

**International Training
for Elders and Responsible Ones
Warsaw, Poland October 4-6, 2024**

**GENERAL SUBJECT:
LIVING IN THE REALITY OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD**

(Friday—Evening Session)

Message Three
The Kingdom and the Church

JL Hymns: 941

Scripture Reading: Matt. 16:18-19; 18:17-18; 13:44-46; Mark 4:26-29; Rom. 14:17;
1 Cor. 4:20; Gal. 5:19-21; Col. 4:11; Rev. 11:15; 12:10

- Matt 16:18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.
- Matt 16:19 I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of the heavens, and whatever you bind on the earth shall have been bound in the heavens, and whatever you loose on the earth shall have been loosed in the heavens.
- Matt 18:17 And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to hear the church also, let him be to you just like the Gentile and the tax collector.
- Matt 18:18 Truly I say to you, Whatever you bind on the earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on the earth shall have been loosed in heaven.
- Matt 13:44 The kingdom of the heavens is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid, and in his joy goes and sells all that he has, and buys that field.
- Matt 13:45 Again, the kingdom of the heavens is like a merchant seeking fine pearls;
- Matt 13:46 And finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.
- Mark 4:26 And He said, So is the kingdom of God: as if a man cast seed on the earth,
- Mark 4:27 And sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and lengthens-how, he does not know.
- Mark 4:28 The earth bears fruit by itself: first a blade, then an ear, then full grain in the ear.
- Mark 4:29 But when the fruit is ripe, immediately he sends forth the sickle, because the harvest has come.
- Rom 14:17 For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.
- 1 Cor 4:20 For the kingdom of God is not in speech but in power.
- Gal 5:19 And the works of the flesh are manifest, which are such things as fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,
- Gal 5:20 Idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, factions, divisions, sects,
- Gal 5:21 Envyings, bouts of drunkenness, carousings, and things like these, of which I tell you beforehand, even as I have said before, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.
- Col 4:11 And Jesus, who is called Justus; these alone of the circumcision are my fellow workers for the kingdom of God, ones who have become a consolation to me.
- Rev 11:15 And the seventh angel trumpeted; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign forever and ever.
- Rev 12:10 And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, Now has come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ, for the accuser of our brothers has been cast down, who accuses them before our God day and night.

I. The church today is Christ's increase in life, but the eternal kingdom of God is Christ's increase in administration—Dan. 2:34-35; Mark 4:26-29:

- Dan 2:34 You were watching until a stone was cut out without hands, and it struck the image at its feet of iron and clay and crushed them.
- Dan 2:35 Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed all at once, and they became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great

- mountain and filled the whole earth.
- Mark 4:26 And He said, So is the kingdom of God: as if a man cast seed on the earth,
- Mark 4:27 And sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and lengthens-how, he does not know.
- Mark 4:28 The earth bears fruit by itself: first a blade, then an ear, then full grain in the ear.
- Mark 4:29 But when the fruit is ripe, immediately he sends forth the sickle, because the harvest has come.
- A. In life Christ increases to become the church; in administration Christ increases to become the kingdom—John 3:15, 29a, 30a; Dan. 2:34-35, 44.
- John 3:15 That everyone who believes into Him may have eternal life.
- John 3:29a He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices with joy because of the bridegroom's voice. ...
- John 3:30a He must increase...
- Dan 2:34 You were watching until a stone was cut out without hands, and it struck the image at its feet of iron and clay and crushed them.
- Dan 2:35 Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed all at once, and they became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.
- Dan 2:44 And in the days of those kings the God of the heavens will raise up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and its reign will not be left to another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms; and it will stand forever.
- B. Christ is not only the church but also the kingdom of God; both the church and the kingdom are His increase—1 Cor. 12:12; Luke 17:21; Mark 4:26-29.
- 1 Cor 12:12 For even as the body is one and has many members, yet all the members of the body, being many, are one body, so also is the Christ.
- Luke 17:21 Nor will they say, Behold, here it is! or, There! For behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you.
- Mark 4:26 And He said, So is the kingdom of God: as if a man cast seed on the earth,
- Mark 4:27 And sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and lengthens-how, he does not know.
- Mark 4:28 The earth bears fruit by itself: first a blade, then an ear, then full grain in the ear.
- Mark 4:29 But when the fruit is ripe, immediately he sends forth the sickle, because the harvest has come.

