

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

**By Titus Chu**

## **MESSAGE FIFTEEN: THE CHURCH, THE CHURCHES, AND THE WORK (2)**

### **LABOR WITH THREE THINGS IN VIEW**

We have covered how we must have three things in view as we labor in a church, among the churches, or in the work. From God's side, we should have His testimony in view. With regard to the saints, we should have their perfecting in view. Toward the Lord's move, we must have His recovery in view.

#### **The Lord's Testimony**

Firstly, we must have the Lord's testimony in view. If we do not have before us what the Lord is after, we could become very active in evangelical work with the sole purpose of increase. To guard against this we firstly should be spiritually burdened according to the revelation we have received and, secondly, we should be spiritually exercised according to that burden.

#### **The Saints' Perfecting**

To have the saints' perfecting in view we must firstly pay attention to their buoyancy. Secondly, we must be concerned regarding their usefulness, which means we must care for their person, the development of their ability, and their being equipped with life and furnished with truth. Life experience and truth are needed to strengthen and validate each other.

***Care for the Saints' Perfecting  
Without Jealousy or Oppressiveness***

In addition to caring for their buoyancy and usefulness, you should be careful not to become jealous or oppressive. Jealousy is common among us. When one brother ministers well, another gets bothered, and when that brother ministers well the other brother becomes troubled. Even among the sisters you can perceive jealousy. When one sister says to another "You cook so well!", that suggests she is jealous. Although we all are for the Lord's recovery and love one another dearly, we still have to realize that jealousy is with every one of us; therefore we need to deal with it.

Jealousy is the reason brothers become oppressive in the church life. I have seen many young people under some elders or co-workers who do not grow well just because of the older ones' jealousy. The older ones love them, but they experience a certain kind of jealousy which causes them to oppress the young ones. They do not give the young ones a free way. They even may block the young ones in the name of learning a lesson. These young brothers then grow up complicated. They have to be careful of what they say to the older ones, for they know if they don't make their approach correctly they will encounter oppression. The older brother may say, "you are not in your spirit," or, "your message was very wild." The young ones lose their effectiveness and cannot grow well because the older ones over them experience a kind of jealousy which in turn causes them to be oppressive. They are unconsciously afraid that the young gifted ones will become more of a blessing to the church than they are.

We don't realize how prevalent jealousy is in the church life. You may not think that you could become oppressive to others in the church life. As you grow more, however, you will discover how easy it is to become jealous and oppressive. I know I have said that I hoped one day I would be able to come to one of your conferences, but I am afraid that for me to walk into your conference may not be so easy!

Jealousy is the root of so many struggles in the church life. As you are raising up saints be very careful. Whenever jealousy rises up within you, condemn it immediately.

There are some brothers here from the same locality who have the desire to be full-time. These brothers will all suffer the snake bite of jealousy. When they hold a conference, one brother may share extremely well. That will be hard on the other three. In the next meeting another brother may be in the third heavens, causing the other three to be in the third hell. Learn not to justify your jealousy. Whenever I experience jealousy I purposely let those I am jealous of step over me. Once you justify your jealousy you will become oppressive. Then the “purging” will begin. Don’t think that there is no such thing as purging in the church. Some saints are more skillful at purging others from the church life than are politicians!

It is possible even for a mother to become jealous of a daughter, even though she has given life to her. This shows how bitter jealousy is in everyone. It is hard to tolerate someone who is as good in something as we are. We don’t have any problem with Brother Lee, for he is beyond our attainment. I may, however, have problems with you a few years from now if I have to attend one of your conferences! I hope I will be mature enough to have a peaceful spirit to receive all your riches. This is a kind of learning particularly related to perfecting others, for just as a mother can be jealous of her daughter, a teacher can become jealous of his student, and a big brother can become jealous of a younger brother he has raised up. Be careful, for by nature this is with everyone.

