

# **SECRETS OF SURVIVAL IN THE SERVING LIFE**

**By Titus Chu**

## **MESSAGE THREE: RECEIVING OUR SAVIOR GOD'S ARRANGEMENT IN OUR ENVIRONMENT**

The longer I have been in the church life, the more I have come to realize that survival in the church life is a great matter. When I was young there were a thousand other young saints who also really loved the Lord. Now perhaps only fifty of that group remain. With all the talent and giftedness among us at that time and with all the Lord's moving among us, there should be many today who are useful to the Lord for His recovery. Brothers such as myself should still be "young brothers" in the church life. Because so many could not survive, however, we "useless" brothers have become quite busy.

### **DANGER AT EVERY STAGE OF GROWTH**

At every stage in your growth in life there is something which can entrap you, and even the very thing you have grown into can entrap you. If by the Lord's mercy we overcome one trap, another snare is waiting, for as we grow we are exposed to new dangers. However, if we say, "then it is a good thing I have not grown," we have died already. We must grow, regardless of the dangers which may await us.

Our entire spiritual life is a fight. The history of the children of Israel gives us a picture of this. During their time in Egypt, they cried out to be delivered from their hard labor. The Lord answered their prayer and brought them out. Actually, however, that very advance brought them into another trap. Eventually all the men who were delivered out of Egypt died except Caleb and Joshua. I do not believe God intended that they all would die. Even Moses was not able to enter into God's goal. This reveals that to enter into God's highest, His best, is not an easy thing.

When I consider the desirous brothers who were my companions and those who took care of me, I wonder why so many of them are no longer with us. I also have seen some who got themselves into very dangerous situations spiritually, yet they made it through and survived. There has to be some principle or secret for our survival in the church life.

### **RECEIVING OUR SAVIOR GOD'S ARRANGEMENT**

We have mentioned in the previous message the four basic needs for our survival as revealed in First Timothy. We must be properly related to the apostles, we must know God our Savior, we must possess Christ as our hope, and we must have a proper life-relationship with others. In this message we will cover the third great item - God our Savior. We must see that God not only has an economy; He is also operating to save us to be one with Him in His economy. Thus, First Timothy 1:1 says "God our Savior" and not "Christ Jesus our Savior." Firstly, we need to see God's economy, for without such a vision we cannot survive. Then we need to learn to cooperate with God's working to bring us into this economy.

### **God's Operation for Our Salvation is Inward and Outward**

God is operating in two directions to save us into what He is after: inward and outward. Inwardly, He is becoming our life. Outwardly, He is arranging our environment, measuring to us everything we need for our salvation into His purpose. If we ignore the Lord's operation as life within, we will not know God's full salvation. If we ignore the Lord's divine arrangement in our environment, we also will not discover God's full salvation.

Many are able to appreciate the Lord's life within them, yet are not able to receive the Lord's saving operation in their outward situation. They get caught with who is right, what seems unjust, or with their preference. They do not realize that all things come to them because of God's arrangement. The reason why you are in a certain church, with a certain group of brothers, and under certain elders is because God has measured them to you. The reason you have such a group of "hopeless" brothers to care for is because God has given them to you. God our Savior has arranged everything to bring us into His economy. In this matter we must not get caught on the tree of knowledge of right and wrong, for if we do we shall not be able to fully benefit from what God has arranged for our salvation.

### **The Improper Way to Receive God's Arrangement**

One way a brother may go through what God has arranged for him is to grit his teeth and resign himself to what God has arranged. The measuring hand of the Lord is to cause you to receive light. God measures to us certain situations according to our specific need. We, however, take them and faithfully endure and struggle through, eventually thinking of ourselves a hero who has successfully passed through the "torture." The goal of His saving work in our environment, however, is not to build up our self; the goal of His saving work is to cause our self to decrease.

Whenever something we have gone through becomes good for self-boasting, we are definitely off. The Lord never gives us anything to boast of in ourselves. If this were so, Pentecostals are to be most envied, for they uplift such experiences to the uttermost. Even Buddhists can claim experiences of such things! We may claim that God has brought something upon us or brought us into a certain situation, yet we may not have experienced a bit of God our Savior, but rather a lot of our self. God's arrangement can become our "capital" in one of two ways: for our boasting or for our enlightenment.

