

International Training for Elders and Responsible Ones

September 2025

GENERAL SUBJECT: CRUCIAL ASPECTS OF MATTHEW 5 THROUGH 7 (Friday—Second Morning Session)

Message Five The Kingdom People Having the Experience of Praying in Private to Contact Their Heavenly Father in Secret to Have Some Secret Enjoyment of Him

NL/EC Hymns: 784

Scripture Reading: Isa. 37:31; Matt. 6:5-6; 14:22-23; Psa. 42:7; S. S. 4:12

- Isa 37:31 And the remnant of those who have escaped of the house of Judah will again take root downward and bear fruit upward.
- Matt 6:5 And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites, because they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners, so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, They have their reward in full.
- Matt 6:6 But you, when you pray, enter into your private room, and shut your door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you.
- Matt 14:22 And immediately He compelled the disciples to step into the boat and to go before Him to the other side, while He sent the crowds away.
- Matt 14:23 And after He sent the crowds away, He went up to the mountain privately to pray. And when night fell, He was there alone.
- Psa 42:7 Deep calls unto deep / At the sound of Your water spouts; / All Your waves and Your billows / Pass over me.
- S. S. 4:12 A garden enclosed is my sister, my bride, / A spring shut up, a fountain sealed.

**I. “When you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites, because they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners, so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, They have their reward in full. But you, when you pray, enter into your private room, and shut your door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you”—
Matt. 6:5-6:**

- A. We need the experience of praying in our *private* room and shutting our door; our Father is *in secret*, and He *sees in secret*; the kingdom people, as children of the heavenly Father, must live in and care for the Father’s secret and hidden presence.
- B. The kingdom people, who live in an emptied and humbled spirit and walk in a pure and single heart under the heavenly ruling of the kingdom, are not allowed to do anything in the flesh for the praise of men, but must do all things in the spirit for the pleasing of their heavenly Father.
- C. The effect of our praying in secret is that the flesh and the self are killed; if people in society and even in degraded Christendom are not allowed to make a show of their good deeds, they will not do them; the self loves to be glorified, and the flesh loves to be gazed upon.
- D. We all need some secret growth in life, some secret experiences of Christ; we need to pray to

- the Lord, worship the Lord, contact the Lord, and fellowship with the Lord in a secret way.
- E. We should pray much yet not let others know how much we pray; if we pray every day without telling others or letting them know about it, it means that we are healthy and that we are growing.
 - F. The kingdom people must have some experience of prayer in their private room, contacting their heavenly Father in secret, experiencing some secret enjoyment of the Father, and receiving some secret answer from Him—v. 6.
Matt 6:6 But you, when you pray, enter into your private room, and shut your door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you.
 - G. Any time we exhibit ourselves in our righteous deeds, we are not healthy; such an exhibition greatly frustrates our growth in life.
 - H. Our human life loves to make a display, a public show, but God's life is always hidden; a hypocrite is one who has an outward manifestation without having anything within.
 - I. We can never practice living a hidden life in secret in our natural life; it is possible only in the divine life, the life that does not enjoy making a show; if we are serious about being the kingdom people, we must learn to live by the hidden life of our Father.

II. We need to learn from the pattern of the Lord living a hidden life in His going up to the mountain privately to pray—14:23; cf. Luke 6:12:

Matt 14:23 And after He sent the crowds away, He went up to the mountain privately to pray. And when night fell, He was there alone.

Luke 6:12 And in these days He went out to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God.