II. The Bible first presents the kingdom and thereafter presents the church; the presence of the kingdom produces the church—Matt. 4:23; 16:18-19:

- Matt 4:23 And Jesus went about in all of Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every sickness among the people.
- Matt 16:18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.
- Matt 16:19 I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of the heavens, and whatever you bind on the earth shall have been bound in the heavens, and whatever you loose on the earth shall have been loosed in the heavens.
- A. The life of God is the kingdom of God; the divine life is the kingdom, and this life produces the church—John 3:3, 5; Matt. 7:14, 21; 19:17, 29; 25:46:
- John 3:3 Jesus answered and said to him, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God.
- John 3:5 Jesus answered, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.
- Matt 7:14 Because narrow is the gate and constricted is the way that leads to life, and few are those who find it.
- Matt 7:21 Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord, will enter into the kingdom of the heavens, but he who does the will of My Father who is in the heavens.
- Matt 19:17 And He said to him, Why do you ask Me concerning what is good? There is only One who is good. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.

Matt 19:29 And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for My name's sake shall receive a hundred times as much and shall inherit eternal life.

Matt 25:46 And these shall go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.

1. The kingdom is the realm of life for life to move, rule, and govern so that life may accomplish its purpose, and this realm is the kingdom.

2. The gospel brings in the divine life, and this life has its realm, which is the kingdom; the divine life with its realm produces the church—2 Tim. 1:10.

2 Tim 1:10 But now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who nullified death and brought life and incorruption to light through the gospel,

3. The gospel of the kingdom brings forth the church because the kingdom is the life itself, and the church is the issue of life—Matt. 4:23; Acts 8:12.

Matt 4:23 And Jesus went about in all of Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every sickness among the people.

Acts 8:12 But when they believed Philip, who announced the gospel of the kingdom of God and of the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

B. The kingdom is the reality of the church; therefore, apart from the kingdom life, we cannot live the church life—Matt. 5:3; 16:18-19; Rev. 1:4-6, 9:

Matt 5:3 Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens.

Matt 16:18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

Matt 16:19 I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of the heavens, and whatever you bind on the earth shall have been bound in the heavens, and whatever you loose on the earth shall have been loosed in the heavens.

Rev 1:4 John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is coming, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne,

Rev 1:5 And from Jesus Christ, the faithful Witness, the Firstborn of the dead, and the Ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and has released us from our sins by His blood

Rev 1:6 And made us a kingdom, priests to His God and Father, to Him be the glory and the might forever and ever. Amen.

Rev 1:9 I John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and endurance in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

1. The reality of the kingdom of the heavens (Matt. 5—7) is the content of the church life; without the reality of the kingdom, the church is empty.

Matt 5~7 be omitted,

2. Since the kingdom life issues in the church life, as we live corporately in the kingdom life, we spontaneously live the church life—Rom. 14:17.

Rom 14:17 For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

3. A believer who does not live in the reality of the kingdom cannot be built into the structure of the church—Eph. 2:22.

Eph 2:22 In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit.

C. Without the kingdom as the reality of the church, the church cannot be built up— Matt. 16:18-19:

Matt 16:18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

Matt 16:19 I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of the heavens, and whatever you bind on the earth shall have been bound in the heavens, and whatever you loose on the earth shall have been loosed in the heavens.

1. The church is brought into being through the authority of the kingdom.

2. The keys of the kingdom are given to make the building of the church possible—v. 19; 18:18; cf. John 20:23.
 - Matt 16:19 I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of the heavens, and whatever you bind on the earth shall have been bound in the heavens, and whatever you loose on the earth shall have been loosed in the heavens.
 - Matt 18:18 Truly I say to you, Whatever you bind on the earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on the earth shall have been loosed in heaven.
 - John 20:23 Whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you retain, they are retained.
3. When the kingdom of the heavens is able to assert its authority over a company of believers, those believers can be built up into the church—Col. 2:19; Eph. 4:15-16.
 - 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.
 - Eph 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,
 - Eph 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.

