

Week 4 – Speaking

WEEK 4 – DAY 1 – SPEAKING TO BE HEALTHY AND SPEAKING WORDS OF GRACE

Eph 4:25 Therefore having put off the lie, speak truth each one with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. 29 Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but only that which is good for building up, according to the need, that it may give grace to those who hear.

God's desire is that we speak, and the most pleasing thing to God is our speaking. Parents love to hear their children speak, and whenever the children speak, the sound of their speaking is pleasant, even if they do not speak well. Similarly, in the meetings whenever the newly saved ones speak, the sound of their speaking is very pleasant. Even if they do not speak well, they still sound pleasant.

Dear brothers and sisters, try to be silent from morning till evening. If you do, you will commit a gradual suicide. Speaking is so healthful! I am not a physician or a nutritionist; I say this completely from human experience. Sixty percent of my health comes from speaking for the Lord. When I do not speak for the Lord, I cannot sleep well; I become deflated and have no joy. (*Everyone Speaking the Word of God*, pp. 10-11)

We must see a principle, a fundamental, a law: you must speak if you want to be healthy. You will be the most healthy person if you speak unceasingly each day. But you must speak the word of the Lord. When you speak the Lord's word, you have joy. People may oppose you, but everyone has a conscience within him; there is an element of fairness in the human heart. A brother who once worked in the telegraph company spoke Jesus whenever he met his colleagues; that is, he spoke for God. Then the others looked down at him, saying in a derogatory way that he was Jesus. But when they had difficulties or when they needed someone to take care of certain important documents for them, they all came to him. Whenever these colleagues faced difficulties, the gospel they had heard operated in them.

Therefore, you must know that the most healthy way is to speak for God. Speaking not only makes your heart happy, but it also is beneficial to your body. This is because human physical health needs deep breathing. When your mouth is closed, you do not breathe deeply, but when your mouth is open, even though you may not intend to do so, you will still breathe deeply. This morning I spoke for more than an hour in the first session, and now I am speaking again for another hour. Even though I did not try to breathe deeply, I have breathed deeply already. If I am tired, I will have a nap this afternoon. Then, tonight after dinner I will come to speak again, and when I am exhausted by speaking, I will go home quickly to sleep again. In living this way surely I will sleep well and be healthy. You sisters who shut your mouth and do not speak, let me advise you that this will damage your health. But you must not gossip or talk idly; rather, you must speak the Lord's word anytime and everywhere. When you speak the Lord's word, the more you speak, the happier you will be; the more you speak, the healthier you will be. (*Everyone Speaking the Word of God*, p. 12)

We have already seen that God desires all men to come to the full knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2:4); this is God's heart's desire. A second desire of God's heart is that we would speak for Him. Everyone must speak. Everyone "may" and everyone "can"; that is, everyone has the right and the ability. We cannot say that we do not have the ability. God created us with vocal cords and a tongue, and with two lips and a mouth full of teeth. These are not only for our eating but also for our speaking. But we fail God according to His creation because we continually speak senselessly, criticizing, lying, and spreading rumors....

Our mouths must speak the words of grace as the Lord Jesus did. Out of His mouth came forth the words of grace (Luke 4:22). Ephesians 4:29 tells us, "Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but only that which is good...that it may give grace to those who hear." Grace may flow out of our mouth; this is the word of God. Brothers and sisters, let us use the time we waste in telephone conversations to call someone we know and preach the gospel to him. We must also visit our relatives to speak the word of the Lord, to speak the truth, and to speak the gospel to them. Not only in the meetings, but also in our daily life, we must speak everywhere and at every time. (*Everyone Speaking the Word of God*, pp. 9-10)

WEEK 4 – DAY 2 – SPEAKING TO THE LORD, WITH THE LORD, AND FOR THE LORD

Num. 20:7-8 Then Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, Take the rod, and gather the assembly, you and Aaron your brother, and speak to the rock before their eyes, so that it yields its water. Thus you shall bring forth water for them out of the rock and give the assembly and their livestock something to drink.

