

HOW TO BE

A

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BY KONG DUEN YEE

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How to Be a Genuine Christian

Receive Salvation

“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). Since we have heard the truth and realized that we are sinners, we must repent of all our sins sincerely and humbly before God, and turn from a life of damnation to His path of holiness. When our sins are revealed to us in the light of the Holy Spirit, let’s not make excuses or deceive ourselves. Rather, let’s be sorry for all the sins we have committed and hate our carnality. We need to be very thorough in confessing our sins and be determined to forsake them by trusting in our Lord. We must beseech God to forgive us our sins and cleanse us with the precious blood of His Son Jesus Christ. We should also give ourselves to God and fully believe in His promise. In this way, we will be forgiven of our sins and obtain peace. Having put off our “old man” (body of sin), we are a new person in Christ—no longer slaves of sin, but children of God. We no longer live under Satan's power of sin but in the kingdom of light and liberty. This is being *born again*.

The first birth is of the flesh—born of human parents. It is a sinful and temporal life which is subject to a second death (the lake of fire). The second birth is of the Spirit (born again)—born of God. It is a holy and eternal life from God which is not subject to the second death, but will enjoy

eternal blessings from heaven. The Lord Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father (heaven) except through Me” (John 14:6). He also said, “... unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God... You must be born again” (John 3:3,7). “He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy” (Prov. 28:13). “But as many as received Him (Jesus), to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name” (John 1:12). “For by grace you have been saved through faith...” (Eph. 2:8).

Believe and Be Baptized

“He who believes and is baptized will be saved...” (Mark 16:16). Faith is the first step to salvation, and baptism is the testimony of salvation made before God and men. One who believes in the Lord must be baptized into His name. However, one who does not sincerely repent of his sins will not be saved, even if he has been baptized many times. On the other hand, a person who has repented will be saved even if he doesn't have the chance to be baptized. A good example is one of the two robbers crucified beside Jesus. Although he had no opportunity to receive water baptism, he truly believed in the Son of God. So the Lord made him this promise: “...today you will be with Me in Paradise” (Luke 23:43).

If God gives us the opportunity to be baptized while we are still alive, we must receive the baptism without excuse. Even our Lord Jesus, the Son of God, who forsook His glory and honor to come into the world in the form of man,

had to fulfill all righteousness by receiving the baptism of John in the Jordan (see Matt. 3:13–17). Shouldn't we imitate Him by being baptized as a good testimony before God, men, the angels, and the devil?

Water baptism has great significance. The Bible says, “Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:3–4). When we are immersed in the water, it signifies that our “old man” (body of sin) is dead and buried with Christ. When we come up out of the water, it signifies our resurrection with Christ. “...that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph. 4:22–24).

Baptism by immersion is a scriptural truth. We must follow the Bible by having our whole body immersed in the water, for only then can the significance of water baptism be fully declared. Most denominations practice baptism by the sprinkling of water, which is not consistent with the Bible. “Baptism” means “immersion.” At His baptism, the Lord Jesus came up out of the water, thus setting a good example of baptism for us to follow (see Matt. 3:16). We who believe the Lord must follow His example. Baptism by the sprinkling of water is merely a tradition of man, a poisonous leaven of Roman Catholicism.

Receive Holy Spirit Baptism

Every Christian should receive the full witness of God which He has testified of His Son. “And there are three that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one. If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which He has testified of His Son” (1 John 5:8–9). When we believe in the Lord, we should receive not only blood baptism (born again through repentance) and water baptism (to abide by the truth after being baptized into the church), but also Spirit baptism (filled with the Holy Spirit). Only then can we gain power to triumph over sin, to love and serve the Lord, and to walk on the heavenly way. “And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace” (John 1:16). We must never fall short of the grace of God. The Lord Jesus said, “For John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now” (Acts 1:5).

Love God and Men

“‘And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ This is the first commandment. And the second, like it, is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these” (Mark 12:30–31). No love in the world is comparable to the great love of God. Human love is limited, selfish and exploitative. Those who are lovable will be loved more, whereas those who are unlovable will be loved less or not at all. But the love of God is great and wonderful. Before Him,

we should have been condemned to death for our rebelliousness and disobedience. We are corrupt and filthy, without goodness, and worthless as rags. Yet He loved us so much that He even sent His beloved Son Jesus to die for us, for the redemption of our sins, through the shedding of His blood. “For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:7–8). For this reason, we should love the Lord our God. “If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed” (1 Cor. 16:22). And if we love Him, we must do His will and mind His heart. “For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality [adultery with the world]” (1 Thess. 4:3).

