

Summary: Why God Interrupts Man

"We thank the Lord that the foundation of Christianity is Christ, the Son of God. Without this, there is no Christianity. We thank the Lord that the content of Christianity is Christ Himself as our personal revelation and guidance. Without this, there is no Christianity. We also thank the Lord that the sphere of Christianity includes all regenerated and saved persons. Tonight when we come together to break the bread, if we only see the group of people who are with us, we do not have the right to touch this bread. What we are touching is the whole church. If we only see our own group, we do not have the qualification to touch this bread. Our heart should be broad enough to include all of God's children, and we should declare that they all are our brothers and sisters. We cannot have any concept of differences in class, race, social status, or intelligence. There cannot be these things in our meetings. The Holy Spirit has descended upon us in the same way that He has descended upon others; there cannot be any distinction. All distinctions are in Adam. We cannot say that we are this way and others are that way. Please do not bring the things of Adam into the church. If we bring the things of Adam into the church, the church will not be helped, but will be damaged instead. May the Lord bless all of us."

(The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, Vol. 21, Issue No. 13, pp. 138-140)

Note: **Bold type** and/or underlining have been added for emphasis in the above verses and quotations.

Suggested Supplementary Reading

If you do not have access to The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, alternately, see Twelve Baskets Full, Vol. 1, "God Silences Man," pp. 14-38

Our Experience in the Church Life

(The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, Vol. 21, Issue No. 13, pp. ???)

Prayer Burdens

1. Pray for the gospel burden to continue in the church, both among the English-speaking and Chinese-speaking saints.
2. Pray for the saints serving the young people, who need much encouragement from all the saints and much strengthening from the Lord to carry this heavy burden of caring for the young people in the church.
3. Pray for the financial need of the church.

Announcements:

General

1. Hall 3 Meeting Schedule

The Lord's Day meeting schedule is as follows:

10:00am - 10:30am

Lord's Table

10:30am - 11:00am

Refreshments and informal fellowship

11:00am - 12:00am

Praise, Songs and Message

The church in Toronto

Twelve Baskets Full Week 3

October 15 - October 27, 2007

God Interrupting Man's Speaking, Part 2 — the Foundation and the Sphere of Our Christian Faith

Weekly Bible Reading:

Matt. 17:24-27; Acts 10:1-48; Galatians 2:11-16

Hymns:

330; 858; 859 (alt. tune)

Monday

Verses for Morning Revival

Matthew 16:13-15

- 13** Now when Jesus came into the parts of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, Who do men say that the Son of Man is?
- 14** And they said, Some, John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.
- 15** He said to them, But you, who do you say that I am?

Readings for Inspiration and Truth

"We thank the Lord that the foundation of Christianity is Christ, the Son of God. Without this, there is no Christianity. We thank the Lord that the content of Christianity is Christ Himself as our personal revelation and guidance. Without this, there is no Christianity. We also thank the Lord that the sphere of Christianity includes all regenerated and saved persons."

II. Concerning the Foundation of Christianity — Christ the Son of God

(why God interrupted Peter in the house in Capernaum)

Is Jesus of Nazareth Just a Man?

"...In Matthew 17 something else happened. Peter answered the question concerning paying the temple tax. We know that the Jews had to pay the temple tax. This is not the kind of tax that we...pay today. The question was not whether the Lord Jesus would pay the tax, but whether He should pay the tax. Some Bible scholars tell us that there are two meanings to the tax in this verse. The first meaning is that of a kind of poll tax, and the second meaning is that of ransom money, like that used in the Old Testament for the redemption of souls. Exodus and Numbers speak of this matter a few times. There were two issues. The tax was levied upon the strangers, and not on the sons. If the Lord Jesus paid the tax, it would mean that He was a stranger and not a Son. If He paid the tax, it would mean that He had denied that He was the Son. But what is the foundation of Christianity? Is Jesus of Nazareth just a man, or is He the Son of God? If Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God, there is Christianity. If He is not the Son of God, we can give up this meeting hall tonight and go away to take care of our own business. The question today is whether or not Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God."