- A. The Lord did not remain in the issue of the miracle with the crowds (the miracle of feeding five thousand men, apart from women and children), but He went away from them to be with the Father privately on the mountain in prayer—Matt. 14:14-23:
 - Matt 14:14** And going forth, He saw a great crowd, and He was moved with compassion for them and healed their sick.
 - Matt 14:15** Now when evening fell, the disciples came to Him, saying, This place is deserted and the hour is already late. Send the crowds away that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves.
 - Matt 14:16** But Jesus said to them, They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.
 - Matt 14:17** And they said to Him, We do not have anything here except five loaves and two fish.
 - Matt 14:18** And He said, Bring them here to Me.
 - Matt 14:19** And after commanding the crowds to recline on the grass, He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed them and broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples to the crowds.
 - Matt 14:20** And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve handbaskets full.
 - Matt 14:21** And those who ate were about five thousand men, apart from women and children.
 - Matt 14:22** And immediately He compelled the disciples to step into the boat and to go before Him to the other side, while He sent the crowds away.
 - Matt 14:23** And after He sent the crowds away, He went up to the mountain privately to pray. And when night fell, He was there alone.
- 1. The Lord compelled the disciples to leave Him in order that He might have more time to pray privately to the Father—vv. 22-23.
 - Matt 14:22** And immediately He compelled the disciples to step into the boat and to go before Him to the other side, while He sent the crowds away.
 - Matt 14:23** And after He sent the crowds away, He went up to the mountain privately to pray. And when night fell, He was there alone.
- 2. He needed to pray privately to His Father who was in the heavens so that He might be one with the Father and have the Father with Him in whatever He did on earth for the establishing of the kingdom of the heavens; He did this not in the deserted place but on the mountain, leaving all the people, even His disciples, so that He might be alone

to contact the Father.

- B. We should treasure three phrases—*to be with the Father, on the mountain, and in prayer*:
1. To pray with others is good, but often we need to pray by ourselves; when we pray with others, we cannot enjoy the Lord as deeply as when we pray to the Lord privately.
 2. Even the Lord Jesus told us that when we pray, we should enter into our private room and shut our door and pray to the Father who sees in secret (6:6); then we have the sensation of how intimate He is to us and how close we are to Him.
Matt 6:6 But you, when you pray, enter into your private room, and shut your door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you.
 3. We have to learn to leave the crowds, our family, our friends, and the saints in the church to go to a higher level on a “high mountain”; we have to be separated from the crowd and the earthly things, to be with the Father privately and secretly to have intimate fellowship with Him.

III. Psalm 42:7 says, “Deep calls unto deep”:

- A. Others can respond deep within to only what issues from deep within us; anything that is not from the depths will never reach the depths of others.
- B. If our life has no depth, our superficial work will only affect other lives superficially; only “deep calls unto deep”; the kingdom life is a life in the depths, a life that can “take root downward and bear fruit upward”—Isa. 37:31; cf. Acts 6:7; 12:24; 19:20.
Acts 6:7 And the word of God grew, and the number of the disciples in Jerusalem multiplied greatly; and a large number of the priests obeyed the faith.
Acts 12:24 But the word of God grew and multiplied.
Acts 19:20 Thus, the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.
- C. On the one hand, we need to allow Christ as the seed of life to take root deep in the soil of our heart as the good earth (Matt. 13:23); on the other hand, we, as living plants in Christ, need to take root deep in the soil of the all-inclusive Christ as the reality of the good land (1 Cor. 3:6, 9; Col. 2:6-7):
Matt 13:23 But the one sown on the good earth, this is he who hears the word and understands, who by all means bears fruit and produces, one a hundredfold, and one sixtyfold, and one thirtyfold.
1 Cor 3:6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God caused the growth.
1 Cor 3:9 For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's cultivated land, God's building.
Col 2:6 As therefore you have received the Christ, Jesus the Lord, walk in Him,
Col 2:7 Having been rooted and being built up in Him, and being established in the faith even as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.
1. The good earth signifies the good heart that is not hardened by worldly traffic, that is without hidden sins, and that is without the anxiety of the age and the deceitfulness of riches; we need to daily allow the Lord to deal with these things in our heart so that we can grow with the growth of God—v. 19.
Col 2:19 And not holding the Head, out from whom all the Body, being richly supplied and knit together by means of the joints and sinews, grows with the growth of God.
 2. Because we have been planted in Christ as the reality of the good land, we need to take time to absorb Him (especially in our times with Him in the morning).
- D. While the sower sowed, some seeds fell beside the way, some on the rocky places, some into the thorns, and some into the good earth; this shows us four different ways for man to receive the word—Matt. 13:4-8, 18-23:
Matt 13:4 And as he sowed, some seeds fell beside the way, and the birds came and devoured them.
Matt 13:5 And others fell on the rocky places, where they did not have much earth, and immediately they sprang up because they had no depth of earth.
Matt 13:6 But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered.