Since Christ has been crucified and the Spirit has been given, there is no need for Christ to be crucified again, i.e., no need to strike the rock again, that the living water may flow. In God's economy Christ should be crucified only once (Heb. 7:27; 9:26-28a). To receive the living water from the crucified Christ, we need only to "take the rod" and "speak to the rock." To take the rod is to identify with Christ in His death and apply the death of Christ to ourselves and our situation. To speak to the rock is to speak a direct word to Christ as the smitten rock, asking Him to give us the Spirit of life (cf. John 4:10) based on the fact that the Spirit has already been given. If we apply the death of Christ to ourselves and ask Christ in faith to give us the Spirit, we will receive the living Spirit as the bountiful supply of life (Phil. 1:19). (Recovery Version, Num 20:8¹, par.2)

If we practice praying over the Word, we will experience the Lord in a very living way, and after a period of time we will be accustomed to speaking to the Lord in a very living yet ordinary and conversational way. We will speak with the Lord not only when we are by ourselves in a private room but also while we are talking with others. We will be constantly in contact with the Lord. Our prayer will be spontaneous and automatic, as natural to us as breathing (1 Thes. 5:17).

Many of us may have been Christians for a long time, yet we still are not accustomed to contacting the Lord. We may feel that in order to pray, we have to be in a private room on our knees. But we must practice contacting the Lord at every time and under every kind of circumstance. We can speak to the Lord while we are walking on the street or while we are working or are busy with various matters. If we are about to lose our temper, we should tell the Lord, "O Lord, I am about to lose my temper." If we are about to criticize someone, we should say, "Lord, I am about to criticize." We must simply contact the Lord and tell Him everything, and then He will be our adjustment and correction. He will be the antibiotic to kill all the germs of our temper and criticism.

What does it mean to abide in the Lord? To abide in the Lord is to be in contact with the Lord all the time. It is not we who are living but it is the Lord who lives with us and in us in a practical way. As Paul says in Galatians 2:20, "It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me." If we contact the Lord and receive Him as the life supply, He will revolutionize our entire life. For instance, suppose we intend to write a letter to someone, but before writing it, we contact the Lord and tell Him that we are going to write such a letter. When we do this, the Lord will do something within us at that very moment, and consequently, the way in which we write the letter will be revolutionized. It will no longer be we who are writing the letter, but the Lord in us will be writing the letter. In every situation we can contact the Lord in such a way. (*Experiencing the Mingling of God with Man for the Oneness of the Body of Christ*, Chapter 7, Section 2)

Learn to say something to Christ. Do not keep anything hidden from Him. Be exposed and open before Christ. Tell Him everything that is on your heart, open to Him, and learn always to receive Him. This is the best prayer. (*Preaching the Gospel in the Way of Life*, Chapter 5, Sec. 5)

We, the saved ones, have a most excellent way, that is, to speak with the Lord and to speak for the Lord. You may say, "Speak for the Lord? My husband makes me angry, the children are gone to school, and no one is at home. Then to whom should I speak?" It is wrong for you to say this, because you have many objects to speak to. The cats and dogs are your objects; the birds are also your objects; and the grass and the flowers are also your objects. First, you must speak to the Lord. Then you must speak to the cat, to the dog, to the birds, and to the flowers: "Little flowers and little grass, I really love you. I can be angry, but you cannot. But you must know that you do not have the Lord's life. I have the Lord's life. Hallelujah!" Speak to them. I am not joking. (*Everyone Speaking the Word of God*, Chapter 1, Section 2)

WEEK 4 – DAY 3 – SPEAKING THE GOSPEL IN OUR DAILY LIFE

Mark 16:15 And He said to them, Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to all the creation.

2 Tim. 4:2a Proclaim the word; be ready in season and out of season...

The Lord Jesus sent all His disciples to go into all the world and preach the gospel to all the creation (Mark 16:15). They were charged to disciple all the nations by baptizing them into the Triune God (Matt. 28:19). All the creation needs to hear the gospel. If we do not have men to preach to, we can preach to the flowers and to the animals. This will increase our faith and cultivate our utterance. Some people have told me that they do not know what to say when they speak to others. My advice to them is to speak to the creation, which includes all the creatures. If we do this, we will learn how to speak. The gospel should be preached to all the creation. If we are crazy with the enjoyment of Christ, we will talk to everything we see about the gospel. If we are speaking the gospel all the time, we will eventually be prevailing, and our preaching will be full of power. Soon after I received the Lord, I practiced speaking by the seashore to the ocean. I did not learn how to preach in a seminary but at the seashore by talking to the sea. (*The God-ordained Way to Practice the New Testament Economy*, Chapter 10, Section 1)

As the sons of God, we all need to be those who speak forth Christ. We need to speak to people in a new way with a new language. We may say, "Good morning, sir. I am a son of God, and I would like to speak to you about my God, who is my Father. John 1:12 says that as many as receive Christ, God will give them the authority to become the children of God." This is the right way to preach the gospel. Although the one to whom you are speaking may be too busy to talk at that time, you can make an appointment with him for a later time. All the sons in the divine sonship should speak Christ, and Christ speaks for God.