Every Christian Has a Particular Faith — Jesus Christ is the Son of the Living God

"Perhaps some brothers and sisters have not seen how particular our faith is. I am always reminded that every Christian in this world has a particular faith. I often feel that the community of Christians is indeed the household of faith. Within the family of believers, there is a particular faith. What is this particular faith? What is the faith? It is being able to pick out One from among the myriads of men throughout the world—in China, in other lands, and including the past and the present—of whom we can say, 'This man is not just a man, but God.' This is Christianity. This is our faith. God is not just God alone. We do not just have a book, the Bible; we have the revelation of God. What is the revelation of God? In order for God to reveal Himself to man, He had to come to the world. We do not believe merely in a God, but in His revelation. We do not believe merely that there is a God, but that there is a revelation of God."

(The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, Vol. 21, Issue No. 13, pp. 140, 131)

Tuesday

Verses for Morning Revival

Ephesians 2:19

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,

Galatians 6:10b

10 ...let us do what is good toward all, but especially toward those of the household of the faith.

Readings for Inspiration and Truth

Christianity is Built Upon the Foundation of Faith in Christ

"...Many people believe that there is an unapproachable God in heaven; they believe that God is unknown and mysterious. The God that many people believe in is like the god of the Athenians, whom one does not know, or whom one cannot know (Acts 17:23). If you ask those in the world today if they believe in God, and what kind of belief in God they have, they will tell you that they believe in a God that is unfathomable and untouchable. But this is absolutely not Christianity, and it is absolutely not the New Testament. We believe that there is a God and that we can know this God. We believe that God is a revealed God and not a mysterious God in heaven. God is a God who has manifested Himself among men. By what means can we know this knowable God? God became a man like us. After He became a man, it was possible for us to know Him and to know the kind of God He is. God has put on humanity and come among men to show men what He is like. The only Begotten of God, the only Begotten in the bosom of the Father, has manifested God. This is Christianity. Because God has manifested Himself on earth, it is now possible for us to identify One from among all men who is God. We can identify this man and say that He is God. We have found Jesus of Nazareth, who is the Son of God. He is the same as we are, but at the same time, He is somewhat different from us. So what is Christianity? Christianity is built upon this foundation. Matthew 17 shows us the story about the paying of the tax, while chapter sixteen shows us the declaration of Peter. The Lord Jesus did not care for so many things; He did not ask many questions. He cared for only one thing, and He paid attention to only one thing, which is: 'Who do you say that I am?' He did not care if others said that He was good or bad, or if they liked or disliked Him. He did not care for these things. He paid attention to only one thing, and He asked only one question: 'Who am I?' Whether or not Christianity stands depends on who we say Jesus of Nazareth is. If we do not resolve this issue, we do not have the proper foundation. If the Lord Jesus is merely an Elijah or a Jeremiah or one of the prophets, we do not have Christianity. But Peter declared in chapter sixteen that the Lord is the Son of the living God. How did the Lord respond? He said, 'Peter, you are Peter. I will build My church upon this rock.' Peter said, 'You are the

necessarily the things that will be there in that day."

(ibid., pp. 137-138)

Saturday

Verses for Morning Revival

Acts 13:1

1 Now there were in Antioch, in the local church, prophets and teachers: Barnabas and Simeon, who was called Niger, and Lucius the Cyrenian, and Manaen, the foster brother of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

Romans 11:33

33 O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and untraceable His ways!

Readings for Inspiration and Truth

III. Concerning the Sphere of Christianity – All Regenerated and Saved

Persons, cont'd.

If We See Our Oneness in Christ, Everything Will Be All Right

"So what is the church? I have pointed out before that a Cyrenian was a black person, while Manaen was raised up with the king (Acts 13:1). In addition there was a good man, Barnabas, and a highly educated man, Paul. They were all in the church, and there was no distinction between them. If we see this, and if God's children today see this, that is, if we see our oneness in Christ, everything will be all right. When we speak of oneness or unity, is it a matter of me obeying you or you obeying me? Are you right or am I right? If we are left to ourselves, we can never be one. Thank the Lord that we are already one in Christ. I have to repeat this word already a thousand and even ten thousand times. We are already one in Christ. We were one in Christ long ago. You are related to Christ before God, and I am also related to Christ before God. Therefore, we are one. This is why the Bible never exhorts Christians to be one. Is not this interesting? There is no place in the Bible which says that we should be one. Rather, it says that we should maintain the oneness. We do not need to create a oneness; we could never be one. But thank the Lord that we have received the same life in Christ. Therefore, we are already one.