III. The genuine church is the kingdom of God in this age; today the believers live the kingdom life in the church—Matt. 16:18-19; 18:17-18; 13:44-46; Rom. 14:17; 1 Cor. 4:20; Eph. 2:19; Col. 4:11; Rev. 1:4-6:

- Matt 16:18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.
 - Matt 16:19 I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of the heavens, and whatever you bind on the earth shall have been bound in the heavens, and whatever you loose on the earth shall have been loosed in the heavens.
 - Matt 18:17 And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to hear the church also, let him be to you just like the Gentile and the tax collector.
 - Matt 18:18 Truly I say to you, Whatever you bind on the earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on the earth shall have been loosed in heaven.
 - Matt 13:44 The kingdom of the heavens is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid, and in his joy goes and sells all that he has, and buys that field.
 - Matt 13:45 Again, the kingdom of the heavens is like a merchant seeking fine pearls;
 - Matt 13:46 And finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.
 - Rom 14:17 For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.
 - 1 Cor 4:20 For the kingdom of God is not in speech but in power.
 - Eph 2:19 So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,
 - Col 4:11 And Jesus, who is called Justus; these alone of the circumcision are my fellow workers for the kingdom of God, ones who have become a consolation to me.
 - Rev 1:4 John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is coming, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne,
 - Rev 1:5 And from Jesus Christ, the faithful Witness, the Firstborn of the dead, and the Ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and has released us from our sins by His blood
 - Rev 1:6 And made us a kingdom, priests to His God and Father, to Him be the glory and the might forever and ever. Amen.
- A. Each time the Lord Jesus spoke of the church, He mentioned it in relation to the kingdom; this indicates how intimately the kingdom and the church are related— Matt. 16:18-19; 18:17-18:
- Matt 16:18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.
 - Matt 16:19 I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of the heavens, and whatever you bind on the earth shall have been bound in the heavens, and whatever you loose on the earth shall have been loosed in the heavens.

- Matt 18:17 And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to hear the church also, let him be to you just like the Gentile and the tax collector.
- Matt 18:18 Truly I say to you, Whatever you bind on the earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on the earth shall have been loosed in heaven.
1. Romans 14:17 proves that the church in this age is the kingdom of God.
Rom 14:17 For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.
 2. *The kingdom of God* in 1 Corinthians 4:20 refers to the church life (v. 17), implying that in the sense of authority, the church in this age is the kingdom of God.
1 Cor 4:20 For the kingdom of God is not in speech but in power.
1 Cor 4:17 Because of this I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways which are in Christ, even as I teach everywhere in every church.
 3. The term *fellow citizens* in Ephesians 2:19 indicates the kingdom of God, the sphere wherein God exercises His authority.
Eph 2:19 So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,
 4. What Paul and his fellow workers were doing in the gospel work for the establishing of the churches was for the kingdom of God—Col. 4:11.
Col 4:11 And Jesus, who is called Justus; these alone of the circumcision are my fellow workers for the kingdom of God, ones who have become a consolation to me.
 5. The word *kingdom* in Revelation 1:6 reveals that where the church is, there the kingdom of God is; the church represents the kingdom.
Rev 1:6 And made us a kingdom, priests to His God and Father, to Him be the glory and the might forever and ever. Amen.
- B. In the Lord's recovery, at the same time we are both in the kingdom and in the church, in the treasure and in the pearl—Matt. 13:44-46.
Matt 13:44 The kingdom of the heavens is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid, and in his joy goes and sells all that he has, and buys that field.
Matt 13:45 Again, the kingdom of the heavens is like a merchant seeking fine pearls;
Matt 13:46 And finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

IV. In the church as the kingdom, we are under the kingdom's rule, government, discipline, and exercise—1 Cor. 6:9-10; Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:5:

