

Outline One

Appreciating the Purpose and Value of the Life-study Messages

Scripture Reading: 1 Tim. 2:4; John 17:17b; Luke 24:32; Acts 8:26-31a

I. We need to see the value of the Life-study messages; the Life-studies and the Recovery Version of the Bible are our treasures in the Lord's recovery and a precious inheritance to all God's children:

- A. Brother Lee daily prayed and studied the Bible for fifty years before he began to release the Life-study messages; he also read the great Bible commentaries; during the same period of time he was speaking for the Lord, preaching the gospel, expounding the truth, edifying the saints, and building up the churches.
- B. In 1974 he had a deep sense that we needed a life-study of the Bible in the Lord's recovery; for this purpose he collected the best of the past teaching and incorporated his own experience, knowledge, and revelation; thus, the Life-studies can replace the many reference works Brother Lee used while producing them.
- C. The Life-studies are the best references to use in preaching the gospel and sharing the truth with fellow Christians; they are able to save us much time and labor.

II. We need to see the four purposes of publishing the Life-studies and the Recovery Version of the Bible:

- A. The first aspect of the purpose is to provide the saints with a simple way to understand the truth in the Bible:
 - 1. Many of the expositions of the Bible in traditional Christianity may mislead their readers because they present the truth in a way that is difficult to understand.
 - 2. The Life-study messages and footnotes of the Recovery Version, however, help readers to enter into the knowledge of the truth in the Word through simple words so that every believer can understand them—cf. 1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Tim. 2:15.
 - 3. Instead of burying the truth in difficult language, these messages present the truth in clear words—cf. 1 Cor. 2:4, 13; 14:9.
- B. The second aspect of the purpose is to help solve the common and difficult problems in the Bible that hinder us from fully understanding the Bible—cf. 2 Pet. 3:16:
 - 1. In almost every book of the Bible there are a few points that are difficult to understand.
 - 2. In order to properly understand these points, Brother Lee spent much time consulting Greek dictionaries, lexicons, and concordances.
 - 3. Thus, the Life-study messages and the footnotes in the Recovery Version of the Bible provide a proper interpretation of many points in the Bible that are difficult to understand.
- C. The third aspect of the purpose is to minister the life supply to the readers—cf. John 10:10; Rom. 8:11; 1 Tim. 4:6:
 - 1. Regrettably, many books in traditional Christianity contain little life supply.
 - 2. However, many saints in the churches can testify that by reading the Life-study messages even for a short amount of time, they receive a rich life supply.
- D. The fourth aspect of the purpose is to bring the children of God into His economy, which is His administration with His plan, His purpose, and His arrangement to attain His purpose for the fulfillment of the desire of His heart—Eph. 3:9; 1 Tim. 1:4.
- E. "I encourage the young ones among us to spend adequate time in the Life-study messages and the Recovery Version of the Bible so that they may receive a good foundation in the truth. If they do this, some of them may be able to develop the truth concerning God's economy by standing on our shoulders, just as we stand on the shoulders of the great teachers of the Bible who have gone before us"—*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1984*, vol. 1, p. 64.

III. The truths conveyed in the footnotes of the New Testament Recovery Version and the Life-study messages are the cream of the saints' understanding of the holy Word in the past twenty centuries:

- A. The New Testament was completed during the apostolic age; however, for two thousand years man's understanding of the New Testament has been incomplete; the Bible that is now in the hands of Christians has not been that open:
 - 1. Today there are many expositions of the Bible in Christianity; among these expositions there are also many interpretations of the truth; most of the interpretations, however, stop with the light and revelation of one hundred fifty years ago.
 - 2. The light and revelation in the Life-studies are up to date and also complete and rich:
- B. The style of writing used in composing the footnotes and the Life-studies is simple, yet the points presented are profound, and the contents are very rich, nourishing, and enlightening:
 - 1. After reading the footnotes and the messages on any particular book of the Bible, a person will surely begin to understand that book.
 - 2. Furthermore, the footnotes and the Life-studies were written with the purpose of solving many of the puzzling questions in the Bible in a brief and succinct way.
 - 3. These characteristics make the footnotes and the Life-studies very valuable.
- C. The Life-studies bring together the riches and essence of the Bible interpretations of the saints over the past two thousand years as well as Brother Lee's own knowledge and experience of the Bible and contain answers to difficult questions, explanation of Bible passages, guidance, revelation, life, and light.
- D. One can say that the spiritual treasures throughout the ages have been gathered into one treasure box—the Life-studies—making it simple and easy to find the riches.

IV. The Life-studies are the best help in understanding the Bible and receiving the nourishment and life supply from it:

- A. In addition to loving God's word in the Bible, we also need help to study the Bible; regrettably, most of the books in Christianity are not helpful; it is for this reason that Brother Lee began to carry out the life-study of the Bible.
- B. Brother Lee used the term *life-study* to indicate that he wanted to teach others the Bible not merely in doctrinal knowledge but by ministering life to them—2 Cor. 3:6.
- C. If a believer loves the Word of God and reads it, he will receive some supply, but it will be difficult for him to enter into and understand the Bible.
- D. It is worthwhile to spend time reading the Recovery Version with footnotes and Life-studies every day:
 - 1. If the young people will spend time every day reading these materials, within five years they will have completed the Life-studies on the New Testament and will be excellent students of the Bible.
 - 2. Brother Lee had the assurance that everyone who finishes such a study would be greatly revived and burning in spirit, would have a proper knowledge of the Bible, a rich supply of the nourishment of life, would be equipped with the truth, and would grow in life; in this way many will become very useful for the Lord's recovery.
 - 3. If for five years the young people daily spend time to enter into the Recovery Version, its footnotes, and the Life-studies, they will be filled with Christ, the Spirit, and the divine life; if many young people do this, the Lord will have a new start not by outward organization but by inward life and truth.

References and Further Reading:

1. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1985*, vol. 2, “Fellowship with Elders and Co-workers in Taipei”; “The Propagation of the Gospel and the Administration of the Church,” ch. 4.
2. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1983*, vol. 2, “Endeavoring to Learn and Propagate the Divine Truth for the Advance of the Lord’s Recovery,” chs. 2, 5.
3. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1984*, vol. 1, “Being Built Up in the Truth and Growing in Life,” ch. 4; “A Word of Recommendation concerning the Life-study Messages.”
4. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1984*, vol. 5, “Truth, Life, the Church, and the Gospel—the Four Great Pillars in the Lord’s Recovery,” ch. 2; “Fellowship concerning the Practice of the Church Life,” ch. 2.