"Friends, there is not only a difference between the Chinese and the foreigners; there are also the differences between rich and poor, free and slaves, and wise and foolish. If there are such differences in the church, the church is no longer the church. I wish that among us the rich, poor, wise, foolish, free, and slaves could all say that we are brothers and that we all have the Lord's life. This is the church. Some time ago, I was working in one place, and some government officials were telling me that they could not go to the ordinary churches. I asked them why, and they said that others were common citizens, while they were officials. I asked them what they wanted to do, and they said that they intended to donate five or six thousand dollars to build a meeting hall and invite a pastor to come. I asked them what they would do with the name of the hall. They said that they had not thought about this yet. I asked if I could suggest a name for them, and they agreed. I then proposed to call it 'The Church of the Officials.' They said that this did not sound right. Then I said that if the name was not right, the people within were not right either. Today everyone who is in Christ is the same; there cannot be any distinction based on differences in the flesh. Thank the Lord that in the Bible there are only the churches in Judea; there are no Judean churches. These churches are in the land of Judea, but these churches do not belong to the Jews. Thank God that there are churches in China, but there is no church of China; there are churches in England, and there are churches in America, but there is no church of England or church of America. If there is, the sphere of Christianity will be damaged."

There is Neither Distinction of Class or of Nationality in the Church

"...We often think that it is possible for certain people to receive the gospel, but not possible for other people to receive the gospel. Some have thought that a person ought to be changed and adjusted before he can become a Christian, or that certain people have to make some adjustments before they can become a candidate for salvation. Thank the Lord. He has shown us that a Gentile does not need to become a Jew before he can be a Christian. Every Gentile can become a Christian immediately. Today no Gentile needs to be a Jew; he can be a Christian immediately. Some people think that a man must first be converted to Judaism before he can become a Christian, and that he cannot jump from being a Gentile to being a Christian. But thank the Lord that grace is always given to those who are standing on a lower ground. As long as we are standing on a lower ground, grace is for us. Hallelujah! As long as we are on the lower ground, we have it. Thank the Lord that we can all come to God just as we are. There is no difference between a Jew and a Gentile. There is no need to improve ourselves or to change for the better. We do not have to be a Jew before we can be a Christian. We can come today. After his experience Peter realized that a person can be saved as long as he is a sinner; no one has the privilege of receiving special grace. Peter thought that there was a special, privileged class and a class who was set aside. But Jews are sinners in the same way that Gentiles are sinners. Romans 3 says that there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles; they are all sinners. All have sinned. The Jews thought that they were privileged sinners, while Gentiles were unprivileged sinners. But thank the Lord, privileged or unprivileged, the Holy Spirit has fallen upon all the sinners. All have received the Holy Spirit, and there is no difference. Thank the Lord. If there is anyone here this morning who is not yet saved, and who thinks that you have to advance to a certain state or change to a certain condition before being saved, you are absolutely wrong. There is no need to change or improve at all. Just come as you are. This is all you have to do. This is indeed a great privilege.

"Second, there is no distinction of nationality in the church. There is no separation of men into Jews and Gentiles. Yet today some are inventing something like the Chinese Christian Church. I once met a very good man who told me that he was organizing a Chinese Christian Church in his locality. I told him that it was an antique. He said that what he was starting was not an antique, because they had just started it. I told him that it was not only an antique, but a museum piece, good only for the museum. If there is China, there is no Christian Church, and if there is the Christian Church, there is no China. Is not the Chinese Christian Church a monster? If we are in Christ, there is no China, and if we are in China, there is no Christian Church. How can there be a Chinese Christian Church? If the church is built upon Jesus Christ, there cannot be a Chinese Christian Church. In Christ there is no distinction between the Jews and the Gentiles. How do you come to God today? How did you become saved? The only basis for you to come before God is that you have partaken of the life of the Lord Jesus. You have become God's children through the life of the Lord Jesus. Therefore, you are children of God before Him. It does not matter whether you are a Jew or a Gentile. You have become a child of God through the life of the Lord Jesus. No matter what color your skin is or what type your blood is, everyone who comes to God comes on the basis of the life of the Lord Jesus. Everyone's sins are washed through the blood of the Lord Jesus, and everyone comes to God by His life. We do not receive grace because we are Chinese, or because we are foreigners. We obtain grace because of Christ. In Christ there is no distinction between the Jews and the Gentiles. If we come to God through a foreigner or a Chinese, perhaps that foreigner or Chinese can claim a share of the merit. But the Bible says that we all are what we are because of one Lord. There is only one Lord. We must say that some of the things that are in the church today are not

