

Spring 2020
Young Working Saints Outing, Pre-Reading

Day 1

Romans 11:36 “Because out from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.”

Romans 11:36 says, “Because out from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.” Some versions translate *out from Him* as “of Him,” and others translate it “from Him.” The meaning in the original language is “out from Him.” *Through Him* may be translated as “passing through Him.” This is similar to someone needing to pass through a bridge in order to cross from one side of a river to the other side. *All things* may be translated as “all,” including persons, things, and affairs. All persons, events, and things are out from Him, pass through Him, and eventually are unto Him.

**KNOWING LIFE AND THE CHURCH, AND EXERCISING TO LEARN
HOW TO WORK AND HOW TO DO THINGS**

We need to know the Lord’s way in order to know how to serve Him. This requires that we know life and the church and have a proper exercise in order to learn how to work and how to do things. These are two crucial exercises. In order to do anything, we must first prepare material. For example, if a farmer wants to grow a plant, he must first have seeds. If he does not have any seeds, he cannot do anything. Even if he has seeds, however, he still may not know how to plant them. Therefore, once we have the material, we need to study the way. Our knowledge of life and the church is the material, and our learning how to work and do things is the way. Our knowledge concerning life and the church is the capital and material for us to serve the Lord. If a businessman wants to do business, he must first obtain capital and then study the way to do business. If he has both the capital and a way, he will probably succeed in business.

By the Lord’s mercy, we have a desire to serve the Lord; therefore, we must pay attention to our material and our way. We cannot work for the Lord merely because of our zeal and love for Him. We need to consider the kind of work to do, the kind of material to use, and the kind of capital we possess. These are critical issues. If we do not have any material and capital, we might as well forget about serving the Lord. However, if we have capital and material, we still may not have the way and, thus, may not know how to serve. Therefore, when we speak of knowing life and the church, our purpose is to help the brothers and sisters obtain the necessary capital and material. This can be compared to the need for the builders of the temple to go up the mountain to gather wood (Hag. 1:8). Our perfecting of the saints can be compared to gathering wood from the mountain. If we want to do the Lord’s work, we must know life and the church in order to obtain the material for the service of the Lord.

(Knowing Life and the Church, Chapter 15, “God’s work of Redemption - The Mingling of God and Man, pp. 179-180”

Enlightenment and Inspiration:

Day 2

Haggai 1:8 “Go up to the mountain and bring wood and build the house, and I will take pleasure in it and will be glorified, says Jehovah.”

Following this, we need to know the way. After we have material, we still need to consider how to do the work in different places and how to make arrangements for various matters in the work. The brothers who administrate the church in the different localities and who serve the Lord full time know from their experience that there is a great difference between one who knows how to work and one who does not. One brother may go to work in a certain place, but there is no result. When another brother goes to work in the same place, however, there is an immediate result. Even though God is the same, the Lord is the same, and the environment for the work is the same, the work of one person produces no fruit, but the work of another person can be very fruitful. The difference lies in both the *person* and the *way*. Furthermore, all our work is affected by persons, events, and things. Therefore, if we want to know how to work, we must know how to do things. In our exercise for the service, we must pay constant attention to these two matters.

The knowledge of life and the church is a matter of truth and light. In regard to the Lord’s work, many churches are weak and poor because the brothers and sisters do not know how to do things. This is a serious matter. The condition of some brothers and sisters is very good before the Lord—they love the Lord, they are godly, and they pray frequently. However, once a work is placed in their hand, it is finished; once a local church is entrusted to their care, its condition becomes poor. Considering the degree of their love for the Lord and the condition of their spirituality and prayer, they should be useful to the Lord in many things. Nevertheless, the outcomes are exactly the opposite. Although they love the Lord and often pray with tears, their service is ineffective. They pray; however, the environment remains the same, and the condition of the church remains the same. This is because they do not know how to work and do things, even though they are spiritual and pray regularly. If a believer is neither spiritual nor able to work, he will be worthless. However, if a believer is merely spiritual but does not know how to work and do things, there will be no result.

More than twenty years ago I thought that as long as we read the Bible diligently, prayed frequently, and were spiritual, the Lord would work and do things through us. However, this is not the case. In the past twenty years the experiences of many churches and saints have proven that merely being spiritual and praying regularly are not enough. We also need to know how to work and do things.

(Knowing Life and the Church, Chapter 15, “God’s work of Redemption - The Mingling of God and Man, pp. 180-181”

Enlightenment and Inspiration:

Day 3

Acts 9:4-5 “And he fell on the ground and heard a voice saying to him, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? And he said, Who are You, Lord? And He said, I am Jesus, whom you persecute.”

REALIZING THAT GOD’S WORK OF REDEMPTION REQUIRES MAN’S COOPERATION

Those who serve the Lord should have a basic understanding that God requires man to cooperate with Him in His plan. Everyone who has a heart to serve the Lord should know this in a fundamental way.

Since God needs man’s cooperation in His work of redemption, all work is of God, not of man. In our exercise we must seek to act according to the principle established by God. God’s desire that man work together with Him has been initiated by God, not by man. God initiates His work, but it is carried out by man’s cooperation with Him. We could never even dream that redemption requires man’s cooperation and needs to pass through man. This thought is not of man. If we do not see this principle, we will definitely have many deficiencies in our work. All works require man’s cooperation with God, but no work is initiated by man. All works originate from God as the source and are carried out with the cooperation of man. We need to see this principle: all work begins with God, not with man.

This is the source of the confusion in today’s Christianity. The main reason Christians are divided into many denominations and sects is that many things among them have been initiated by man, not by God. The point of initiation is not God but man. Every person who serves God should submit to Him and say, “O God, although You cannot do anything without me and although You need me to work together with You, everything must originate from You, not from me. I will not move unless You move; I want to move only in Your move.”