### **The Lord’s Recovery**

Not only should we have the testimony and the perfecting of others in view, we should also have the Lord’s recovery in view. Regarding this I have given you six principles. First, you must learn to treasure the recovery more than your region. Second, you must treasure the region more than your particular cluster of nearby churches. Third, you must treasure the nearby churches

more than your local church. Fourth, after these three considerations, we should help the local church according to the nearby churches. Fifth, we should help the nearby churches according to the region. Sixth, we should help the region according to the entire recovery.

### *Stand with the Apostle's Burden*

There are very few coworkers and elders who know how to stand with Brother Lee's burden, even though they were raised up by him. The elders seem to be caught by their local church, and the workers seem to be caught with their region. Very few go to Brother Lee and ask him what is really in his heart. Possibly most of the saints don't even think about this. We shouldn't utilize his burden to build up our region; we should utilize our region to stand with his burden. Our problem is that we often lay hold of Brother Lee's burden in order that it may become a blessing to us and our church, rather than making ourselves available to become his blessing.

Brother Lee has made many proposals to me regarding what could be done in the Lord's recovery. He has often asked me to visit places to take care of certain situations. He may say, "Can you go to that place?" and then, "You know, perhaps you shouldn't go, why don't you stay here and work with me on the Chinese speaking work" and then, "Titus, we are going to publish something, maybe you should be involved in the publication."

I was made sorrowful by this, for I realized that here is an apostle of the Lord full of burden, yet so few are able to stand with him. Out of all the churches, the saints, and the serving ones, how many are with him? Brother Lee is not a light person. He wouldn't bring up all these things with me if they were not really burdening him.

### *Learn Not to Have a Work*

It seems our exercise is just contrary to these six principles. We take the whole recovery for our church, we take the whole region for our profit, we take all the churches for our growth, and we take our local church for our capital. We gear everything to our profit. Very few are geared in the proper direction. How many brothers have learned not to have a work? Had I not gone to the Far East when I did, would the church here have had to struggle through this year in this way? Yet by the Lord's mercy, when Brother Lee says, "Go," I go. I have learned not to hold on to any work.

Once you serve the Lord full-time, the work becomes quite important to you. Once you become full-time you grab hold of the work in order just to lay hold of something. If, by the Lord's mercy, you view the recovery as more precious than your region, the region more precious than the nearby churches, and the nearby churches more valuable than your church, then your labor will be healthy. I would not just help Cleveland and cause Cleveland to become a problem to Willoughby. I would not just help the churches in Ohio, for eventually the churches in Ohio may then become a problem to Chicago. Also, I help a region according to the recovery, so that there won't be a region which stands out as special to become a frustration to the recovery. Try to remember these things. They are produced out of tears and years of learning. Only when you can exercise in this way can you become a profit to the Lord's recovery. Otherwise, no matter how many people you gain, how many churches are raised up, or what kind of work you are involved with; all will become a frustration to the Lord's recovery.

### **THE GOAL OF OUR LABOR: TO BUILD UP THE BODY OF CHRIST**

As we practice these matters, we must realize that the Lord's overall desire is to have a Body. Therefore, when we labor we should have His unique Body in view.

The Lord did much in the 1970's to raise up many young brothers who became the functioning ones who in turn raised up the Cleveland-area churches. Since 1977 I have had to travel due to the situation in the Lord's recovery. I realized that there was much need in the new churches in Ohio, but I also realized the greater need of the Lord's recovery. Due to that traveling the churches in Ohio suffered, but I realized whatever I had was for the Body, not just for the area I had helped raise up.

### **A Local Church is Only the Container**

The Universal Body is the only reason there are local churches. Don't consider the local churches individually as the desire of God. The local church is just a bowl to contain the riches. You need the local churches to contain the riches, but the doctrine of the local church is not explicitly taught in the Bible, so don't make it a big issue. If there are no riches, there is no reason for the bowl to exist. You should see the local church from this angle. True, you cannot give up the bowl, for without it there is no way for the riches to be contained. But you should be after the riches, not the container. Once you have the container, you should focus on gaining the content. The more content you have, the richer the container is. This is my point: the local churches exist for the Body to be in life and oneness. Why is there a church in Cleveland? For the realization of the Body of Christ. Just as there is no way for soup to be realized other than through a bowl, there is no way for the Body to be realized except through the local churches.