- 1 Cor 6:9 Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be led astray; neither fornicators nor idolaters nor adulterers nor effeminate nor homosexuals
- 1 Cor 6:10 Nor thieves nor the covetous, not drunkards, not revilers, not the rapacious will inherit the kingdom of God.
- Gal 5:19 And the works of the flesh are manifest, which are such things as fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,
- Gal 5:20 Idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, factions, divisions, sects,
- Gal 5:21 Envyings, bouts of drunkenness, carousings, and things like these, of which I tell you beforehand, even as I have said before, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.
- Eph 5:5 For this you realize, knowing that every fornicator or unclean person or greedy person (who is an idolator) has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.
- A. Although the church today is God's kingdom, we are in the kingdom in reality only when we live, walk, and have our being in the spirit, not in our natural man— Rom. 8:4; Gal. 5:16, 25.
Rom 8:4 That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the spirit.
Gal 5:16 But I say, Walk by the Spirit and you shall by no means fulfill the lust of the flesh.
Gal 5:25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.
 - B. As those who are under the dispensing of the Divine Trinity, we need to live a kingdom life in the church, growing and developing in the divine life until we reach maturity—2 Cor.

13:14; Rom. 14:17; 2 Pet. 1:5-11.

- 2 Cor 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
- Rom 14:17 For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.
- 2 Pet 1:5 And for this very reason also, adding all diligence, supply bountifully in your faith virtue; and in virtue, knowledge;
- 2 Pet 1:6 And in knowledge, self-control; and in self-control, endurance; and in endurance, godliness;
- 2 Pet 1:7 And in godliness, brotherly love; and in brotherly love, love.
- 2 Pet 1:8 For these things, existing in you and abounding, constitute you neither idle nor unfruitful unto the full knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 2 Pet 1:9 For he in whom these things are not present is blind, being shortsighted, having forgotten the cleansing of his past sins.
- 2 Pet 1:10 Therefore, brothers, be the more diligent to make your calling and selection firm, for doing these things you shall by no means ever stumble.
- 2 Pet 1:11 For in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be richly and bountifully supplied to you.

V. The church brings in the kingdom—Matt. 6:10; 12:22-29; Rev. 11:15; 12:10:

- Matt 6:10 Your kingdom come; Your will be done, as in heaven, so also on earth.
- Matt 12:22 Then there was brought to Him one possessed by a demon, blind and dumb, and He healed him, so that the dumb man spoke and saw.
- Matt 12:23 And all the crowds were amazed and said, Is this not the Son of David?
- Matt 12:24 But the Pharisees, hearing this, said, This man does not cast out the demons except by Beelzebul, ruler of the demons.
- Matt 12:25 But knowing their thoughts, He said to them, Every kingdom divided against itself becomes desolate, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand.
- Matt 12:26 And if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand?
- Matt 12:27 And if I, by Beelzebul, cast out the demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges.
- Matt 12:28 But if I, by the Spirit of God, cast out the demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.
- Matt 12:29 Or how can anyone enter into the house of the strong man and plunder his goods unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will thoroughly plunder his house.
- Rev 11:15 And the seventh angel trumpeted; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign forever and ever.
- Rev 12:10 And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, Now has come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ, for the accuser of our brothers has been cast down, who accuses them before our God day and night.

A. The church was brought into being for the purpose of bringing in the kingdom— Matt. 16:18-19; 18:17-18; Rev. 1:6, 9; 11:15:

- Matt 16:18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.
- Matt 16:19 I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of the heavens, and whatever you bind on the earth shall have been bound in the heavens, and whatever you loose on the earth shall have been loosed in the heavens.
- Matt 18:17 And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to hear the church also, let him be to you just like the Gentile and the tax collector.
- Matt 18:18 Truly I say to you, Whatever you bind on the earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on the earth shall have been loosed in heaven.
- Rev 1:6 And made us a kingdom, priests to His God and Father, to Him be the glory and the might forever and ever. Amen.
- Rev 1:9 I John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and endurance in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.
- Rev 11:15 And the seventh angel trumpeted; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He

will reign forever and ever.