In the New Testament God speaks in Christ as His firstborn Son (Rom. 8:29), indicating that all the brothers of His firstborn Son as His many sons have to be the word of God speaking for God. They are not only the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, etc. (Eph. 4:11), but, even more, they are the sons of God, who are the members of His firstborn Son. They are much higher than the Old Testament prophets.

Today we New Testament believers are God's sons and His prophets. First Corinthians 14:1 says, "Pursue love, and desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy." Verse 31 says, "For you can all prophesy one by one that all may learn and all may be encouraged." As long as you are a son of God, you are also a prophet. As a son you should speak, and as a prophet you should prophesy. You can all prophesy. We need to be prophets to our relatives, colleagues, and classmates. We should prophesy every day and be bubbling over with Christ all the time. Instead of talking to people about the political situation, we should speak something mystical to them. When we speak to someone, perhaps he will say that we are a mental case. But we can tell him, "I'm not a mental case; I'm a case of the son of God." We must learn to be "crazy" to speak for the Lord in this way. (*Crystallization-Study of the Gospel of John*, Chapter 2, Section 5)

The second point we have to learn for preaching the gospel is to open our mouth widely to speak everywhere. It does not matter even if you speak wildly; as long as it is the gospel, there will still be the effect. If you intend to convince people by reasoning and therefore speak properly with eloquence and persuasion, you will tend to kill them with your speaking. In the past fifty years in China, the most effective gospel preacher was Dr. John Sung. I heard his preaching. While preaching the gospel, sometimes he jumped from the platform to the ground and then used someone as a steppingstone to jump back to the platform. His messages did not follow any logical order. Sometimes he screamed at people and scolded them, and occasionally he even made strange noises in his speaking. Nevertheless, his gospel preaching was very effective. (*Rising Up to Preach the Gospel*, Chapter 1, Section 1)

WEEK 4 – DAY 4 – EVERYONE SPEAKING IN THE MEETINGS

Ephesians 5:19 Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and psalming with your heart to the Lord.

Col. 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to God.

Once we are gathered together into His name, we need to speak. In Ephesians 5:19 and in Colossians 3:16 the psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs are not mainly for singing but for speaking. In addition to singing the psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, we need to speak them. Due to our background, we do not have the habit of speaking the hymns and songs. We must pick up this habit and forget about our background, what we have learned in the past, and about our present environment. We must come back to the pure word in the Bible concerning how to meet. The New Testament reveals that the unique thing we have to do in the meeting is to speak. We need to speak with the Lord's word, with psalms, with hymns, and with spiritual songs. We all must learn to speak....

Many of us do not get ourselves prepared to come to the meeting to speak. Instead, we merely come to the meeting to sit and listen. We are not used to “bringing our mouth” to the meeting. To merely come to the meeting to hear what another person would say is wrong. When we come to the meeting, we should get ourselves prepared to speak. The reason why the situation among many Christians today is so weak, poor, low, cold, and far off is altogether due to the lack of speaking. If we all would learn to revolt against this kind of silence and speak for Christ, speak forth Christ, and speak Christ, immediately revival would come in.

When I come to a meeting for ministry and everybody is silent, this silence nearly quenches me. When everybody would not speak, it is hard for me to speak. On the other hand, if everybody speaks and I have to fight to get a chance to speak, I am stirred up. If you are the only one on a basketball team who plays, there is no encouragement for you to play and it is hard for you to play. Suppose, however, that every member of the team is playing and coordinating together. This is a revival. My burden is to stir you up to revolt against the silence in the meetings. Forget about the Christianity way of meeting. When you come to the meeting, you should be prepared to speak.

You must speak in the meeting, but you should not speak your own word. We all have to learn to speak Christ as our word, the Word of God, and to speak His word, the word as revealed in the Bible. To speak in this way we must experience Christ. The more we experience Him, the more we have to say of Him. We should not merely say something concerning Him but we must “say Him”; we must say something that is Christ Himself. We have to speak the Christ whom we have experienced in our daily life, and then we have to speak His word. Colossians 3:16 says, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.” For the word to dwell in us richly we need to learn the word by studying the Bible.