Matt 13:7 And others fell on the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked them.
 Matt 13:8 But others fell on the good earth and yielded fruit, one a hundredfold, and one sixtyfold, and one thirtyfold.
 Matt 13:18 You therefore hear the parable of the one who sowed.
 Matt 13:19 When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand, the evil one comes and snatches away that which has been sown in his heart. This is the one sown beside the way.
 Matt 13:20 And the one sown on the rocky places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy;
 Matt 13:21 Yet he does not have root in himself but lasts only for a time, and when affliction or persecution occurs because of the word, immediately he is stumbled.
 Matt 13:22 And the one sown in the thorns, this is he who hears the word, and the anxiety of the age and the deceitfulness of riches utterly choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.
 Matt 13:23 But the one sown on the good earth, this is he who hears the word and understands, who by all means bears fruit and produces, one a hundredfold, and one sixtyfold, and one thirtyfold.

1. The Lord Jesus tells us that among these different conditions, one is the rocky places; there is a little earth on the surface, but underneath there are rocks; when the seed falls into this kind of ground, it springs up quickly, but as soon as the sun comes out, it withers because of the lack of root—vv. 5-6.
 Matt 13:5 And others fell on the rocky places, where they did not have much earth, and immediately they sprang up because they had no depth of earth.
 Matt 13:6 But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered.
2. A root is growth that occurs beneath the soil; leaves are growth that occurs above the soil; in other words, roots are the hidden life, whereas leaves are the manifest life; the trouble with many Christians is that, while there is much apparent life, there is the lack of a secret, hidden life.
3. The Christian who does not have anything in the depth of his being has no root; he will not be able to stand in the day of trial and temptation; may God work in us so that we can take root downward.
4. To be without root is to be without any hidden treasure, hidden life, or hidden experiences; it is essential that some of our experiences remain covered; to uncover everything is to lose everything—cf. Isa. 39:2-8.
 Isa 39:2 And Hezekiah was glad for them and showed them his treasury, the silver and the gold, and the spices and the fine oil, and his whole armory and everything which was found among his treasures; there was nothing in his house or in all his dominion that Hezekiah did not show them.
 Isa 39:3 Then Isaiah the prophet came to King Hezekiah and said to him, What did these men say? And from where have they come to you? And Hezekiah said, They have come to me from a distant land, from Babylon.
 Isa 39:4 And he said, What have they seen in your house? And Hezekiah said, They have seen everything that is in my house; there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shown them.
 Isa 39:5 Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, Hear the word of Jehovah of hosts:
 Isa 39:6 The days are now coming when everything that is in your house and that your fathers have laid up as a treasure unto this day will be carried away to Babylon; nothing will be left, says Jehovah.
 Isa 39:7 And they will take away some of your sons who will issue from you, whom you will beget, and they will become eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.
 Isa 39:8 And Hezekiah said to Isaiah, The word of Jehovah which you have spoken is good. He said moreover, Indeed there will be peace and truth in my days.

IV. In order to live a life in the depths, it is necessary to have direct and intimate fellowship with the Lord; Song of Songs 4:12 says, “A garden enclosed is my

sister, my bride,/ A spring shut up, a fountain sealed”:

- A. At this point in her spiritual progress, the Lord’s loving seeker has become a garden for Christ’s private satisfaction.
- B. She is not an open garden but an enclosed garden; all that she has is for her Beloved’s delight and for no one else.
- C. If today’s believers would close up a little more and seal up tighter, their work would become more prevailing.
- D. May the Lord grant us grace and do a deeper work in us through the cross so that we may strike deep roots and live a hidden life in the depths to fulfill God’s requirements and satisfy His heart.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

THE DIVINE FACTS IN THE MYSTICAL HUMAN LIFE OF THE FIRST GOD-MAN

**Training His Disciples to Learn from Him
in the Miracle of Feeding Five Thousand People**

Going Up to the Mountain Privately to Pray

After performing the miracle, the Lord went up to the mountain privately to pray (Matt. 14:23; cf. Luke 6:12).