1. The church's responsibility is to perpetuate Christ's victory and to bring in God's kingdom—12:10-11; 11:15.
 - Rev 12:10 And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, Now has come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ, for the accuser of our brothers has been cast down, who accuses them before our God day and night.
 - Rev 12:11 And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they loved not their soul-life even unto death.
 - Rev 11:15 And the seventh angel trumpeted; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He will reign forever and ever.
 2. The work of the church on earth is to bring in the kingdom of God; all the work of the church is governed by the principle of the kingdom of God.
 3. The church is responsible for bringing heaven's will down to earth and for carrying it out on earth—Matt. 6:10; 7:21; 12:50.
 - Matt 6:10 Your kingdom come; Your will be done, as in heaven, so also on earth.
 - Matt 7:21 Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord, will enter into the kingdom of the heavens, but he who does the will of My Father who is in the heavens.
 - Matt 12:50 For whoever does the will of My Father who is in the heavens, he is My brother and sister and mother.
- B. The church, which comes into being under the rule of heaven, by reason of her submission to the heavenly rule, deals with God's enemy—16:18-19; Eph. 6:10-18:
- Matt 16:18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.
 - Matt 16:19 I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of the heavens, and whatever you bind on the earth shall have been bound in the heavens, and whatever you loose on the earth shall have been loosed in the heavens.
 - Eph 6:10 Finally, be empowered in the Lord and in the might of His strength.
 - Eph 6:11 Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the stratagems of the devil,
 - Eph 6:12 For our wrestling is not against blood and flesh but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenlies.
 - Eph 6:13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.
 - Eph 6:14 Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth and having put on the breastplate of righteousness
 - Eph 6:15 And having shod your feet with the firm foundation of the gospel of peace;
 - Eph 6:16 Besides all these, having taken up the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming darts of the evil one.
 - Eph 6:17 And receive the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which Spirit is the word of God,
 - Eph 6:18 By means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit and watching unto this in all perseverance and petition concerning all the saints,
1. In order for the kingdom of the heavens to be established, there is the need of spiritual fighting—Matt. 12:22-29.
 - Matt 12:22 Then there was brought to Him one possessed by a demon, blind and dumb, and He healed him, so that the dumb man spoke and saw.
 - Matt 12:23 And all the crowds were amazed and said, Is this not the Son of David?
 - Matt 12:24 But the Pharisees, hearing this, said, This man does not cast out the demons except by Beelzebul, ruler of the demons.
 - Matt 12:25 But knowing their thoughts, He said to them, Every kingdom divided against itself becomes desolate, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand.
 - Matt 12:26 And if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand?

- Matt 12:27 And if I, by Beelzebul, cast out the demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges.
- Matt 12:28 But if I, by the Spirit of God, cast out the demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.
- Matt 12:29 Or how can anyone enter into the house of the strong man and plunder his goods unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will thoroughly plunder his house.
2. The responsibility of the church is to continue the warfare Christ fought on earth; the church must continue the victorious work that Christ has carried out against Satan—Heb. 2:14; 1 John 3:8b; Col. 2:15; Psa. 149:5-9.
- Heb 2:14 Since therefore the children have shared in blood and flesh, He also Himself in like manner partook of the same, that through death He might destroy him who has the might of death, that is, the devil,
- 1 John 3:8b ... For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.
- Col 2:15 Stripping off the rulers and the authorities, He made a display of them openly, triumphing over them in it.
- Psa 149:5 Let the faithful ones exult in glory; / Let them give a ringing shout upon their beds.
- Psa 149:6 Let the high praises of God be in their throats, / And a two-edged sword in their hand,
- Psa 149:7 To execute vengeance on the nations / And punishment among the peoples;
- Psa 149:8 To bind their kings with fetters / And their nobles with chains of iron;
- Psa 149:9 To execute upon them the judgment written. / This honor is for all His faithful ones. / Hallelujah!