Sometimes a brother pays so much attention to his local church that he loses sight of the purpose of his local church. He pays attention to the beautification of the container. He may build a beautiful meeting hall and develop attractive meetings. Surely we must fight for the local church, but the reason we fight for it is so that we can have the oneness and life of the Body. You can take the ground of the church in one day, but the real struggle is to have the content within this container. If you do not have this

struggle, you practice the church life only in name; you do not possess the reality of the church life.

**The Lord is for the Body,  
Not for the Ground of Locality**

I am concerned about this matter. If we don't grow well, the Lord may have no alternative but to go to another group of people. Do you believe the Lord will come back just because some people are standing on the ground of locality? Surely the Lord will only come back because of the saints' preparedness in life. Do you think the Lord will tolerate sloppiness? Won't He go to another people if we are not careful to gain Christ? He will go to those who are willing to take Him as their life. We should be clear that the local church is here for the Body to be in life and oneness.

**The Local Churches are for the Body**

The local church is for the Body; the local church is not for the local church. The church in Cleveland should never be for the church in Cleveland. The church in Cleveland is for the Body of Christ. This is easy to speak, but a hard lesson to learn. If you are responsible for the service office, wouldn't you desire the best brothers to be with you? There are a number of districts in Cleveland; wouldn't the brothers in each district just wish that the best brothers could be with them? With just such reasoning a church often tries to raise itself up without the blessing of the recovery in view. This is too common. It is very easy to labor for what is near us and to lose sight of the Lord's recovery. We need to be aware of this danger.

## **The Supply of the Local Church is from the Body and the Testimony of the Body is through the Local Churches**

We also need to see that the supply of the local church is from the Body and that the testimony of the Body is from the local church. You must realize as you are practicing the church life that no local church supplies itself. All the elders in a certain region may be good elders; but not many know that the supply of their church is the Body and that the testimony of the Body is the churches. All the local churches like to be supplied internally, taking their resources as the supply. Many elders, for some reason, don't like to see their church influenced by other churches. They don't mean to have this feeling, just as nobody likes to be jealous. However, if you become an elder you should be careful of having the thought, "Now I finally have the ground to exercise my burden." Furthermore, you may feel that the gifted brothers with you are for your strength. The Body thus has disappeared from your view.

We should ask ourselves how often our local church has gone to another local church for life. We struggle so much just to build up our local church. We labor and wish that the Lord would bless us, but He doesn't. For some reason many churches in the Lord's recovery are in a corner because they try to raise up their church by their church. They haven't tried to raise up their church by means of the Body. We must realize that the local church draws its life from the entire Body.

For the Lord's Body to have a testimony, there must be the local churches. For the local churches to be raised up, however, they must have the Body in view. This, however, is frustrating to our way. For instance, a church may be trying to build itself up. Then a brother calls from another church and suggests a conference. The leading brothers have reservations, but they don't want to be divisive, so they agree. Then, there is Titus, calling about a time together. Then there is Brother Lee and the trainings. Brothers, I don't believe there is a local denomination with this kind of involvement. Those brothers in the lead in your local church have burdens and projects for your church in view.

Then Titus may call and ask them to come over for a gathering of the elders. Furthermore, you may receive information of a teachers' training for those involved with the young people. They leave. Then, the Chinese speaking leave for a conference. You may think, "The local churches are independent!" Once you take this thought, you die. To say the life of the churches comes from the Body is easy, but in practice, when you view all these commitments, you may wish there were no Titus, and so on. You just wish you could have the opportunity to do your own thing.

There is no work in a church that is so important that you cannot drop it for the Body's sake. The reason many churches do not do so well is because they regard the things in their hand as being too important to drop. They are busy, but eventually they go nowhere. We should realize that no local church is a unique entity. Every local church is a part of the Body. When a local church is only with its own things, it cannot go far.