### **A Proper Understanding**

We have to understand that God's arrangement is not for us to have an experience, but for us to receive His light. Sometimes when we are enlightened we know it, while at other times we are not so conscious of it, but we realize something is happening. Even if we are not receiving the Lord's speaking clearly, we sense some shining. We may not be able to testify how we felt like such a sinner so that we had to repent for a certain thing, but the result is that we have become soft, tender, even godly. What we go through should not cause us to become hard or proud. The environment the Lord measures to us should break the self by opening us to His enlightening.

### **The Experiences Given To Enlighten Us May Harden Us**

If we go through the things the Lord brings to us without receiving any enlightening, we will become hard. If we do not know how to take it, the heavier the Lord's measuring hand may become, and the harder we may become, even to the point that it may become impossible to rescue us. We may feel so sure of our stance, and feel we now have so many experiences to back ourselves up with. Yet our experiences have not brought us any light; we have not become softened tender or broken in the self-life. It is then possible to reach a point when no one can help us any more. I have met brothers like this. They have passed through so many experiences because they loved the Lord, and the Lord loved them, yet they did not have the proper attitude to gain what the Lord intended. Instead of receiving the Lord's shining and confessing that they are wrong, they feel they have been treated wrongly by those the Lord put them with. The very thing the Lord dealt to them to soften them became the cement to harden them. Their spiritual "sufferings" became a concrete coffin which finished off their spiritual growth. To experience the Lord's life inwardly is not difficult, but to experience God our Savior through His environmental dealing is not so simple.

## **Things Happen To Us Because We Need Them To**

We must learn that the reason why the Lord measures anything to us is because we need it. Your realization should be that on the entire earth, no one makes mistakes except you. Everyone else is right. If there is anyone who is wrong, it is you. This is why the Lord allows so many “unreasonable” things to come to you. God can never be wrong, Christ can never be wrong, your wife and children cannot be wrong, the entire church life cannot be wrong; if there is anything that is not according to your way, it means that you are wrong. Learn to say, “I am wrong.” Only when we have such a proper spirit will we be able to handle whatever the Lord measures to us profitably.

### **A Personal Testimony**

To pass the university entrance exam in Taiwan I needed to score at least 300 points. I scored 299. That could not have happened unless the Lord granted it. Another time, I achieved the qualifying mark to enter the best university, but because of a bureaucratic mistake my name wasn't entered onto the list. Eventually I took the entrance exam five times. I never asked the Lord why this happened to me. I never told the Lord that He was wrong. By His mercy I was able to take everything with thankfulness for His faithful dealing.

Let me give you another testimony. Because I was the second tallest in my company when I was in basic training, it was my lot to carry the machine gun bullets, which meant carrying nothing really, because we were not carrying bullets in the drills. The tallest man carried the machine gun, which was very heavy. When the time came to assign the tasks, the tallest man bent his knees slightly so I would appear taller. I got to carry the machine gun. He even told me, “Here, you'll need these”, giving me some rubber pieces he was going to use to cushion his shoulders. He was well prepared!

We would go on marches for miles, and I would be carrying this thirty-five pound machine gun. Actually, today I am able to preach strongly for hours because of that. That was very good for me. I was very sick at that time, yet I got the hardest job. Even though I knew what that man did to me, I loved him, never changing my manner toward him. I thanked the Lord. I had been selfishly happy when I knew that I would be carrying the bullets, now I thanked the Lord for saving me from my selfishness. I could have sought to correct the “oversight,” but I didn’t, for I recognized the measuring hand of God my Savior.

Another experience I had involved the machine-gun. I had a small Bible which I read while others practiced with the gun. During one practice I heard a single shot and I looked up, for it was supposed to be fired in two-shot bursts. My sergeant had been shot! We were miles away from base, so I ran all the way. Not one other person there chose to run with me. After the shooting the other sergeant rebuked the soldier, asking why he had pulled the trigger. He said, “You told me to do it!” which was not true. How evil that was! While they were arguing, I was running miles. I found the doctor and got him to run back with me, and I had to wait for him because he was not able to keep up with me. That must have been miles of running. I did the whole thing in the Lord’s presence. I had no feeling that it was none of my business whether the sergeant died or not. I had the full feeling to rescue his life. Neither did I have any complaint as to why the others would not go. I remember praying, “Lord, thank You that You sacrificed someone’s health to show me the meaning of life.” That day as I was cleaning my gun the Lord was speaking to me, “You should know that you could have been the one shot there.” I kept telling the Lord, “Yes, Lord, I could have been the one. My breath is Yours.” I had a real consecration that day.

