

CGM PASTORAL CARE CONFERENCE – AUGUST 2013
SPEAKER: LIM KOU

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Theme of messages

- *The equipping and readiness of God's workman*
- God's workman - all believers, especially those with spiritual responsibilities in preaching, teaching, shepherding the flock and leadership responsibilities

The fields are white for harvest

John 4:34–35

34 Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work.

35 "Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest.

- Has been so since the days of Christ on earth
- In our generation, large numbers have been turning to the Lord in Africa, S. America, Asia, China, India...
- Paul to the Athenians:

Acts 17:30–31

30 "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, 31 because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead."

- Peter to Cornelius and those with him:

Acts 10:34–35

34 Opening his mouth, Peter said: "I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality, 35 but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him.

Task entrusted by the Lord

- To fulfil our role well as God's workmen, it is needful for us to appreciate the task the Lord has entrusted to us and how He wants the task to be accomplished

Matthew 28:19–20

19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

- Goes beyond conversion of non-believers
- God's goal:
 - o All to turn to the Lord in true repentance and faith

- o All to grow unto maturity in Christ
- o Each member well integrated into healthy church life
- o Each member working out properly
- o The whole body being built up in love
- o The continuing addition of new ones into the body of Christ, and being built up and contributing
- God's desire is not isolated believers seeking to walk with Him and serve Him
- The Lord Jesus says:

Matthew 16:18

“... I will build My church...”

- At the heart of the fulfilment of the task entrusted is the healthy expression of body-life and growth of the body in submission to Christ (the head of His body, the church)
 - o the body built up in love
 - o in two dimensions: local and universal

Learning from how the apostle Paul sought to fulfil the task

- Every man mature in Christ

Colossians 1:28–29

28 We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete (or mature) in Christ.

29 For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me.

- In the context of body-life/church life

Ephesians 4:11–16

11 And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers,

12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;

13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

14 As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;

15 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ,

16 from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

- It is crucial we fulfil the task entrusted to us well – this is at the heart of the advancement of God's kingdom

Critical issue: the equipping and readiness of God's workman

- Paul to Timothy:

2 Timothy 4:1–2

1 I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom:

2 preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.

- Are we properly equipped and ready?

1 Timothy 4:12–16

12 Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe.

13 Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation and teaching.

14 Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery.

15 Take pains with these things; be absorbed in them, so that your progress will be evident to all.

16 Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you.

How can God's workman be adequate, equipped?

- The Scriptures fulfil a vital role

2 Timothy 3:16–17

16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;

17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 2:15

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.

Four foundational areas

- To be ready and properly equipped, God's workman must concentrate on four key foundational areas (the first four messages I will be covering)
 - o God, truth, the Scriptures and Christ
- The substance of the four messages ought to be:
 - o foundational for our own lives
 - o foundational for our ministry – what we seek to transmit to others
 - o the primary concentration, longing and motivation of our hearts - what permeates and consumes our lives
 - o the foundation on which we build everything else
 - o the basis of our values, perspective and approach to every aspect of our lives
- The four messages are:
 - o *Message 1: God* – the foundational basis of our lives and ministry
 - o *Message 2: Truth* – understanding, absorbing truth → men of truth, manifesting and communicating truth

- o *Message 3: The Scriptures* – understanding and positive response to what God wants to teach and communicate to us through the Scriptures → men of truth, adequate, equipped for every good work
- o *Message 4: Christ* – God's primary provision for us – abide in Christ and He in us → bear much fruit

Wrong focus

- Many Christians would agree these four areas ought to be the primary concentration of every believer and the primary content and substance of Christian ministry
- In reality, we often fail to pay adequate attention to them – in our own lives and in our ministry
- We are often more concerned and preoccupied with the outward appearance of things – we look at outward indicators to tell us if things are going on well
 - o We focus on growth in numbers - how many have indicated they have become Christians - how many are attending the various meetings
 - o We focus on programmes and projects – how many and how successful - how many participated – how many say the programmes are good
 - o We focus on challenging believers to go and preach the gospel - the more people go, the better
- Failure in these four areas will adversely affect all other areas
 - o We cannot fare well in other areas even if it does not appear to be so
 - o We can fare well in other areas only when we fare well in these four foundational areas

Assurance of God's blessings

- If God, truth, the Scriptures and Christ form the foundational basis and primary motivation of our lives, we will have the assurance of God's blessings, personal well-being and fruitful ministry
- This will be true for every child of God in whatever context
- This is especially true for those of you with spiritual responsibilities in preaching and teaching, shepherding and feeding the flock
- With heavier responsibility, the spiritual pressures and attacks will be greater, and the implications and consequences will be more significant and far-reaching
- This is the way to fulfil our part in the outworking of God's purposes and the manifestation of God's glory

Content and substance of my ministry

- These four areas have been the content and substance of my ministry all these years
- They are reflected in my messages – posted on the website www.godandtruth.com
- They are also reflected in my three books: *Understanding Job*, *The Two Kingdoms* and *Man of Faith* - which are compilations of edited text messages
- These books been made available for free distribution – and will form the substance of the 5th message

[NOTE: All scriptural quotations in this series of messages are taken from NASB]