's interests, and God's goal:
 - 1. God will listen to our prayer when our prayer to God is toward Christ, the kingdom of God, and the house of God as the goal in God's economy—1 Kings 8:48; Dan. 6:10.
 - 2. No matter for whom we are praying, our prayers should be aimed at the interests of God, that is, at Christ and the church as God's interests on earth, for the fulfilling of God's economy—Eph. 5:32; 6:17-18.
 - 3. We should not usurp God for our own prosperity, but we should pray, live, and be persons according to God's heart and for His economy—1 Sam. 4:3.

II. In order to pray the prayer of the age for the fulfilling of God's economy, we must be people who live in ascension:

- A. Every man who is saved is not only one whose sins are forgiven and not only one who is made alive from death and has God's life but also is one who is seated with Christ in the heavenlies, the highest place in the universe; thus, he is a man of ascension—Eph. 2:5-6.
- B. The life of Christ that we have received is ascended and heavenly and is given from heaven; therefore, once we obtain this life, we have fellowship with heaven and are joined to heaven—Col. 3:1-4; John 1:51; cf. 3:13.
- C. Christ as our life has saved us into a position in which we are seated together with Him in the heavenlies, a position in which we are above all God's enemies; here in the heavenly atmosphere of His heavenly presence, with a heavenly nature and characteristic, we are a heavenly people.
- D. Today we realize and experience this reality in our spirit through faith in the accomplished fact—2 Cor. 4:13; cf. Heb. 4:2.

- E. We need to maintain the position of ascension in our daily living, living in the life of heaven; we need to be continually touching heaven in our inner being and living in the heavenly condition, situation, and atmosphere of the Lord's presence, which, when touched by others, will enable them to obtain the heavenly supply—Eph. 4:8; Rev. 1:20.
- F. By living in ascension, we are transformed to become the Lord's bridal army, a woman "who looks forth like the dawn, / As beautiful as the moon, / As clear as the sun, / As terrible as an army with banners"—S. S. 6:10; cf. Gen. 1:16-18.
- G. We must be men of ascension with the position of ascension so that we can pray the prayer of warfare and the prayer of the age, the prayer of ascension—Eph. 2:6; 6:12; S. S. 4:6-9; cf. Gen. 3:14; 1 Cor. 15:47-48.
- H. If we stand in the position of ascension, we can directly command the environment, rebuke difficulties, and destroy all the works of the enemy.
- I. Regrettably, the prayers of the church today contain all too few authoritative commands; therefore, they cannot deal with the enemy; this proves that our actual condition is still on earth and not in the heavenlies in the position of ascension with the reality of ascension.

III. The prayer of the age is the prayer of the church as the Body of Christ, the prayer that exercises the authority of Christ as the ascended Lord and Head of the Body, for the fulfilling of God's economy; to enter into this kind of prayer, we need a heavenly vision to see something that is far beyond our natural concept—Eph. 1:17:

- A. We need to see the meaning of the ascension of Christ:
 - 1. The ascension of Christ indicates that the entire work of redemption has been completely accomplished—Heb. 1:3; 10:12.
 - 2. The ascension of Christ indicates that the lordship of Christ has been established—Acts 2:36:
 - a. Everything that the Lord has obtained and attained is being transmitted "to the church"—Eph. 1:19-23; 3:20.
 - b. We need to see the heavenly fact that Christ has been exalted by God, established as the Lord of the universe, and made Head over all things to the church; all things are under His feet, and everything He has obtained and attained is being transmitted to the church, which is His Body—1:22-23.
- B. We need to see the church's position as the Body of Christ; because the church is the Body of Christ, the position of the church is exactly the same as that of Christ; since the Body is one with the Head, the position of the Body is exactly the same as that of the Head—1 Cor. 12:12, 27; Eph. 5:30.
- C. We need to see the authority of the church as the Body of Christ:
 - 1. The authority of the Body is the authority of the Head exercised by the Body; thus, the authority of the Body is the authority of the Head.
 - 2. As the church, the Body of Christ, we need to assume the authority of Christ—Matt. 28:18b-19a; Luke 10:19.
- D. We need to see the prayer of the church as the Body of Christ:

1. This kind of prayer is not the prayer of individual believers but the prayer of the church as the Body of Christ; physically, we may even be praying in our room by ourselves, but spiritually, we are one with the Body.
2. In this kind of prayer we do not beg the Lord to do something for us; instead, we claim what the Lord has obtained and attained:
 - a. Christ has obtained the lordship and the headship; He is the Lord and the Head over all things to the church.
 - b. Christ has attained the highest place in the universe; He has been raised from the dead and is seated at God's right hand in the heavenlies, far above all rule, authority, power, and lordship in the universe—Eph. 1:20-21.
3. When we pray according to what the Lord has obtained in ascension, we may pray, "Lord, we do not go along with the present situation. As Your Body, we take the ground of Your ascension and claim Your lordship over the present situation."
4. When we pray according to what the Lord has attained in ascension, we should simply declare who we are and where we are; we are in the Body, the Body is in the Head, and the Head is transcendent; if we have the vision that we are the Body of the Head and that the Head is now transcendent, we will take the ground to claim what the Lord has attained and tell all the negative things, "Do not bother me. Go to the lake of fire! I am transcendent. You cannot touch me. You are under my feet."
5. Because the Body is one with the Head in the heavens, the Body has the authority to bind or loose what has already been bound or loosed in the heavens—Matt. 16:19; 18:18.
6. The church is built upon a rock, and this rock is the ascended Christ; as a result, the gates of Hades cannot prevail against the church—16:18.
- E. To fully enter into this kind of prayer and be able to exercise the authority given by the Head to the Body, there are two things that we must realize:
 1. We must realize that we are members of the Body, and we must live, act, and move in the Body.
 2. In our daily life we must always put off the old man and put on the new man by being renewed in the spirit of our mind; the new man is composed of the Head with the Body, Christ with the church—Eph. 4:22-24; 2:15-16.
- F. "We need to see the vision of the ascended Christ and learn to pray the prayer of authority. For two thousand years these matters have been neglected, but we believe that in these last days the Lord is going to recover them. Too often we do not take the ground of Christ's ascension and claim what He has obtained and attained. Nevertheless, we believe that the Lord will recover this lost ground. This is the highest peak, the highest mountain of the good land. In these last days the Lord will recover this highest peak, this highest mountain. We must realize the facts, take the ground, and claim what the Head has obtained and attained. This is the prevailing prayer of the church. This is the prayer of the age"—*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1963*, vol. 1, p. 165.