

transfiguration, so that we will clearly see that unless we carry out God's will by bearing the cross, we cannot expect to be raptured. Knowing the coming glory without having the revelation concerning how to enter the coming glory is useless. May the Spirit of God grant us a spiritual vision, so that we know the relationship between the rapture and the accomplishment of God's will. After we have such a view, may we bear the cross and follow the Lord faithfully unto death. May we be like our Lord, who was set toward Jerusalem and did not turn at all. May we be able to say what Paul said, that we have not disobeyed the heavenly vision.

"The glory is in sight, yet the sufferings are here! The day of the rapture is near, yet we must first pass through the cross. The day of the rapture is near, but there is a calling to purposefully carry out God's will and obey Him. This is the pathway which led the Lord to be taken up! The rapture is ordained, and the pathway to Jerusalem is also ordained. Once we are raptured, everything will be over. The times when we experience the most suffering with the Lord are the times when we are most intimate with Him. The times when we feel that the Lord is closest to us are the times when we are suffering with Him. The Lord is ahead of us, and we are behind Him. We should follow the Lord to finish this course!"

(*ibid.*, pp. 613-615)

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

*Our Experience in the Church Life*

**When We Find We Cannot Immediately Follow the Lord's Will, We Could Pray:**

"Lord, I admit that I am not willing to learn this lesson. But please do not surrender to me. Lord, please wait! I will surrender to You."

***Prayer Burdens***

1. The Chinese-speaking training is drawing near. Pray the Lord would give those attending an open heart to receive what the Lord wants to speak through Brother Titus Chu.
2. The young people's Ignite conference with many coming from out of town will closely follow the Chinese-speaking training. Pray for the young people as well as all the serving saints and homes opened for hospitality.

***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 8

December 24, 2007 - January 5, 2008

**The Cross of Christ**

*Weekly Bible Reading:*

**Matthew 27:33-53; Luke 23:26-49; Romans 8:14-39**

*Hymns:*

**552; 431; 1137; 1133**

**Monday**

*Verses for Morning Revival*

**Matthew 27:34**

**34** They gave Him wine to drink, mingled with gall. And when He tasted it, He would not drink.

**Luke 23:34a**

**34** And Jesus said, Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing...

*Readings for Inspiration and Truth*

***The Cross and the Wine Mingled With Gall***

"...the Lord Jesus was led by man to Golgotha where he was about to be crucified,...At that time the punishment of the cross was the most agonizing kind of punishment; therefore, the law in those days permitted giving the one who was going to be crucified wine mingled with gall to drink. Although wine mingled with gall was not as good as the anesthetics that surgeons use today, at that time it was the substance that best alleviated the pain in one's senses.

"The Lord Jesus was very distinctive here in that He would not drink wine mingled with gall. When others were crucified, they all wanted to drink wine mingled with gall; only the Lord Jesus would not drink it when He was crucified. There was bitter feeling with the crosses of men, so they all needed wine mingled with gall to remove the pain in their senses. But in the cross of the Lord Jesus, wine mingled with gall was refused. If one is crucified and also drinks wine mingled with gall, then it will be a cross of man and not the cross of our Lord...

"At this point we should ask the reason for the Lord's refusal. The cross produced a bitter feeling in others, but it did not produce such a feeling in the Lord Jesus. (This does not refer to physical feeling; physically, He also had feeling.) Because others were full of feelings, there was a need for wine mingled with gall. But here was a person who, on the spiritual side, did not harbor any bitter feelings when He was crucified, so He did not need wine mingled with gall.

"According to Luke, when the Lord was on the cross, He prayed, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing' (23:34). This is what is meant by having no need of wine mingled with gall. Here was a man who was wrongfully accused, afflicted, scourged, shamed, persecuted, rejected, judged, and even condemned by men. He was abused by men to the uttermost, but at this point He

lifted up His head and said, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.' He had no feeling of bitterness within, nor the feeling of being wrongfully accused, nor the feeling of being persecuted; therefore, He needed no wine mingled with gall. A person who has no feeling of bitterness within does not need wine mingled with gall to alleviate his pain."

*(The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, Vol. 37, Chpt. 17, pp. 97-98)*

## Tuesday

*Verses for Morning Revival*

### James 1:2-3

- 2 Count it all joy, my brothers, whenever you fall into various trials,
- 3 Knowing that the proving of your faith works out endurance.