VI. The church should pray to bring in the kingdom of God—Matt. 6:10:

- Matt 6:10 Your kingdom come; Your will be done, as in heaven, so also on earth.
- A. Although the kingdom is here in the church life today, the manifestation of the kingdom is yet to come.
- B. The coming of the kingdom is not automatic; if there is no prayer, the kingdom cannot come; thus, we must pray for the coming of the kingdom.
- C. The prayer of the church is the most effective means of conquering Satan—16:19; 18:18.
- Matt 16:19 I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of the heavens, and whatever you bind on the earth shall have been bound in the heavens, and whatever you loose on the earth shall have been loosed in the heavens.
- Matt 18:18 Truly I say to you, Whatever you bind on the earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on the earth shall have been loosed in heaven.
- D. The church must be the outlet of heaven, allowing heaven's authority to be expressed on earth—16:18-19; 18:17-18.
- Matt 16:18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.
- Matt 16:19 I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of the heavens, and whatever you bind on the earth shall have been bound in the heavens, and whatever you loose on the earth shall have been loosed in the heavens.
- Matt 18:17 And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to hear the church also, let him be to you just like the Gentile and the tax collector.
- Matt 18:18 Truly I say to you, Whatever you bind on the earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on the earth shall have been loosed in heaven.
- E. Genuine prayer is a joint labor with God to bring His kingdom to the earth and to carry out His will on earth; hence, prayer is a spiritual battle—6:10; 2 Cor. 10:4; Eph. 6:12.
- Matt 6:10 Your kingdom come; Your will be done, as in heaven, so also on earth.
- 2 Cor 10:4 For the weapons of our warfare are not fleshly but powerful before God for the overthrowing of strongholds,
- Eph 6:12 For our wrestling is not against blood and flesh but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenlies.

VII. Those who always put God’s kingdom before them—that which touches God’s will and His enemy—are the most useful workers in the hands of God—Matt. 6:33; 7:21; 25:21, 23; Col. 4:11.

- Matt 6:33 But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.
- Matt 7:21 Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord, will enter into the kingdom of the heavens, but he who does the will of My Father who is in the heavens.
- Matt 25:21 His master said to him, Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful over a few things; I will set you over many things. Enter into the joy of your master.
- Matt 25:23 His master said to him, Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful over a few things; I will set you over many things. Enter into the joy of your master.
- Col 4:11 And Jesus, who is called Justus; these alone of the circumcision are my fellow workers for the kingdom of God, ones who have become a consolation to me.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

THE RELATION BETWEEN THE KINGDOM AND THE CHURCH

Scripture Reading: Matt. 16:18-19; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:15-16; Col. 2:19

The opening proclamation of the New Testament is this: “The kingdom of the heavens has drawn near” (Matt. 3:2). The New Testament calls immediate attention to the matter of the kingdom. But after a while, when the disciples had come to know Him, the Lord raised the question of the church. The church was a mystery that had been hidden throughout all the generations of the past, and it was not until the Lord Jesus had brought His disciples to the point of recognizing Him as “the Christ, the Son of the living God,” that He spoke openly of the church. When Peter said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God,” the Lord came in at once with the word: “Upon this rock I will build My church” (16:16-18). It was as though He was saying, “I am the Son of God, the Christ, for this purpose—the building of My church. As the Son of God and as the Christ, I am a rock, the foundation stone of a building that is to be built, and that building of which I am the foundation is the church.”

Let us bear in mind that the first mention of the church is in Matthew 16, and Matthew is the book that proclaims the kingdom. The Lord’s second mention of the church is still in the book of Matthew—chapter 18. The four Gospels record only two occasions when our Lord on earth made reference to the church, and both of these are in the book that specifically proclaims the kingdom. From that fact we may know how intimately the kingdom and the church are related. Throughout the New Testament we find these two advancing together in the closest connection. When the Lord said, “Upon this rock I will build My church,” He immediately added, “I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of the heavens.” The keys of the kingdom are given to make the building of the church possible. Where the authority of the kingdom is absent, there the building of the church will be lacking. Anyone who refuses to submit to the authority of the kingdom can at best be a saved person; he will never be built into the structure of the church.

The Bible first presents the kingdom and thereafter presents the church. Where the kingdom of the heavens is in authority, there a church will be built up. A church comes into being where a company of people accept the government of heaven. So it would appear to be the presence of the kingdom that produces the church. But the New Testament goes beyond that. That is only one half of the New Testament revelation; the other half is this—the church brings in the kingdom. The church that comes into being under the rule of heaven, by reason of her submission to the heavenly rule, deals with God’s enemy. It is the presence of God’s enemy that hinders God’s will from being done on the earth, and it is the exercise of God’s authority by the church that casts him out. Then the New Jerusalem appears, and in the New Jerusalem you see the kingdom and the church blending into one. The New Jerusalem is the bride, which according to Ephesians 5 is the church. It is also a city, which speaks of government, and in this center of government there is the throne of God and of the Lamb.