I encourage all of you to revolt against the traditional practice of Christian meeting and come to the meeting and learn to speak. To speak, however, you must acquire the adequate vocabulary. You can acquire an adequate divine vocabulary from your experiences of Christ, from the Bible, especially from the New Testament, from the Life-study Messages, and from the notes in the Recovery Version of the New Testament. In the Life-studies and in the notes of the Recovery Version are many high, deep, and profound terms which we should learn and use. In describing the wonderful Spirit which we have received and which we now enjoy we have used seven marvelous adjectives. The New Testament clearly reveals that this Spirit is all-inclusive, processed, compound, life-giving, indwelling, sevenfold intensified, and consummated. All the ones among us who are under twenty-five years of age are in a golden time to acquire a rich spiritual vocabulary. When you are rich in vocabulary, it is easy for you to compose any sentence, any paragraph, and any article. We must spend time to increase our spiritual vocabulary. It is regretful that many of us are short of divine utterance and expression. (*The Way to Practice the Lord's Present Move*, Chapter 3, Section 2)

WEEK 4 – DAY 5 – SPEAKING IN THE MEETINGS WITH PSALMS, HYMNS AND SPIRITUAL SONGS

Eph 5:19 Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and psalming with your heart to the Lord.

1 Cor. 14:26 What then, brothers? Whenever you come together, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up.

In ancient times the saints spoke the hymns in the meetings...We must come back to the practice revealed in the pure Word. Ephesians 5:19 says to speak the hymns to one another. In mutuality, I speak to you and you have to speak back to me. (*Elders' Training, Book 08: The Life-Pulse of the Lord's Present Move, Chap. 1, Sec. 2*)

In our meetings, we must have some psalms, not only for psalming but also for speaking. I hope that in every meeting at least one-fourth of the speaking would be speaking on psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. A hymn, like the cream of milk, is the cream of a certain composition. The best way for us to learn how to speak is to learn how to speak with the hymns. We should learn to use a hymn like "O Glorious Christ, Savior Mine" (Hymns, #501). That hymn will help us in speaking, but we have to learn to speak in a living way, in a very refreshing way, and in a very inspiring way. We should not just read the hymns, but speak in a way to stir up the saints and inspire every attendant of the meeting. We need to practice speaking the hymns in this way again and again. Then we will be equipped to render much help to the meeting. We can have a very good Lord's table meeting just by speaking one hymn. After speaking this hymn, we can sing it, and after singing it, we can speak it again. We would not need to call another hymn. By singing, speaking, singing, and speaking one hymn, the riches of Christ will be released into the meeting. (*The Scriptural Way to Meet and to Serve for the Building Up of the Body of Christ, Chapter 8, Section 2*)

Whatever we speak in the meetings must be with Christ and the church as the center...We need to take Christ, the Head, with His Body, the church, as the very center of our speaking. Regardless what word we speak, the center must be Christ with the church. (*Speaking Christ for the Building Up of the Body of Christ, Chap. 1, Sec. 2*)

In today's Christian meetings, we mostly use the New Testament. But when Paul wrote 1 Corinthians 14:26, there was no New Testament as we know it. What they had was mostly the Old Testament. In the ancient times, the time of the first apostles, although the Christians did not have the New Testament, they had many new psalms, hymns, and songs written according to the apostles' teaching. First Timothy 3:16 was probably a quotation of a short song that was very popular in the apostles' time. When they met together, they used these psalms, hymns, and songs very much. Some teachers would say that psalms also refer to the old psalms in the Old Testament. I do not disagree with this, but I believe they used more psalms, hymns, and songs written according to the apostles' teaching for the purpose of meeting. I am very thankful to God that we have a New Testament and a hymnal. Our hymnal is very good for speaking.

With a small number it may be easier to practice speaking the hymns. Keep a good sequence, and keep your spirit living, exercised, and released. We are so raw to this new way. But I believe that if we practice day after day, we will pick up something. Spontaneously we will be adjusted. We will adjust ourselves by practicing.

The hymns are especially rich in life experience and in truth. The poetic language is so pure. In our ordinary speaking none of us can utter the purified words that are in the hymns. This is because the hymnal was written with much consideration. Hymn #501 has seven verses. If we read and speak it to one another, we will see the riches. If we speak properly, we can render a message by our speaking. We should learn to use complete clauses, phrases, or expressions in our speaking and speak so that others can follow our speaking.