What is the difference between the church and religion? No religion has been initiated or advanced by God. In contrast, the church is initiated and advanced by God. Religion is something conceived by man, who worships and serves God according to his thoughts about God. However, the church does not come from man’s thinking; rather, the church comes from God. The church is the issue of God’s moving and calling in man and of man’s answering God’s call. From the Old Testament to the New Testament, those who served God were called by God; no one served out of his own desire. Saul, who took the way of religion, persecuted Jesus the Nazarene and was zealous in all kinds of religious activities. Then one day he saw a great light on his way to Damascus, and he heard a voice from heaven, saying, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” He immediately said, “Who are You, Lord?” (Acts 9:3-5). At this point Saul began to know the church. The church originates from Christ and comes out of God Himself.

(Knowing Life and the Church, Chapter 15, “God’s work of Redemption - The Mingling of God and Man, pp. 184-185”

Enlightenment and Inspiration:

Day 4

Matthew 8:21-22 “And another of the disciples said to Him, Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father. But Jesus said to him, Follow Me, and let the dead bury their own dead.”

God Needing Man in His Work

Once we see that God’s work requires man’s cooperation, we will realize that man has an important place in God’s work. This is quite different from our prayers, which often include the thought that we are nothing and that the Lord can work without us. This is not God’s thought. Instead, we should pray, “Lord, without us, You cannot work.” This is a prayer that is according to the truth and according to God’s heart. Although God the Almighty created the heavens and the earth, those who know God will say, “God, You can work only when You have us. Without us, You cannot work at all.” If there were no people on the island of Taiwan, how could God preach the gospel? Throughout the years we have realized from our experience that even though God is almighty, there are things that He cannot do. His inability to do certain things relates to us in our experience. Although God can do everything, He cannot force us to move. He may move in us for many years, but we still may not rise up to take action. God can do everything in the universe, but He cannot force us to rise up early or read the Bible. God needs our cooperation; He cannot do many things in us because, even though He is almighty, there are many limitations in us.

With God there is eternity past; with man there is eternity future. As God journeys from eternity past to eternity future, there is a bridge of time. This bridge of time is really man himself. God wants to cross from one side to the other through man, but many people have a sign that says Not a Through Street. When God makes a demand on us, we often shake our head to indicate that the road is blocked. When God makes a demand, we often respond, “But I have a wife, children, and...” Our “but” means that God cannot pass through us. In eternity God is not under any restriction, but in time God is restricted. If we will not allow God to pass through, God cannot do anything in the church life. We restrict God the most.

Nevertheless, God is patient. When He cannot get through in us, He will wait patiently and call us again. If we do not listen to Him, He will wait some more. He is very patient. He will wait until we are touched by Him and say to Him, “O God, I will say yes to You. I will no longer say but or Not a Through Street. I will only say Amen.” When we hear the Lord’s word and forsake everything to follow Him, we will not be like the disciple who said to the Lord, “Permit me first to go and bury my father” (Matt. 8:21). God’s principle in redemption is that man would cooperate with Him and that man would be a bridge for Him to pass through.

(Knowing Life and the Church, Chapter 15, “God’s work of Redemption - The Mingling of God and Man, pp. 186-187”

Enlightenment and Inspiration:

Day 5

John 15:5-6 “ I am the vine; you are the branches. He who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing. If one does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is dried up; and they gather them and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.”

Some brothers like to ask, “How do we give a message and speak for God?” We can study this matter and discover thousands of requirements, but we cannot ignore this one basic question: do we allow God to pass through us and mingle with us? If we do not have a clear understanding about this point, regardless of how well we speak, our speaking will be useless. We must see that God requires man to cooperate with Him in His work; man’s cooperation is indispensable. Without man’s cooperation God’s way is blocked. If we prostrate ourselves before God and allow Him to pass through us, God’s glory will be expressed.

In our fellowship with God and in our reading of the Bible and prayer before the Lord, will we answer His call unconditionally when we hear His voice? Or will we say however and but? How many of us can say yes to the Lord, or “Lord, I will take this way”? Our usefulness in the Lord’s hand depends upon how much we cooperate with Him; how far He can go in us depends entirely upon how absolute our Amen is to Him. We are sinful and corrupt, we tend to lose our temper, and we always blame others. From our experience in following the Lord, we know that these are hindrances to the Lord. However, our unwillingness to submit to the Lord absolutely is the greatest hindrance.

Some brothers and sisters never offend others, but they are not useful to the Lord because when they respond to Him, they say yes and then say but. This is like a bridge that is well-constructed and clean but with a sign that blocks it, saying Not a Through Street. Do we want to be this kind of bridge? Another bridge may be old and broken, but the Lord can still cross over because it is open for passage. Some believers may be like a broken bridge, but the Lord can still pass through them.

Man Needing God in God’s Work

If we have seen that God needs our cooperation, we will realize that we cannot be independent from God in anything. On the one hand, we know that if God does not have us, He cannot get through; on the other hand, if we do not have Him, we cannot move. We need to tell Him, “O God, I thank You that I have been shown mercy. Because of Your creation and redemption, I have You, and I am even becoming You, but I am still a man. God, You cannot work without me. You need me, and You need man.” We should all lift up our head and be encouraged to pray in this way by God’s grace. Furthermore, we need to tell Him, “Without You, I cannot do anything; I need You.”

(Knowing Life and the Church, Chapter 15, “God’s work of Redemption - The Mingling of God and Man, pp. 187-189”

Enlightenment and Inspiration:
