

**GENERAL SUBJECT:
THE GOD-ORDAINED WAY**

Message Fifteen

The Vital Groups (1)—The Burden and the Vitality

Scripture Reading:

John 15:5	I am the vine; you are the branches. He who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing.
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.
John 4:14	But whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall by no means thirst forever; but the water that I will give him will become in him a fountain of water gushing up into eternal life.
John 21:15	Then when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Feed My lambs.
2 Tim. 2:2	And the things which you have heard from me through many witnesses, these commit to faithful men, who will be competent to teach others also.
Rev. 14:4b-5	These are they who follow the Lamb wherever He may go. These were purchased from among men as firstfruits to God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth no lie was found; they are without blemish.

I. The burden of the vital groups—John 15:5; Rom. 8:4; John 4:14:

- A. A vital group is a group of normal Christians who will bring the recovery into another age.
- B. The main extract of messages on vital groups from 1992 to 1993:
 - 1. Abiding in the Lord—John 15:5.
 - 2. Walking according to the spirit—Rom 8:4.
 - 3. Flowing rivers of living water—John 4:14.
- C. Rising up to pick up the way to be vital.

II. The vital groups being the life-line of the God-ordained Way—Acts 2:46-47:

- A. Our present situation being very desperate.
- B. The group meetings should constitute eighty percent of the church life.
- C. The spreading which the Lord wants being in the homes—Acts 2:46-47.

III. Our attitude for the vital groups—Acts 20:31-35:

- A. Only through labor will we know how to practice the vital groups—James 5:7.
- B. Our failure being that we did not labor:
 - 1. If we do not labor persistently, we will not have a proper result.
 - 2. The way of the labor being to labor by all means and at any cost—1 Cor. 15:10.
 - 3. Our labor should be a labor of love—1 Thes. 1:3.
 - 4. Our labor in the Lord will never be in vain—1 Cor. 15:58.
- C. We must be desperate—Acts 18:5; 2 Cor. 5:14:
 - 1. The furtherance of the vital groups unto the increase should be a matter of life or death with us.
 - 2. We should be desperate for the Lord's interest on the earth today; this is our destiny—Acts 20:20, 31.
- D. We should not have any excuse for ourselves, but we should have a positive, fearless, and laboring spirit to accomplish the Lord's commitment to us—Acts 20:24; Col. 1:28-29.

IV. The obligation of the vital groups—shepherding and teaching—Luke 15:4-7, 24:44-49:

- A. The Gospels unveil the shepherding and teaching of Christ in His ministry for the fulfillment of God's eternal economy:
 - 1. Shepherding outwardly—Luke 15:4-7; John 10:9, 11, 16.
 - 2. Comforting inwardly—John 14:16-17, 20.
 - 3. Teaching to strengthen the shepherding and to carry out its goal—Matt. 5-7, 13, 24-25; John 1-7, 14-17.
- B. The essential functions of the gifted persons in the Epistles being to shepherd and to teach—John 21:15-17; 1 Cor. 4:17b; Acts 20:28.
- C. The shepherding and teaching in the eldership:
 - 1. The obligations of the elders in the church are:
 - a. Shepherding as Christ did and as the gifted persons do—John 21:15-17; 1 Pet. 5:2-3.
 - b. Teaching to strengthen the shepherding and to carry out its goal according to what Christ taught in the four Gospels and what the gifted persons taught in the Epistles—1 Tim. 3:2b, 5:17b; Acts 20:27-28.
 - 2. The elders shepherding the churches by taking the lead should not lord it over them but should become patterns of God's flock—1 Tim. 5:17; 1 Pet. 5:2-3.

V. To be vitalized—Rev 2:4-5; 1 John 1:9; Rev. 1:2-3:

- A. In order to be vital, we first must have a thorough fellowship with the Lord.
- B. To be stirred up in the first love for the Lord through repenting prayers—Rev. 2:4, 5; 2 Cor. 5:14-15.
- C. To make a thorough confession to the Lord—1 John 1:9, 3:2-3.
- D. To have close, intimate, and thorough fellowship with the Lord and with the seeking saints—1 John 3:23-24.
- E. To reconsecrate yourself to the Lord:
 - 1. In presenting your body as a living sacrifice—Rom. 12:1.
 - 2. In being transformed by the renewing of the mind from being fashioned according to this age—Rom. 12:2.
 - 3. In not being slothful in zeal, but burning in spirit to serve the Lord—Rom. 12:11.
- F. To be the overcomers in the church life:
 - 1. In the age of the overcomers according to the Lord's calling—Rev. 1:2-3.
 - 2. As today's Zion in today's Jerusalem (the church life)—Rev. 14:1-5:
 - a. The high peak, the center, the uplifting, the strengthening, the enriching, and the reality of the church, the holy city.
 - b. To consummate the holy city (the church) and to bring in the consummated New Jerusalem in eternity.

VI. The vital groups should be composed of people who are overcomers, those who are vital—living and active—Rev 3:1-2; 15:16; 14:4b, 5:

- A. To be vital is to be living:
 - 1. This is versus the deadness of Sardis—Rev. 3:1-2.
 - 2. Only one thing today can make us living, and that is prayer; we must pray unceasingly.
- B. To be vital is to be active—to have the dynamic activities:
 - 1. This is versus the lukewarmness of Laodicea—Rev. 3:15-16.
 - 2. We need to pray for our dynamic activities, for our function in the vital group.
 - 3. A vital group being living and full of activities.