Many Christians argue about whether it is right to smoke, go to the movies, gamble, drink liquor, dance, watch television or listen to the radio. Sometimes their arguments become fierce. But all this is unnecessary. We only need to ask ourselves this: “*Do I really love the Lord?*” The Lord will not force us to love Him. He wants our love to be voluntary, for only such love is precious and pleasing to Him. We love Him because He first loved us. He died so willingly for us. Shouldn't we give ourselves completely to Him and love Him faithfully for the rest of our lives? If one says that he loves the Lord but refuses to forsake the lusts and pleasures of the world, he deceives God and himself.

The most important testimony of the church is her separation from the world. The world cannot coexist with God. The principle of the world is *to crucify Christ*, but the principle of the cross is *to crucify the world and me*. Paul said:

To me, the world has been crucified; and to the world, I have been crucified (see Gal. 6:14). “You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. Or do you think the Scripture says without reason that the spirit he caused to live in us envies intensely?” (James 4:4–5 *NIV*). The Spirit of the Lord is holy and jealous. God will never allow us to love anything other than Christ, for we are the bride of Christ. One day, we will judge the world together with Him. How can we not keep ourselves holy and chaste? How can we commit adultery with the world? If a man's wife is in love with another man, she cannot please her husband. How, then, is our love for our Beloved? Isn't His love for us—a love sweeter than wine—enough to ravish our hearts?

We should not continue to indulge in worldly fashions, smoking, drinking, gambling, fighting, obscene publications, worldly music, and so on. These things give Satan a chance to blaspheme God. He can laugh at the Lord, saying, “Where is your beloved bride (the Christians)? Isn't she lying in my bosom? She doesn't care at all about your great love for her. Even though you have purchased her with your precious blood to be your wife, I am still the one she adores!” Just imagine how deeply such vicious insults would hurt our Lord. Why do we still refuse to forsake the world and its sinful pleasures? Why do we continue to grieve the Holy Spirit? “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him...And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever” (1 John 2:15,17).

We should not only love the Lord with all our heart, but also love our neighbors as ourselves. As sinners, we were selfish. Now that we have found grace, we should deny ourselves and love others. “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love...If someone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?” (1 John 4:7–8,20). Love not only your brothers, but all men as well. Love not only those who are lovable, but also those who are unlovable. The Lord Jesus said, “...love your enemies,...and pray for those who...persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven...” (Matt. 5:44–45). “Love will cover a multitude of sins” (1 Pet. 4:8). “[Love] is the bond of perfection” (Col. 3:14). “...love edifies” (1 Cor. 8:1). “...he who loves another has fulfilled the law” (Rom. 13:8). “Pursue love...” (1 Cor. 14:1).

Have Fellowship with the Saints

Once we accept Jesus Christ as our Savior, we must return to His sheepfold, the New Testament Church established by the Holy Spirit, so that we may grow in Christian faith. (Beware of the denominations that do not preach the complete truth!) Love the Lord's church with all your strength and with all your heart. Serve in the sacred work diligently. Have constant fellowship with members of the body (brothers and sisters) in the Holy Spirit. Admonish one another in love and help one another. “With all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with

one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all” (Eph. 4:2–6).

“Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness. Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion. Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,’ says the Lord. ‘Therefore if your enemy hungers, feed him; if he thirsts, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head.’ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good” (Rom. 12:6–21).

“But, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love” (Eph. 4:15–16). “Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:3–5).

Attend Service and Partake of the Bread and Cup

“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together...” (Heb. 10:25). As God's children, we should serve God regularly in His holy temple. The Lord's Day (Sunday) is the day which marks the Lord's resurrection and the descent of the Holy Spirit. On this day we must put aside all secular matters and bring our whole family to church to worship the Lord. If we draw near to God, He will draw near to us. Those who fear God, be they young or old, will be blessed by Him. Besides attending Sunday service, we should also attend weekday meetings, such as prayer and Bible study meetings or other conventions. For this is pleasing to God. The Lord says, “For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them” (Matt. 18:20).

We should remember the Lord Jesus by breaking bread regularly because this is a holy service He established before His crucifixion. We do it frequently in remembrance of the

Lord's death until He comes. “And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed it and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, ‘Take, eat; this is My body.’ Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom’” (Matt. 26:26–29). “For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes. Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged” (1 Cor. 11:26–31).