The New Jerusalem combines in itself both the church and the kingdom. And in saying this, we have summed up in a sentence the entire content of the New Testament. We might express it in three statements—the kingdom produces the church, the church brings in the kingdom, and the ultimate issue is the kingdom and the church. The New Testament opens by presenting the kingdom and thereafter presenting the church. But how does the church become an actuality? It is through the exercise of kingdom authority. When the church has ceded to the kingdom the right to rule and has submitted to its sway, the church then brings the dominion of heaven to the earth. All the way through the New Testament we see the church blending with the kingdom and the kingdom blending with the church, until eventually this blending issues in the New Jerusalem. In the New Jerusalem, where you can detect the nature of the church and the conditions of the kingdom, God is able to express His sovereignty fully and can therefore execute His will and display His glory.

With that summary in mind, let us now inquire: Why is the church needed? We can only indicate the answer in a few words. God has a purpose concerning the universe, but for its accomplishment it was necessary for Him to wield authority, because as we pointed out earlier, no plan can be carried into effect where authority is lacking. Whether or not God would be able to implement His purpose hinges on this matter of authority. So when God's enemy sought to frustrate God's purpose, he did a crucial thing—he violated God's authority. How did God seek to meet the situation? He did so by securing another creation through whom He could exercise authority. He sought a company of men who would give Him the right of way on the earth to carry His will into effect. If only He could secure a band of men on the earth who would let Him wield dominion over them, then He could accomplish His purpose concerning Christ in and through them. It was for this reason that God needed the church. He wanted to have the church in order to bring His kingdom from heaven to earth.

The question that now arises is this: How is the church secured? We might answer, "The Lord Jesus shed His blood for the remission of our sins and gave His life that we might be born again and thereby constitute the church." This is true enough, but it is a very superficial aspect of the truth. The Scriptures present this far more profound aspect—that the church has been secured through the sovereign rule of heaven. Because the kingdom of heaven is able to assert its authority over a company of men, that company of men can be built up into a church. It is necessary at this point to recapitulate. Why was the church brought into being? It was for the purpose of bringing in the kingdom. How was the church brought into being? It was by means of the authority of the kingdom. God's purpose was to bring His heavenly dominion to the earth, and apart from the church His goal could not be attained. He needed a people who would subject themselves to the dominion of heaven so that under that dominion they might be built up into the church. That is what Matthew 16 reveals. Do not imagine that by our salvation alone we become the church. We who are saved are in the church, but our salvation alone does not constitute us the church. The church is a Body; therefore, there is the need of relatedness, and there is the need of building up.

Let me illustrate. Our body has very many bones, but do many bones constitute a body? Let the Old Testament book of Ezekiel supply the answer. Ezekiel says that the children of Israel were in the sight of God like a heap of dry bones. One day the breath of life came into them, and the bones were knit together, and they became one body (Ezek. 37).

To illustrate again, the church is a house. It is God's dwelling, God's temple. Now the Bible says that we who are saved are "livingstones" and are built together into a "spiritual house" (1 Pet. 2:5). We admit that a house is built of stones, but a heap of stones is not a house. Brothers and sisters, do not take for granted that if a thousand brothers and sisters come together here, it means that the church is here. What is the church? It is the saved assembled together. But what kind of an assembling together is it? A great number of stones heaped up together is not a house. What then is a house? It is stone built upon stone—this one set on top of that one, that one set beside the other one, above and beneath, to the left and to the right, before and behind, all perfectly placed in relation to one another. Apart from a building together of the stones, there can be no house. There might be a thousand brothers and sisters

together, and all are saved, but we would still ask whether they have been built together or not. They are certainly church material, but whether they are the church or not depends on whether they have been built together. Without building there is no church.