Christ, the Son of the living God' (v. 16). Jesus said, 'Upon this rock I will build My church' (v. 18). Upon what is the church built? The church is built upon the foundation of 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.' The Lord said something wonderful after this: 'The gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.' Why? Because the church is built upon this rock; it is built upon the words 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.' I have often asked myself who Jesus of Nazareth is. There are many people here today. I cannot come to you and take your hand, or anyone else's hand, and say, 'You are the Son of God.' But I can take the hand of Jesus of Nazareth, and say, 'You are the Son of the living God.' I feel that this is the greatest joy of my whole life. To discover that Jesus of Nazareth is my Savior is not a marvel. To discover that Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of the living God is a marvel. If Jesus of Nazareth was merely a man, a man from a nation far away, the church would fall, Christianity would fall, and the New Testament would fall. The whole issue rests on whether Jesus of Nazareth was man or God."

(*ibid.*, pp. 131-133)

Wednesday

Verses for Morning Revival

Matthew 16: 16-17

- 16** And Simon Peter answered and said, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.
17 And Jesus answered and said to him, Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in the heavens.

Acts 16:30-31

- 30** And leading them outside, he said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?
31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved, you and your household.

Readings for Inspiration and Truth

II. Concerning the Foundation of Christianity — Christ the Son of God, cont'd.

"Peter saw the tax collectors coming, and he made up his mind to tell them, 'Yes, yes. I can guarantee that we will pay the tax. I have been with the Lord for so many years. I know that He will pay it.' But the Lord would not allow him to speak. There was no reason to allow him to go on speaking in this way. If he had gone on speaking, the whole foundation of Christianity would have been shaken. The previous passage concerned a question about the content of Christianity. What was at stake now concerned the foundation of Christianity. The Mount of Transfiguration speaks of the content of Christianity, while in the house, we see the foundation of Christianity. The fact that He is the Son of the living God cannot be challenged.

Christ, the Son of God does not need redemption

"There is another significance to paying the temple tax. If He needed to pay this tax, it meant that Christ also required redemption. Therefore, this is not merely a question of paying or not paying the tax, but of whether or not He should pay the tax. If the Lord Jesus paid the tax, it would mean that the Son of God required redemption just as we do. I once met a Catholic who condemned me for not worshipping Mary. I told him that I do not worship Mary. He asked me why, and I told him that Mary was the same as us; she needed the Savior just as much as we do. On what can I base this? When she was pregnant, she said, 'My spirit has exulted in God my Savior' (Luke 1:47). She also needed a Savior. But the Lord Jesus did not need a Savior, because He had no sin. If the Lord Jesus wanted a Savior, it would not be humility but lying. The Lord Jesus is most humble, but He cannot be so humble as to say that He has sinned. If the Lord Jesus needed to pay tax, it would mean that He needed redemption also. What is Christianity? Christianity is built upon these two

foundations. One is that Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God, and the other is that Jesus of Nazareth has no sin. Jesus of Nazareth not only is the Son of God, but is God's Beloved. The Son of God speaks of His position, while God's Beloved speaks of His morality. This is why the Lord would not allow Peter to continue. He could not say anything or open his mouth anymore. He did not have the position to speak. The Lord Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. Thank the Lord that He did not have to pay the tax. Peter should have known that the Lord did not have to pay the tax.

“But That We Do Not Stumble Them” – We Cannot Insist on Our Own Right

“But then the Lord presented another principle. This principle should render us much help. ‘But that we do not stumble them.’ This means, ‘Lest we stumble them, lest we offend them, you should go and fish, and take the fish that you catch and open its mouth, and you will find a stater; take that and give it to them for Me and you.’ The Lord Jesus tried to make it clear to Peter that He did not pay the tax because He was a stranger. He paid the tax because He did not want to stumble them; He did not want to make them feel uncomfortable or unhappy. Peter did not realize this. He only knew to pay the tax. The Lord realized that the whole foundation rests on the fact of who He is. Never think that our foundation lies in something that we do. That is a fallen Christianity, a backslidden Christianity. Christianity is not a religion in which we do something. It is not a matter of us doing something, but a matter of who He is. Is He man or is He God? Some have asked what they should do in order to be saved. The apostle answered, ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus.’ He is the Lord. We have to see that He is the Lord. Man's eyes are blind. Consequently, he asks what he should do. But this is not the issue. The issue is Himself. Who was the One who was born in Bethlehem two thousand years ago and grew up in Nazareth as a carpenter? The Jews said that He was a bastard. Some said that He was Elijah or one of the prophets. But who do you say that He is? If God gives you a little insight, you will see that Jesus of Nazareth is God coming to earth; He is the manifestation of God. If you see this, all problems will be solved. The problems of all those who believe that He is God are solved. Once we acknowledge Him as God, the issue of work is over. This is the main issue. However, although He is the Son of God, He paid the tax because He did not want to make others unhappy or uneasy.