When I consider this truth, I realize we are very short in our practice. All the churches struggle so much in this matter. There are four churches in the Metro Cleveland area, yet many saints from some churches have never visited any of the other churches. It seems we only have our local church in view. We should realize, "I am in Cleveland, but I am a blessing to all the churches. As a member in the Body I am a life supply to every local church." I have a deep feeling about this. If we don't exercise concerning this, the churches and the saints in them will dry up.

Let me give you an illustration concerning two churches. One church has had about seventy saints meeting for a number of years now. Another just began with a few couples and now it also has about seventy meeting. The key difference is that the newer church knew how to draw its life-supply from the Body.

The Body gives life to the churches, and the churches issue out as the testimony of the Body. The moment you are cut off or isolated from the rest of the Body, your life supply is gone and therefore you have no way to be the testimony of the Body. Only

the churches that draw their life supply from the Body become the testimony of the Body.

### **Learn to Closely Labor with the Nearby Churches**

I must say a further word about this matter. It seems we all are busy with something, yet there is no close labor together. When one church has a burden, are all the churches nearby standing with that burden in prayer? Do the saints in Cleveland even know the saints in Akron? I am afraid even some of the leading brothers are lacking in this regard and thus have become executives struggling only for the profit of their department within the company. We must learn to labor together with the churches that are close to us.

### **Learn to Fellowship Intimately With the Churches in Your Region**

Besides learning to labor closely with the churches near us, we must also exercise to have an intimate fellowship with the churches in our region. For instance, the churches in Ohio, Minnesota, Illinois, Michigan and Pennsylvania are all within fourteen hours drive of each other. In such a situation it is not easy to labor closely, but surely we can fellowship intimately. We, however, tend to be very local. For instance, those in a church may readily attend a video training in their church or one in their cluster of churches, but would not consider attending in a locality they do not often visit. This is because we do not really go to the Lord for His leading.

On the one hand, it is difficult to labor closely with churches farther away. In our labor we should be together with those churches close by to coordinate and give life to one another. In our fellowship we should seek to have intimacy with all the churches in our region.

### **Desperately Follow the Burden of the Recovery**

I like these three words: “closely,” “intimately,” and “desperately.” We must desperately follow the burden of the recovery, particularly the burden of the apostles. For some reason, however, we have no care for the churches nearby, no interest in the churches in our region, and we utilize the apostles for our church. There once was a leading brother, for instance, who screened the life-study messages. He released only a few out of those the church received, because the others did not fit his program. This is to utilize the ministry.

We need to be desperate. To be desperate means to realize that if you don’t do something, you are in trouble. For instance, when a brother loves a sister, there is a kind of desperation within him. He doesn’t tell her, “Well, if you marry somebody else, that’s OK, but if you decide to marry me, that’s OK, too.” We should be very desperate concerning the apostle’s view and burden. Each life-study should be taken with this attitude. We have to learn to receive the riches of the ministry in a serious way. We should fear lest there should be anything that would distance us or separate us from what is in the apostles.

These three matters of exercise are very practical. First, you have to labor with the churches nearby. Then, you have to fellowship intimately with the churches in your region. Finally, you have to follow the apostles’ burden desperately. The apostles also follow the saints, because actually we all are following the Spirit. In Los Angeles after Brother Lee left for the Far East, the brothers weren’t sure what to do. A brother stood up and said, “In the Far East when we didn’t know what to do, we read-pray the Word. You read the Bible and then pray.” The church picked this up and really enjoyed it. When Brother Lee returned he wasn’t bothered that they initiated something in His absence. He watched it and picked it up immediately. He experimented with it and suggested “pray-reading” would be a better term. Eventually pray-reading came to the whole recovery.

Another time during a training a number of brothers from Chicago got crazy about the Jubilee. Brother Lee didn't say, "Stop! I didn't stress this." Right away he picked it up. I believe that Brother Lee follows the saints more than the saints follow him. We don't realize how he is constantly observing the Lord's move. We should learn from him.