## **The Lord Arranges All Things for The Church**

Why did all these things happen to me? Because I needed them to happen to me. It seems the Lord will pay any price to gain a people who would be as His Son. I had the deep sensation that the Lord was operating everything just for my sake. After I finished basic training, by some error I was assigned to another base to go through it again. But don't you believe that the government is in the Lord's hands? Instead of complaining to the Lord for being so hard on me, I realized every arrangement was made by the Lord for this little man. The Lord is the One who is the real governing One. Yes, there is a government, but isn't the Lord doing everything for the church? This kind of learning, however, must be with us in our spirit. If we do not know how to go through these kinds of experiences, they will not break us, rather, they will become the cement to harden us. Within us there should be no feeling of offense or bitterness, but rather the recognition: "Lord, thank You, I needed it."

I went to a certain country to help them out of a certain problem. Another brother visited there later. I asked him how the things were. He replied the situation had not changed. I knew this was not true. He further mentioned a situation that I knew had been taken care of. I even checked with another brother who was there. Apparently someone had misrepresented the situation to this brother. Yet, don't you believe I needed someone to lie to him for my sake? I could write him and clear things up, but don't I need that brother to misunderstand me? Up until now I can testify that I have no feeling to explain things to that brother or to find out who misinformed him. That brother doesn't really misunderstand me; he knows who I am. I'm more qualified to die than anyone else. This must be our basic attitude in receiving the Lord's hand in our environment. If that brother really believes that false report, don't you think that there is something within me which causes that brother to believe it? If I didn't need it, would the Lord allow the brother to lie? Don't I need some light? If I were to go to him to make clear the real situation for my own sake, even in the name of preserving my usefulness, I would not know "God our Savior."

## **The Reason God Measures Things to Us**

Whoever knows how to cooperate with the Lord's measuring hand will grow well. We may resist or try to reason out alternatives to what the Lord has arranged for us. Don't do this; the reason the things come to us is because of who we are. We think that B is happening to us because we did A. God's realization is that we did A because of who we are. The B is not for the A, the B is for you. You take things too naturally. Learn to see things spiritually, divinely. You must begin to realize that you are the one who is responsible for all the things that happen to you. There is something in you that requires the faithful Lord's dealing. So, whatever happens to you, be tender.

## **Watchman Nee's Realization**

Watchman Nee was often called "the proud Watchman Nee." When one sister tried to be sympathetic towards him regarding this, he replied, "Sister, I am worse than what they say." This is enlightenment. This is why he never sought to defend himself. The things that happened to him just caused him to be much more in the Lord's presence. When the church in Shanghai excommunicated him, he just went out. He honored that wrong judgment one hundred percent. Even when other churches invited him to join them in their Lord's table he refused, for to him there was only one table. He could have rebuked those in Shanghai, claiming that they were his children, but he received it as from the Lord. He had a ministry, but he didn't care for his ministry, he cared for the Body. He didn't return to Shanghai until the brothers invited him back and repented. He wept. Think of how much was in that weeping. A spiritual man, who put aside such a ministry for six years, just because of some peculiar decision by some brothers in a church. He wouldn't argue with the elders. He did not seek some more spiritual church. His feeling was that his ministry was over. Eventually Brother Lee handled the situation, stressing the two trees, never discussing who was right or who was wrong. Thus, the saints were encouraged to repent.

We should realize that in the church life, no one makes any mistakes except us. We are the reason for all our troubles. The reason why all the things happen to us in the practical church life is that we need them to happen to us.

### **Our Need is Not to Seek After God's Dealing, but to Realize the Goal of His Dealing**

In spite of our need for such dealings, we should realize that there is no need to seek after them. Don't pray, "Lord, measure something to me today." Every day the Lord is measuring something to you; what counts is whether you see it or not. Don't seek after it, neither run away from it. Don't say, "Lord, break me" and neither say, "Lord, take this cross away from me." On the one hand, we should anticipate the Lord's dealings to learn from them, receiving His enlightening. On the other hand, if we overly seek after the Lord's dealings, we may become superstitious.

No spiritual experience is for the experience itself. All spiritual experiences are for us to grow in life. Some brothers were in a car accident. However, there were probably hundreds of car accidents that day, so there is no need to take it superstitiously. You shouldn't feel, "Only I am qualified to have a car accident." Praise the Lord for His dealings, yet also realize that many who will not even become Christians miraculously survived car accidents.