We need to learn to speak the hymns in many ways. Sometimes we need to repeat and stress. In the chorus of hymn #501 there is the phrase, "Inexhaustible, rich, and sweet!" We need to read this phrase by stressing it and by repeating it. We all have to learn to stay away from our natural way, that is, our natural reading and our natural hearing. We need to learn something new according to the Scriptures. (*Speaking Christ for the Building Up of the Body of Christ, Chapter 1, Section 2*)

WEEK 4 – DAY 6 – SPEAKING IN THE CHURCH MEETINGS BY PROPHESYING

1 Cor. 14:3 But he who prophesies speaks building up and encouragement and consolation to men. 4 He who speaks in a tongue builds up himself, but he who prophesies builds up the church. 31 For you can all prophesy one by one that all may learn and all may be encouraged.

The excelling gift produced in the growth in life through the enjoyment of Christ is prophesying (14:12). First Corinthians 14 stresses that the top gift, the gift that excels all the other gifts, developed by our enjoyment of Christ is prophesying. Prophesying in chapter fourteen does not mean predicting. This is proven by verse 3 which according to the Greek says, “He who prophesies speaks to men building up and encouragement and consolation.” If a brother is speaking building up, encouragement, and consolation to others, this proves that his prophesying is not predicting. To prophesy in 1 Corinthians 14 is to speak for the Lord, speak forth the Lord, and speak the Lord into others, ministering (dispensing) the Lord to others (14:3-5). As proper, growing believers whose spiritual gifts are being developed, we must speak the Lord into others every day. If we practice this every day, we will all have something to share when we come together for fellowship. This will be the fulfillment of 1 Corinthians 14:26—whenever we come together, each one has.

The first item that we should have for the church meetings, according to 1 Corinthians 14:26, is a psalm. The New Testament shows us that psalms and hymns are firstly for speaking not singing. Ephesians 5:18-19 says that we are filled in spirit by speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. To speak the composed, poetic writings is more accurate, concise, and powerful than ordinary speaking. This is why we have to learn how to speak the hymns in our meetings. First Corinthians 14:26 also speaks of having a teaching, a revelation, a tongue, and an interpretation. All of these items are for speaking. The last two items, a tongue and an interpretation, are miraculous speakings. They are not by learning but by the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit. A psalm, a teaching, and a revelation require learning.

Speaking for the Lord, speaking forth the Lord, and speaking the Lord into others is for the building up of the church as the Body of Christ. With only one man speaking and the rest listening a congregation can be built up, but the Body of Christ as an organism can never be built up. To build up the organic Body of Christ, all of us need to speak...For us to come together to build up the Body of Christ organically, the practice of one man speaking and the rest listening is not prevailing. All the members need to speak for the Body of Christ to be built up. One saint can speak for two minutes, another for five minutes, and another for three minutes.

Suppose that we have two hundred meeting together always with one speaker. Regardless of how good, how marvelous, and how excellent this speaker is, many would become tired of his speaking after two years. Even the speaker himself may feel the same. Suppose that, on the other hand, two hundred meet together for ninety minutes and everyone bears the responsibility to have something to speak for the Lord. If each one speaks for three minutes, thirty saints will be able to speak. This will be a refreshing meeting. Whenever a new one speaks, his speaking is especially fresh and refreshing. Everyone will say “amen” to his speaking. To build every part of the Body of Christ, we all need to rise up to speak for the Lord.

Our church meetings should be a feast of the riches of Christ. When we are invited to a feast, we do not partake of only one dish. A feast is full of many different kinds of food. Some Chinese feasts are composed of twenty-four courses of food. If we had many kinds of dishes in a meeting, how wonderful that would be! None of us would get bored of such a meeting. Our meetings need to be feasts full of enjoyment.

A meeting in which all the saints are speaking for the Lord is full of nourishing, cherishing, adjusting, and correcting. A brother may be in the meeting who has a habit that is not so fitting for the church life. With only one person speaking and the rest listening, a message may never be given that touches this brother's habit. But if twenty or thirty saints speak in the meeting, eventually someone will speak something that touches this brother's habit. Because many portions are presented in the meeting, many things can be touched. In such a meeting, the saints get corrected without anyone knowing. Furthermore, the saints get built up, supplied, furnished, and equipped. This is why the Apostle Paul had the burden to stress prophesying. (*The Excelling Gift for the Building Up of the Church*, Chapter 1, Section 2)

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