Not Remaining in the Issue of the Miracle with the Crowds

The Lord did not remain in the issue of the miracle with the crowds but went away from them to be with the Father privately on the mountain in prayer. If we go to a certain place and have a great success, would we leave right away, or would we remain in this big success to enjoy it? We need to see and follow the pattern of the Lord Jesus. He did not remain in the issue of the great miracle that He performed. Instead, He went up to the mountain privately to pray. The word *privately* is very meaningful. This means He did not let the people know that He was going to pray. Otherwise, they would have followed Him. He went away from them to be with the Father privately in prayer. I like these three phrases: *to be with the Father, on the mountain, and in prayer*. We should learn from the Lord’s pattern here by exercising to be with Him on the mountain in prayer. His looking up to heaven means that He had no trust in Himself. His going up to the mountain means that He wanted to be with the Father in prayer.

To pray with others is good, but often we need to pray by ourselves. When we pray with others, we cannot enjoy the Lord as deeply as when we pray to the Lord privately. Even the Lord Jesus told us that when we pray we should enter into our private room and shut our door and pray to the Father who sees in secret (Matt. 6:6). Then we have the sensation of how intimate He is to us and how close we are to Him. We have to learn to leave the crowds, our family, our friends, and the saints in the church to go to a higher level on a “high mountain.” We have to go higher, far away from the earthly things on a lower level. We need to get to a higher level, separated from the crowd, to be with the Father privately and secretly to have intimate fellowship with Him. This is the significance of being on the mountain in prayer.

*Asking the Father to Bless All Those Who Participated
in the Enjoyment of the Issue of the Miracle*

We need to consider why the Lord Jesus went to the mountain right after this miracle.

John 6:27 gives us the reason. This verse says that after performing the miracle, the Lord said, “Work not for the food which perishes, but for the food which abides unto eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you; for Him has the Father, even God, sealed.” The Lord told the ones whom He fed not to seek the food that perishes but to seek the food that abides unto eternal life. I believe the Lord

Jesus went to the mountain to pray in this way: “Father, I pray to You under Your blessing. Through Your blessing, You fed the five thousand, but Father, they are just seeking for the food that perishes. I do look unto You that You would bless them that they would seek the food that abides unto eternal life. Father, You know that I am Your sent One. Only I can give them the food that abides unto eternal life, but they do not know Me in this way. They know only that I can perform a miracle to feed them with physical food. But they do not know that it is only I who can give them food that is of the eternal life.” I believe that the Lord prayed to bless them further in this way.

His going up to the mountain privately to pray indicated His asking the Father to bless all those who had participated in the enjoyment of the issue of the miracle that they would not be satisfied with the food that perishes but that they should seek for the food that abides unto eternal life and recognize that He was not only the Son of Man but also the Son of God who was sent and sealed by the Father and who could give them eternal life. When the five thousand were being fed by Him, they recognized that He was the capable Son of Man, but they did not realize that He was actually the Son of God who was not only sent but also sealed by the Father. He was the One who could give them the very bread that is related to the eternal life. For this reason He had another teaching in John 6. In John 6 the Lord revealed that He is the bread out of heaven, the bread of life. Eventually, He said that this bread is just His word. “The words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life” (v. 63). John 3:34 says that He is the One who speaks the word and gives the Spirit not by measure. To know Him in this way requires a revelation, so He prayed for them privately on the mountain.

Receiving Some Instruction from the Father

His going up to the mountain privately to pray also indicated that He wanted to receive of the Father some instruction concerning how to take care of the five thousand people fed by His miracle.

In this crystallization-study of Matthew 14, we can see how much we need revelation from the Lord to see the intrinsic significance of His word. To see the miracle of feeding five thousand with five loaves and two fish is easy, but to know the deeper lessons that we have to learn from the Performer of this big miracle requires revelation. These lessons are intrinsic, deeper, and of life. To know the great miracle the Lord performed does not give us any life. We can only admire the Lord’s outward doing. But to see all the detailed points concerning the lessons of life in order to learn from the Lord in His way of performing the miracle imparts life to us. We need to learn these living lessons from the Lord so that we can enter into the God-man living. (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1994–1997*, vol. 3, “The God-man Living,” pp. 564-566)