

BEING A BROTHER

By Titus Chu

MESSAGE THREE: FOUR CRUCIAL ELEMENTS AND OUR FOUR-FOLD PLACE

In following the Lord there are four crucial elements: life, ministry, commitment, and fellowship. In life we are brothers. In ministry we are members. In commitment we are slaves. In fellowship we are the Lord's friends. The Lord has placed us in a four-fold place. Firstly, our place is to be a brother and not a worker. Secondly, our place is to be a member and not a ruler. Thirdly our place is to be a slave and not a lord. Fourthly, our place is to be the Lord's friend and not His employee. Being a brother is related to the household. Being a member is related to the Body. Being a slave is related to God's economy. Being a friend is related to fellowshiping with the Lord concerning His present move.

We inherit this four-fold place automatically at the time of our divine birth. We were born brothers. As brothers we also are members. As members we are also slaves. Moreover, we also are the Lord's friends. This is our place. We don't have to attain to any of these aspects. Once we become regenerated, all of these aspects belong to us. Of the four, the first comes absolutely out of life. Therefore it is the highest aspect. This aspect is that of being a brother.

The four negative matters are also with us automatically. It is in our being to be a worker, a ruler, a lord, and an employee. We naturally gravitate to these four to the detriment of what was granted to us at our divine birth. To be a worker, for instance, is much easier than being a brother in the church life.

IT IS EASIER BEING A WORKER THAN BEING A BROTHER

To be a worker is easy. All you need to do is consider what the church needs and discuss it with others. Don't think this is something necessarily spiritual; this really fits your ego. You feel so important when you decide to have a conference. You feel you are more than just a brother.

A worker is one who has the work in view. In your labor in your teams, how many of you have the brothers in view? I'm afraid you are more concerned with how to do the job of presenting your topic. You should be fair to the others to prepare a worthwhile outline, but you shouldn't be concerned about how successful your presentation will be.

From the very beginning of their involvement in the church many adopt the mindset of a worker. Then the sad thing is that, even though the Lord may keep them in the recovery, once they leave the work they will not know how to be a brother anymore. There is nothing dishonorable about getting a job. But if you were to get a job after being full-time, would you be able to just be a healthy brother in the church life? I am afraid that once you leave the work you will have no interest in the meetings anymore. Your ability to normally function may disappear. Why? You have been spoiled by being a worker. In my life I have found that the hardest lesson for most of us to learn is how to remain a healthy brother throughout one's entire church life.

THE TWO PRIMARY FACTORS OF BEING A BROTHER: LIFE AND LOVE

Being a brother involves only two matters: life and love. If you desire to grow as a brother in the church life, you must be focused upon the divine life. The issue of life is just love. Love is the condition that issues out of the divine life. In a good sense, only life and love are necessary to be a brother in the church life.

Love is a rich word. It would take many meetings to cover just this one word. But generally speaking, if you are rich in life, you will also be rich in the experience of love. In a healthy household, life and love are the constituting factors. Life and love substantiate the family life. The going on and activity of a household is centered upon and issues out of life and love. A worker, however, if he is focused upon work, does not carry the church life in this way.

THE TWO PRIMARY THINGS OF BEING A WORKER: PROFIT AND DEVELOPMENT

To be a worker also involves two things. Any work, whether it is in the world or in the church life, is focused upon profit and development. If you go to work for any company, you work firstly for its profit, and secondly for its development. Furthermore, you will have your own profit and development in view. You may think, "This company has only two managers now, but in ten years it should have ten more branches. By then I should be a vice-president."

In our laboring we should have the church's profit in view, but in our exercise we should never allow profit to replace life and love. If as a worker you do not know how to be a brother, you will become profit-oriented rather than church-oriented. I have heard it said, "Even if you lose this many, you will gain more." This is to treat the saints as numbers, just using the saints to gain another number. If you have any thought that any brother can be sacrificed for the sake of the church's "profit," you are not qualified to serve the Lord. The saints are those who have been purchased by the precious blood of Christ. Who are you to sacrifice them? What father would say, "Let a few sons die, I will have more." Some brothers are so work-oriented that they have lost sight of the nature of the Lord's recovery.

If we do not have life and love in view, our labor will degrade to that of Christianity's. Actually, such a thought (treating the saints as objects for profit or increase) is worse than what occurs in Christianity. I have read about how Catholic priests in the past would visit people in their parishes. They would visit from house to house to care for their people. That was their job. I somewhat admire that labor more than some of the labor I see among us today. At least they treated those poor ones as God's children.

The Lord charged us to make a profit for Him in the parable of the talents. He also commanded His disciples to disciple all the nations. Thus we cannot say that we should not care for profit or development. However, if we forget our base of life and love, there can be no true profit or development.

Many families are broken apart today because the father or mother is more focused upon profit and development than on life and love. Such parents may be able to give their children more material things, but they fail to give their children themselves. When I came to the United States I told a brother that since I was the eighth child, my parents may not feel my absence too much. That brother told me I didn't understand that to a parent every child holds a special place. Now that I am a parent I can also testify to this. I cannot say which of my children is more precious to me. I cannot say which one I love more. I couldn't, even if forced to, choose among them as to which I would most desire to keep. Every one is most important to me. This should be true in our church life. In the church life every brother and sister is important to us. Once you become a worker, every brother and sister can become capital for you to gain further profit. This is serious. To those that say, "Although you lose this one you will still gain more," I can only say that you have never raised up anyone. If you have even raised up one brother you would never even think such things.

May the Lord forbid that we ever become workers to the point that we forget that we are brothers. If this occurs, the reality of the Body disappears. The church may be here in name, but in reality it is not. The church is something produced out of life and love. Once these two aspects are lost from view, the reality of the Body is also lost. If we focus on the profit and development of the church as a worker rather than upon love and life as brothers we are developing an institution, not the Body of Christ.

TWO PSYCHOLOGIES

The highest place the Lord has ordained for you is to be a brother. Being a brother involves a certain kind of psychology, and being a worker involves another kind of psychology. A brother's psychology can be compared to that of a parent in a family. What is the psychology of a parent? Their whole psychology is focused upon the well-being of their children. Their thinking is entirely focused on what is best for their children and their family. As a father and a husband, I have no thought about what I can get out of my wife and children, or how I can use them for my own profit. I only care for their well-being. This is different from the psychology of a worker.

One's life and living is based upon one's psychology. If you are just a brother, then with every church you visit and with every place you go, you will just seek to enjoy life. If you are a worker, then with every church you visit and with every place you go, you will look around and analyze how the saints operate, what they are doing well, and what their shortcomings are. You won't be there for fellowship, you will be there to analyze and inspect. Once you are caught with the matter of work, your ability to grow in life will become limited by your work-oriented psychology.

To remain a brother in the church life is a most precious blessing. Those who remain in the place of being a brother will be protected. To remain a brother in the church life eventually becomes the highest attainment in our development. We need to consider profit and development, but that should never become the primary focus of our Christian exercise. May the Lord have mercy on us that we may remain focused on love and life.

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