### **Avoid Being Independent**

Every elder likes to be independent. Some like to be independent openly, and some like to be independent in a hidden way. Only those elders who have made big mistakes are willing to give up their desire to be independent. If there are more chances, however, many would still like to prove themselves. The desire for independence, however, is the reason Lucifer became Satan. Every local church must be learn not to be independent. Recently I heard one brother give a message on the autonomy of the local churches. According to the Bible, there is independence in administration. But let me ask you; is administration for administration, or is administration for life? We cannot be independent when it comes to life, just as a hand cannot cut itself off from the body, for it will die. If there cannot be independence in life, how can there be total independence in administration? A local church is just a part of the Body, and you can never be independent in life. According to the Bible, there is independence in administration. But let me ask you; is administration for administration, or is administration for life? Administration should be for life.

Since administration is for life, and since no one can be independent in life, how independent can that independence of administration be? If you were to ask me whether the administration in Cleveland is free of outside control, I would have a peaceful conscience to say yes. We are not told what to do by Brother Lee or by anyone else. However, when administration has life in view, you cannot be independent. We often fail in this regard.

Once Brother Lee pointed out how good the acreage at Willoughby would be for a large meeting center. I didn't pick up on what he said, and now I realize that the whole recovery in the United States could be more prevailing if I had. Didn't Brother Lee see something that I didn't see? Within one day's drive of this area lives perhaps fifty percent of the nation's population as well as a majority of Canada's. We don't see things as Brother Lee does. Because we unconsciously or consciously assume we are independent we don't fellowship. We build our hall according to what we think is right. We lack trust to the Lord and His recovery. I didn't think we would be able to have the money necessary for such a large hall. I regret this now.

So, are the local churches independent? Yes, but with a footnote; "not totally." The administration should be free, not controlled. Every local church's administration should be independent, but as administration is for life, when we exercise our freedom we should have the nearby churches, the region, and the entire recovery in view.

### **Avoid Having Only Your Locality in View**

Don't just think about your locality. It may be very prevailing, but don't talk about it. I have never given others the feeling that there is something exceptional about Cleveland. In fact, I always tell others there is nothing exceptional there. We are for the Lord's recovery; even the brothers and sisters in Cleveland are for the Lord's recovery, not for Cleveland. I am very happy about this. Although the saints are faithful in the church where the Lord has placed them, they also are faithful to His recovery. The Lord has committed to us His recovery, not our locality. There is the need for you to be faithful where the Lord has put you, but you are not for that locality.

### **Always Have a Learning Spirit**

Independence and a learning spirit occupy opposite poles. The one who is independent is the one who is without a learning spirit. The person with a learning spirit is one who will not be independent. It is too easy, however, for us to lose a learning spirit. For instance, in this nine-month labor you may feel you have really gained something and you may tell another saint, “I have been through the nine-month labor; what have you been through?” That saint should reply, “I have been through Christ; what have you been through?” Don’t despise this kind of labor, but maintain a learning spirit.

Once any brother takes the lead, within a few years his learning spirit is gone. I have seen very few who are able to retain a learning spirit. This is because, firstly, the saints respect you, and we all are small people. If just a few brothers stand by you and shout, “Long live Brother So-and-so” you think you really will live eternally. If a few begin to respect you, you will begin to feel that you are one of the archangels who became a man because of some mistake. You lose your ability to learn.

Secondly, as an elder, you have the habit of discussing things. Sometimes it is fellowship, sometimes it is just discussion. Elders are not more holy than other saints; they are just brothers. You don’t grow overnight just because you have been appointed an elder; only your place changes, therefore you still discuss things in the flesh as well as fellowship things in the spirit. As you are fellowshiping or discussing things, you spontaneously build up a kind of authority. You discuss what kind of meeting there should be, and so on. It is hard for a person to go through these things and still be able to maintain a learning spirit. It is, therefore, dangerous to become an elder. You need a deep realization that you are on the verge of ruin when you become an elder. To be put into the eldership is just to be put into a coffin.