Perhaps some would ask what it really means to be built. Regrettably, although the word *build*, as used in Matthew 16, is found very often in the New Testament, it is frequently rendered “edify.” So we read of believers being “edified” and of the church being “edified.” But the original language does not imply (as does the word *edify*) to “improve morally,” or to “benefit spiritually” but truly to “build.” How do we build? Well, here is a stone. Along comes a workman, tool in hand, and he applies the tool to the stone until its surface is perfectly even. But that stone has to fit into a certain space in the building. The stone is triangular. The space is rectangular. So the stone has to be chipped and chipped and chipped until the shape of the stone and the space in the building perfectly correspond. Then into the space the stone is fitted. The stone is not there to be ornamental; it is there to be part of the building. It is not a lot of ornamental stones that are needed. In many gatherings there is quite a display of beautiful stones, but I am afraid there has not been a building up of the stones into a house. What God wants is not a lot of precious stones; He wants a spiritual house.

We often meet brothers who are delightful Christians. Their lives are well ordered; they are careful about the early morning watch and earnest in evangelistic work; they have attended many meetings for spiritual “edification” and have become so truly “edified” that they call forth the commendation of others; yet they remain individualists who cannot be “built.” They are precious stones, so precious they cannot be fitted together with common clay or stone. They are too beautiful to be built up into one building with others, so they remain individual Christians, lovely for display but no good for building. What God desires is a house, not a lot of separate stones, however beautiful they may be. He wants a complete church, not numbers of scattered Christians.

One sister, speaking to me of another, said, “Oh, she’s such a precious sister, so spiritual.” When I asked more about her, she said, “Oh, she’s so humble, so quiet, so gentle; we have never known her to be irritated.” And again she added, “She’s so spiritual.” I asked, “Who is she spiritual with? Is she an isolated spiritual sister, or has her spirituality related her to others?” “Oh,” replied the sister, “singers who strike such high notes as she find few who can sing with them.” Alas! that sister was so spiritual that no one could be her spiritual companion. Such a sister is all right for display purposes, but she is of no use for church building. The kind of sister needed in the church is one who can have another placed behind her and another in front, another to her left and another to her right, and one below her and one above. That is the kind of Christian God is seeking today.

During the past two thousand years one of the greatest hindrances to the purpose of God, and the main reason why our Lord has had to delay His return, is the lack of Christians who have been built together. You can find Christians all over the world, and you can find spiritual Christians too; but where in any one place has a spiritual house been built? There are lots of stones that have been wrought upon until they are very beautiful, but where is the building? May the Lord have mercy upon us.

Brothers and sisters, there is a condition to be fulfilled if there is to be a building. The one indispensable condition is submission to the authority of the kingdom. Our Savior has been exalted to be Head of the universe, and all authority has been given to Him in heaven and on earth. God has put all things under His feet and has made Him Head over all things to the church. In the first place this implies that the church must come under His headship. What is headship? It is the government of the Head. We need to realize that in order for the church to be built up, we must submit to the authority of the Head. Where there is no Head, there is no authority, and there the question of church building cannot even arise. In Ephesians 4:15-16, which speaks throughout of the building of the church, it is shown to be of primary importance that we “grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ.” In how many things are we really growing up into Him? Even our humility, even our love, and even many of our other good qualities are not necessarily a growing up under His headship. We have not yet

understood what it means to have our affections governed by Christ and to have all those other desirable qualities developed under His headship. Where there is truly a growing up in all things into the Head, there will follow the building up of the Body as these two verses show. “All the Body, being joined together and being knit together...causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.” Colossians 2:19 speaks of “holding the Head.” What does that mean? It means that in all things we submit to the authority of the Head. Note that it does not say, “Holding the Savior,” nor does it say, “Holding the life.” It is when we submit to the government of the Head that there will be the building of which the same verse speaks— “All the Body, being richly supplied and knit together by means of the joints and sinews, grows with the growth of God.” If we have subjection to the authority of the Head, we have the building up of the Body. Where the government of heaven is secured, there the church is secured. The extent to which the church is built up in our midst will depend entirely upon the place given in our midst to the church’s Head.

“All the Body, being joined together and being knit together”—that is church building. But how does it happen? “Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together.” It happens as each member submits to the Head; it happens as each accepts the government of the kingdom of heaven. Only through those who come under the control of the Head can the building of the church be secured. So the question as to whether or not the church will be built up becomes a question of whether or not you and I can accept the authority of the kingdom. (*The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1957, vol. 3, “The Kingdom and the Church,” pp. 261-266*)