### **Experiences Give Us Boldness in the Lord's Presence**

My score was 299 on the entrance exam. Don't you believe a few others scored 299 also? I doubt, however, that they experienced the joy that I experienced! My brother, who is five years younger than me, also took that exam. We were all anxiously awaiting the results. The brother checking the results called. He said, "Praise the Lord for your brother!" (Not for me!) I asked, "Which university?" "National Taiwan University" he replied. Then I asked, "How about me?" He answered, "One point short."

The whole family was waiting there. I turned to my brother and said, “Well, congratulations, brother, you made Taiwan University.” My mother asked, “How about you?” I told her. My mother’s face dropped, and I realized that her hope was that I, as the oldest, would be the one who was accepted into Taiwan University. It was hard to see my family’s disappointment, yet I told the Lord, “Thank You, You are so living.” To have had that 299 was much better than making it into Taiwan University. The faith I had toward the Lord was strengthened.

Sometimes you may wonder why I have so much boldness and faith in the Lord. It is largely due to the things I experienced in my early years. Since the Lord has been so living to me, what can I be but bold? I have seen how everything is in God’s hand.

### **The Danger of Seeking Experience for the Sake of Experience**

Some who experience something just take it as an experience. Another takes it as an experience of life. You shouldn’t seek after experience for experience’s sake. You may feel, “My! Titus’ early life was so peculiar. Lord, I love You, so give me such a life also.” That is to seek after experience for the sake of experience. Everything will seem to have significance to you, even a red light. Eventually you are full of experiences but there is no Christ. You are looking for something that you may have some testimonies. You are not pursuing life.

Actually, in a certain sense, everyone should tell the Lord that they are willing to be broken. We should ask the Lord to measure to us whatever is best for us. Yet if we focus on this, we will begin to seek experiences. If we are focused on life, the experiences will bring us into more life. If you are focused on experiences, funny things will be produced. For this reason, do not seek hard dealings from the Lord. Don’t make experience an issue. I experienced many strange things, but another brother I knew didn’t have the same experiences. We both grew. I needed such experiences; he didn’t.

Instead of praying for experiences, just tell the Lord you love Him. Then, whenever something comes to you, don't focus on that thing. Allow that thing to generate life. Let your boasting be of life, not of experiences.

### **The Blessedness of Being Full-Time**

Suppose you are going to be full-time for the Lord. There is much more learning involved than for those who have a job. With a secure job there are few worries. When you are full-time there is no security. It is dangerous, but there is no other kind of living which is more romantic, more challenging, or more realistic than serving the Lord. With other kinds of work you can rest. You can measure your accomplishments. In full-time service there is no such thing. You are always struggling to be fresh, new, and burdened in the Lord's presence. The saints will not take your "old" stuff. This is why it is so very blessed to be full-time.

### **The Learning Involved in Being Full-Time and the Dangers of Focusing on Experience**

This is also why it is hard to be full-time. In a meeting you may not be able to find the flow. Or, you may find the flow, but the saints are unable to receive it. Financially, the Lord also puts us in different stages. Sometimes the Lord's provision is overabundant, sometimes it seems to bring you into hardship. That is a different kind of learning. There are many kinds of learning in being full-time.

Still, even these experiences are not for the sake of experience. You may be full of experiences of the Lord's rescuing you, yet you may not have increased in truth or vision because of them. Experiences should never leave you with just experiences. Learn to be intimate with the Lord in your spirit. Pay attention to the anointing. Then, when you are sharing, you will have the Lord's speaking. Life will then meet the need of the saints you are ministering to.

**TWO KEY REALIZATIONS FOR A  
HEALTHY CHURCH LIFE AND  
A HEALTHY SERVING LIFE**

Realizing these two keys: that the things that happen to you do so because you need them, and that you don't need to seek after such experiences, could you ever be critical or gossip? No, because you realize you are the reason for your suffering. Then, as you pass through these experiences, do you have anything to boast of? Not a thing. They should only lead you to life. If life is not the issue, that experience has not helped you; on the contrary, it has hurt you.

Now when you come to the church life, are you full of life out of all these experiences, or are you full of bitterness? Criticism of others is only an exposure of ourselves. It is not of the Lord. When the Lord measures something to us, our immediate realization should be "This has come to me not for an experience, but that I may experience the life of my Savior God. God the Savior is saving me through this."

If you know how to take this word, your entire sphere of spiritual exercise will become different. You will be protected. May the Lord have mercy on us.

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