*Readings for Inspiration and Truth*

### A Great Problem among God's Children is that God Is Not Their Joy

"Those who harbor a feeling of bitterness, who need wine mingled with gall, are those who will not bear the cross. Many children of God apparently seem to be bearing the cross but are not doing so in reality. Bearing the cross requires no consolation and joy outside of God. But when many bear the cross, the ones living next door know all about it. If those upstairs bear the cross, the ones living downstairs know about it. When it comes to many people, their countenance, expression, and voice tell people: 'Look! I am here bearing the cross.' We should realize that if the news of the existence of a cross leaks out, it is not a cross. Whenever the news leaks out, there is no cross. The news that leaks out is wine mingled with gall. Human beings are prone to seek comfort, love, and sympathy from others upon suffering even a little pain. We do not know how innumerable are those who thirst for these things, but this is not the cross. A great problem among God's children is that God is not their joy. Therefore, they seek joy outside of God. God cannot satisfy their heart, and therefore, they need to seek comfort outside of God. This is wine mingled with gall. This is not something that belongs to the cross. "When God's children suffer, there are perhaps three different kinds of feelings. Some react outwardly toward men; some turn inward; and some suppress their feelings. Those who react toward men become angry with others, hate others, and do not forgive them. Those who turn their feelings inward become hurt and pity themselves, supposing that they are following the Lord and that they are suffering very much like the Lord. Those who suppress their feelings become passive. We easily become angry; we easily pity ourselves; and we easily become passive. Some of God's children think that being passive is being victorious. Little do they know that the passive ones, in their feelings, also expect wine mingled with gall. Passivity is another expression of being hurt. Because one is despairing within, he becomes passive; because he expects too much, he becomes passive. Passivity proves that there is no cross; it is only the forcible suppression of one's feelings."

*(ibid., pp. 98-99)*

## Wednesday

*Verses for Morning Revival*

book of Ephesians is filled with God's grace. Yet at the same time, it is filled with man's responsibility. If God has not gained what He has purposed, He will not be satisfied. 'And all things which have been written through the prophets regarding the Son of Man will be accomplished' (Luke 18:31). May everything God has ordained for us be accomplished in us."

### 6. Before the Rapture, There Will Be Heavier Crosses

"He spoke further a parable, because He was near Jerusalem and they supposed that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately. He said therefore, A certain man of noble birth went to a distant country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return' (Luke 19:11-12). The disciples thought that as soon as they entered Jerusalem, God's kingdom would come and the Lord would be king. The disciples thought that they were going to Jerusalem to enjoy the blessing, but the Lord told them that they were going there to suffer. The disciples thought that going to Jerusalem was for reigning, but the Lord told them that it was for dying on the cross. Going to 'a distant country' is to go to heaven, but before that, before the rapture and the resurrection, there must be greater sufferings and darker environments. The shadow of the great tribulation seems to be here already. Before the rapture, there will surely be heavier crosses!"

### 7. Jesus Leads Us in the Way Which Is Ahead

"And having said these things, He went on before them, going up to Jerusalem' (Luke 19:28). He is leading us on in the way which is ahead of us. A year before that, His face had been toward Jerusalem. Here, it was still the same. He did not change. He does not charge us to go while He stays behind; rather, He leads us along the way."

### 8. Once We Know God's Will, We Obey

"After the Lord arrived in Jerusalem, we know that He entered the city every day, and at night He stayed at the Mount of Olives. Let us consider His prayer on the last night at Gethsemane, 'My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will...Again, going away a second time, He prayed, saying, My Father, if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, Your will be done' (Matt. 26:39, 42). Some interpret the 'cup' mentioned at Gethsemane as dying. This interpretation is not entirely correct. The cup refers to the cross. In other words, the Lord asked God to spare Him from going to the cross if it was possible. But then the Lord also said, 'Not as I will, but as You will.' The Lord could pray, 'If it is possible, let this cup pass from Me,' but He could not pray, 'If it is possible, let Your will not be fulfilled.' It is true that the cup was important. But there is a distinction between the cup and God's will. The Lord showed us that God's will was more important than the cross. The second time He prayed, He put the cross and God's will together, and He obeyed, knowing that the cross was God's will. Before this time He could choose, but once He knew that the cup was God's will, He obeyed."

### 9. The Spiritual Vision of Glory Causes Us to Bear the Cross and Follow the Lord Faithfully Unto Death

"Brothers, what is the mount of transfiguration? The mount of transfiguration is glory; it is the glory after the rapture and the resurrection. However, the mount of transfiguration not only signifies glory; it also signifies a revelation, a vision, and a clear view. The mount of transfiguration reveals that the pathway to glory is through Jerusalem. Today we need the revelation, the vision, and the view of the mount of

because of Herod. He said, 'I must journey.' ”