“This is a lesson for us. There are many things which we do not have to do, which we nevertheless do. We often have the right to not do certain things, but we give up that right anyway. We can maintain our right, but we often do not, because we do not want to stumble or offend others. We should obey His word, take out a stater from the fish we have caught, and use it as tax money. To be afraid of others' criticism is to follow a wrong principle; if we do something because we are afraid of others' criticisms, our way is too broad; it is no longer a narrow way. However, it is equally wrong for us to try to maintain our right or save our money. This is not an ordinary case of fear of criticism. We have the right not to do things, and we have every reason to protect ourselves. But we may do something because we are afraid of alarming or stumbling others. For the sake of others, not for the sake of ourselves or for the sake of upholding our own right, we cannot insist on our own right. Instead, we can learn to bear the cross and lay down our own right.

(The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, Vol. 21, Issue No. 13, pp. 133-135)

Thursday

Verses for Morning Revival

Acts 10:34

34 And opening his mouth, Peter said, In truth I perceive that God is not a respecter of persons,

Galatians 3:26-28

- 26** For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.
27 For as many as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.
28 There cannot be Jew nor Greek, there cannot be slave nor free man, there cannot be male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Readings for Inspiration and Truth

III. Concerning the Sphere of Christianity – All Regenerated and Saved

Persons

(why God interrupted Peter in the house of Cornelius)

God is Not a Respector of Persons

“After a long time, perhaps half a year after Pentecost, Peter went down to Caesarea. Before he went, he had a prejudice against the Gentiles. He was a Christian, but he was a Jewish Christian. He was a Christian, but he was also a Jew, just as you are a Christian, but also Chinese. This is why God sent a sheet from heaven. The sheet indicated to him that as long as he was in Christ, there was no difference between the Jews and the Gentiles. In Christ there is no distinction between the Jews and the Gentiles; there is only one church, and everyone is a Christian. The Lord showed him a vision and pointed out that everything inside the sheet was clean. Peter thought that the Jews were a special, privileged group, that they received special grace from God, and that it was hard for the Gentiles to receive God's grace. But God showed him that only the inner man is related to God's grace; there is no difference between the Jews and Gentiles in this respect. Therefore, God sent him to the house of Cornelius. He found himself preaching in the house of Cornelius. Yet one thing still could not be erased from his mind. The middle wall of partition was still there. He considered the Gentiles as dogs. He thought that God had granted special privileges to the Jews, and that they were a special group of people. He could not believe that the Gentiles could receive the same grace that the privileged Jews had received. He had seen the principle and the vision, and he confessed with his mouth that God is no respecter of persons. But in practice, there was still some problem. This is the same with us today. We say with our mouth that there is no distinction between the Chinese and other nationalities. We know this as a principle, and we have seen the vision. But when it comes to practice, we act differently. Before Peter finished his words, while he was yet speaking and about to continue, the Holy Spirit came in and fell upon them all. All the Gentiles, with no exception, began to speak in tongues. The tongue-speaking interrupted Peter's word. Later, Peter realized that the Holy Spirit had descended upon the Gentiles in the same way that He had descended upon them. He testified that just as the Holy Spirit had fallen on them, the Holy Spirit had fallen on the Gentiles. He had no choice but to baptize them and recognize them as Christians.”

(The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, Vol. 21, Issue No. 13, pp. 135-136)

Friday

Verses for Morning Revival

Ephesians 2:13-15

- 13** But now in Christ Jesus you who were once far off have become near in the blood of Christ.
14 For He Himself is our peace, He who has made both one and has broken down the middle wall of partition, the enmity,
15 Abolishing in His flesh the law of the commandments in ordinances, that He might create the two in Himself into one new man, so making peace,