In the past years I have seen so many brothers step into the eldership and have watched as the lid of the coffin was gradually nailed down. You are walking right into temptation. Satan is right there. The brothers respect and honor you and make you feel that you are really somebody. Furthermore, taking care of the needs of the church makes you feel as if you are so important. You become the decision maker. If all the churches love you, that makes it much worse. Your learning spirit totally disappears, and even Brother Lee's burden becomes just some information to you.

Be careful. Fight to maintain a spirit of learning. A learning spirit is your salvation. Whenever you lose your ability to learn, your growth ceases, for your growth is based upon how much of a learning spirit you have. When you have this kind of spirit and attitude, the church you are in will be blessed.

### **Learn Not to Appreciate Your Locality More than Other Localities**

There is only one Body and one recovery of the Lord. In this one Body and one recovery the Lord has raised up many churches. By the Lord's government you have been placed in a certain locality. When you are in your locality, you have to be very careful that you do not love your locality more than other localities. This is a hard lesson. If you are in the church in Cleveland, wouldn't you love the church in Cleveland? Yet should you love the church in Cleveland more than the church in Willoughby or the church in Chicago? On the one hand, you have to learn to be where you are with the brothers and sisters there. But when you come to love your locality more than other localities, your locality becomes an issue in the Body. That will issue in division. It will take other brothers who are very broad not to treat you as divisive.

For instance, if we in Cleveland boasted about Cleveland to everyone, wouldn't other saints be offended and distance themselves from us? Some may realize that you are not intending to be divisive, but these are the saints who are mature. You stumble those less mature because they may consider that you make your region or locality too much of an issue. They would feel that you are intentionally lifting your church up above theirs. You didn't intend that a problem would result, but one does, just because you appreciate your locality more than you appreciate other localities.

### **Never Make People Your “Capital”**

Once you bring a few people into the church life or help a few to love the Lord, unconsciously it is easy to make them your capital. Once you feel you have some capital in the church life, you are ruined. In the church, we all are Christ's. I love what Paul says to the Corinthians, “Paul is yours, Apollos is yours, Cephas is yours ... and you are Christ's” (1 Cor. 3:22-23). In other words, every one of us is Christ's. No one belongs to anyone but Christ. But it is very easy for us to feel that we have gained somebody. This is because we are fallen. When there is some blessing of the Lord we claim it as if we are responsible for it. We use the brothers the Lord has added as our capital for our own use.

I had an experience about twenty-five years ago in Taipei. I was learning to serve the young people. Another young people's group from another hall came to visit us. I discovered in that meeting we had two camps. If I were more learned at the time, I would have just ignored it and asked the other serving brother to share or I would have shared. The other brother was reluctant to share and for some reason I was too, so I suggested that the young ones share testimonies. One brother shared from the other hall, and one brother shared from my hall, back and forth. It gave a bad taste.

I realized then and repented that I was using the young people to prove my work; they had become my capital. Even though I had not consciously done so, it manifested itself in that way. I will never forget the feeling I had on that day. I had offered these young people to the Lord, but a camp belonging to Titus was manifested.

Brothers, be careful. Learn not to have a work. The Lord can testify for me that I am just as willing to leave where I am as I am to stay. Learn not to allow any capital for yourself. I have repeated this to you many times. I want to warn you about it again. Never take the Lord's blessing as your capital to gain something in the Lord's recovery.

### CONCLUSION

Firstly, learn not to be independent, realizing in life we need the whole Body, and administration is for life. Yes, the elders are the highest government in a local church, but at the same time they should have the Body in view. Secondly, you should always have a learning spirit. Thirdly, don't just have your locality in view. Fourthly, don't appreciate your locality more than other localities; don't even appreciate your area of churches or region more than other areas or regions. There is only one Body in the universe. Finally, don't make any local church or any blessing of the Lord your capital, thinking you have something. May the Lord have mercy.

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