#### **4. Along The Way, If There Is Anything That We Ought To Do, We Should Do It**

“Luke 17:11-19 shows that on His way to Jerusalem, the Lord passed through Samaria and Galilee, and He healed ten lepers. This teaches us that along the way, if there is anything that we ought to do, we should do it. Whether it is the preaching of the gospel or the rendering of help to others, as long as it is something along the way, we should try our best to take care of it. The Lord was set for Jerusalem, but when anything came along His way, He took care of it. He did not decline just because He was set for Jerusalem. We certainly should not change our direction because of the things that come to us along the way, and we should not be caught away by the things we meet to the point that we stop advancing. We should work, and we should save others. However, our course should be set toward Jerusalem. If something is a frustration to our journey toward Jerusalem, we should stop that work. The Lord could have healed the ten lepers on the way and then stopped there without going further to Jerusalem. He also could have healed all the lepers in Samaria, but if He had done this, He would not have been able to save us. It is right for Christians to save sinners and help others. But if a person is stopped by these things from doing God's will, he should not continue them. These things should only be done along the way. It is right to wait for the rapture, but it is also right to do our best to save others. Revelation 22:17 is very meaningful. It says, 'And the Spirit and the bride say, Come! And let him who hears say, Come!' These two 'come's' are the prayer of the Spirit and the bride for the Lord's coming. Following this, it says, 'And let him who is thirsty come; let him who wills take the water of life freely.' This shows that after we yearn for His coming, we preach the gospel. May we save a few more men while we are on the earth!"

*(The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, Vol. 19, pp. 611-613)*

### **Saturday**

*Verses for Morning Revival*

#### **2 Corinthians 4:16-18**

- 16** Therefore we do not lose heart; but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.
- 17** For our momentary lightness of affliction works out for us, more and more surpassingly, an eternal weight of glory,
- 18** Because we do not regard the things which are seen but the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

*Readings for Inspiration and Truth*

#### **5. It Is Not Enough for Us to Take the Way of the Cross Alone**

" 'And taking the twelve aside, He said to them, Behold we are going up to Jerusalem' (Luke 18:31). The Lord did not say 'I am going,' but 'we are going.' It is not enough for us to take the way of the cross alone; we should exhort others and lead them on to do God's will and carry the cross also. How do we wait for the rapture? C. H. Mackintosh said, 'It is one thing for us to believe that the Lord will come. It is another thing for us to wait for His coming.' God does not want us to believe in the Lord's coming in creed only; He wants us to wait for the coming of His Son. The church should pass through everything that God has ordained for it. The

#### **2 Corinthians 4:11, 15**

- 11** For we who are alive are always being delivered unto death for Jesus' sake that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.
- 15** For all things are for your sakes that the grace which has abounded through the greater number may cause the thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God.

*Readings for Inspiration and Truth*

#### **What Is Not the Experience of the Cross of Christ?**

“Among God's children, some do suffer, but there are not many who really bear the cross. When they are suffering, they express themselves in a few different ways. Someone may think that since he is a Christian, he is supposed to suffer. Outwardly he says nothing, and he really looks like a cross-bearing Christian, but secretly he is murmuring. Such persons, who murmur a great deal after they have suffered, still do not know what the cross is because inwardly they are filled with bitter feelings; they need wine mingled with gall.

“Some people do not murmur when they suffer. There is neither spoken nor silent murmuring. Yet they weep. We must realize that the cross is a place where the blood is shed and the body is sacrificed; the cross is not the place of weeping and self-pity. Those who pity themselves and weep are those who do not know the cross. Weeping means that one is not willing to see himself suffer. Only those at the foot of the cross weep; those who are on the cross have no tears. If a person feels hurt after enduring a little pain or suffers after incurring a little loss, he still does not know what the cross is.

“There is also another kind of person who is puffed up with pride and pretends to be an overcomer. This person is not a crucified person either because his kind of reaction is for gaining people's attention. He seems to be saying, 'Though I suffer, I can still sing hymns and still give praise; I am a cross-bearer.' The purpose of his behavior is to gain man's admiration. This is also wine mingled with gall; this is not bearing the cross either.

“Some do not bear the cross in reality but are very capable of talking about the cross. They consider that this encounter is an experience of the cross, and that incidence is also an experience of the cross. This happening is a cross, and that happening is also a cross. What these persons expect is the pity of men. Their heart is grieved only because no one pities them. Their eyes are always looking around them for some to come and pity them. These persons crave wine mingled with gall; they are not crucified.”

*(The Collected Works of Watchman Nee, Vol. 37, Chpt. 17, pp. 99-100)*

### **Thursday**

*Verses for Morning Revival*

#### **2 Corinthians 1:3-4**

- 3** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassions and God of all comfort;
- 4** Who comforts us in all our affliction that we may be able to comfort those who are in every affliction through the comforting with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

- 59 And they stoned Stephen as he called upon the Lord and said, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!
- 60 And kneeling down, he cried out with a loud voice, Lord, do not hold this sin against them...

*Readings for Inspiration and Truth*

**What Is the Experience of the Cross of Christ?**

“The cross is not turning one’s feelings toward others; it is not turning one’s feelings inward or suppressing one’s feelings. The cross is a matter of joyful acceptance; it is for a person to thank God saying, ‘The path that God has chosen for me is all good. I can be glad, I can give thanks, and I have no problems because I receive from God’s hand the cross that He has given me.’

“The cross forgives; it does not pity itself, and it is not passive. The only feeling the cross gives us is a feeling of thanksgiving to the Lord.

“The cross is a matter of having a soft heart before God. Whatever God wishes, let it be so. It is a matter of knowing that God is great and that God is also love.

“The real bearing of the cross will only result in others’ respect; it will not seek man’s pity. Whenever one seeks man’s pity and whenever one seeks man’s comfort, that is only wine mingled with gall and not the cross. Our Lord was crucified on the cross, and therefore the cross becomes a place where we worship the Lord. The Lord’s cross was at Golgotha, and therefore Golgotha becomes the center of our praises to the Lord. If a brother is suffering for the Lord on the cross, we will kiss his hands and his feet for the Lord. But he is not a cross-bearer if he expects this and that while enduring the pain of the cross.

“Our Lord refused wine mingled with gall for the simple reason that He did not need man’s help. He did not need man’s help because He already had God’s joy in Him. The cross means rejoicing within and being able to praise God within. Therefore, a cross-bearer can comfort others. Paul said, ‘Who comforts us in all our affliction that we may be able to comfort those who are in every affliction through the comforting with which we ourselves are comforted by God’ (2 Cor. 1:4). A person such as Paul is one who can comfort other people because no difficulty can touch him. We have seen that Paul and Silas could pray and sing hymns to praise God in their affliction in Philippi (Acts 16:25). These two men needed no wine mingled with gall; they were men who were really crucified on the cross. Stephen could still ask God to forgive the people when he was being stoned (Acts 7:59-60). He did not feel any pain for himself; he needed no wine mingled with gall. He was really a crucified person. The cross means that no matter what pain or difficulty befalls you, you are not touched by it; on the contrary, you can still praise God. If you are always considering how heavy or difficult a matter is, there is no cross.

“May God show us daily what the cross is, and may we know how the cross does not need wine mingled with gall. May God save us from seeking wine mingled with gall and enable us to rejoice and praise on account of Him.”

*(ibid, pp. 100-101)*

**Friday**

- 16 The Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God.
- 17 And if children, heirs also; on the one hand, heirs of God; on the other, joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him that we may also be glorified with Him.
- 18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the coming glory to be revealed upon us.

*Readings for Inspiration and Truth*

***The Pathway to Glory—Through Jerusalem***

***(Lessons from the Way to the Lord’s Cross)***

**1. Whenever We Take the Way of the Cross, Others Will Not Receive Us**

“ ‘And they went and entered into a village of the Samaritans...And they did not receive Him, because His face was set to go to Jerusalem’ (Luke 9:52-53). The Samaritans did not receive the Lord for one reason: His face was set to go to Jerusalem. Whenever we set out to do God’s will and take the way of the cross, others will not receive us. We have to ask God day after day to give us a stronger desire for His will. Although men may not be pleased, nevertheless the Lord knows us. At that time, two disciples could not stand the rejection of the Samaritans, and they wanted revenge. The Lord turned and rebuked the two of them, saying that they did not know of what kind of spirit they were. When we are rejected, we feel like saying, ‘Wait until the judgment seat, and we will see who is right.’ The Lord rebuked such an attitude. Having said that, the Lord turned to other villages. He did not have time to take care of the reaction of the Samaritans.”

**2. The Experience of the Cross Will Cause Us to Gain Deeper and Richer Experiences**

“ ‘And He journeyed throughout the cities and villages, teaching and making His way toward Jerusalem’ (Luke 13:22). This teaches us not to drop everything to wait for the coming of God’s kingdom just because the day of the rapture is near. Rather, we should continue in the way of the cross. This is the course; we cannot stop our daily work. The Lord taught as He made His way throughout the cities and villages. If the cross has done a deep enough work in us, everything will render us help and will cause us to gain deeper and richer experiences.”

**3. Cunning Men Cannot Thwart God’s Will**

“ ‘In the same hour some Pharisees came up, saying to Him, Get out and go from here, for Herod wants to kill you. And He said to them, Go and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out demons and accomplish healings today and tomorrow, and on the third day I am perfected. However, I must journey today and tomorrow and on the following day because it is not acceptable for a prophet to perish outside of Jerusalem’ (Luke 13:31-33). In these verses, the Lord spoke some strong words. He said that Herod was a fox. The Lord was comparing Herod to God. Those said that the will of the king had to be fulfilled; the Lord said that the will of God in heaven had to be fulfilled. Compared to God, Herod was just a fox. Although the fox was cunning, it could not stop the Lord from going to Jerusalem. The Lord could not stop His journey because of the word of a fox; He could not change His face or His course