Before we eat the Lord's bread and drink His cup, we must examine ourselves. If we find ourselves guilty of any sin in the light of the Holy Spirit, we must readily confess and repent before the Lord. We must also resolve to deal with our sins. After that, we can partake of the Lord's bread and cup.

Offer with a Willing Heart

We should be good stewards of God. We should willingly offer anything that God has entrusted to our care—be it body, soul, wisdom, money, time or material things. Let

Him use all these to spread the gospel of the heavenly kingdom. “For all things come from You, and of Your own we have given You” (1 Chron. 29:14).

In the Old Testament era, the people of Israel gave their tithes, and God promised to shower blessings on them from heaven. “‘Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and prove Me now in this,’ says the LORD of hosts, ‘If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it’” (Mal. 3:10). In the New Testament era, we who are redeemed with the precious blood of the Lord Jesus and who have obtained such great grace, should “present [our] bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is [our] reasonable service” (Rom. 12:1). This does not mean that every Christian must offer himself to be a full-time preacher. (This ministry is given by God, and one must first be very sure of God's choice and calling to assume it.) However, to offer one's body and heart to the Lord and to live and witness for Him on earth is the minimum requirement of every Christian.

Since we are baptized into the Lord's name, we are His. No longer do we belong to ourselves, nor have we any rights or mastership over our own body, soul and spirit. Christ is our Master, and He should reign supreme in all things. What He hates, we must hate and never do; whatever pleases Him, we must do with all our heart and strength. We live for the Lord and also die for Him. All things should be done to the glory of His name. Since our body, soul and spirit belong to the Lord, we should willingly give our material possessions to Him, too. “For I bear

witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely willing, ... first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God, ... He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. 8:3–5; 9:6–7).

In the house of God, many important gospel works cannot be carried out smoothly, and many faithful servants of God are in financial difficulties. This is because the children of God have not been faithful in their offering. They have turned the grace of God into an opportunity for the flesh. They have robbed God (see Mal. 3:8) and spent His money on personal benefits and pleasures. They have indeed fallen short of Him! There are also many Christians who do not understand the truth on offering. In their carnal zeal, they blindly offer the money and talents that God has entrusted to them to false religious groups (denominations which reject the precious blood, the truth, or the baptism of the Holy Spirit). They help them sin and oppose God at the expense of God's grace. They do what they shouldn't do. How unwise! Therefore, before we offer, we should seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Never act according to the feeling of the soul. If we pray more, the Holy Spirit will grant us the spiritual wisdom to handle all the things God has entrusted to us. We will know how to keep, offer or use them in the acceptable will of God. Everything the Lord has entrusted to us must go to the New Testament Church built by the Holy Spirit. This offering will be like anointing the Lord's body with fragrant ointment. May we all be God's faithful and good stewards.

Read the Bible Constantly

God's greatest blessing to Christians is the Holy Bible—the word of God. It is the word of eternal life, a real treasure house. We must read and search the Scriptures everyday. From it, we will receive every kind of spiritual blessing. We will come to know and love God more, and learn to trust and obey Him.

“And that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” (2 Tim. 3:15–17)

If one cannot overcome sin, he will be overcome by it. The Bible is like a mirror which reflects our sins. It is also the power of life which enables us to overcome sin. “Direct my steps by Your word, and let no iniquity have dominion over me....Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path....How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word” (Ps. 119:133,105,9).

The Bible is also the bread of life. A tree cannot grow without water; neither can a Christian become spiritually strong and mature without spiritual food. “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God” (Matt. 4:4).

The Bible is also our timely help and comfort in tribulations. Men will always have troubles and worries in life. Nevertheless, the Bible contains thousands of precious promises for those who believe in God. We will receive

wonderful encouragement and assurance from the Bible if we know Him as the righteous, holy, loving, kind, faithful and powerful God, the Almighty who alone does wonders and takes pleasure in showering grace on us. Shouldn't we love Him and depend on Him more? "Let us know, let us pursue the knowledge of the LORD" (Hos. 6:3).

Christians should wake up early to read the word of God first thing in the morning. Let us read the Bible with a humble and desirous heart, not to find faults. Before reading His word, we should pray that He open our understanding, that we may understand the Scriptures (see Luke 24:45). The Holy Spirit will guide us into the truth. Moreover, we must have absolute trust in God. For He hates an unbelieving and doubtful heart. Believing in God's word is a real blessing in life. The greater our faith, the more blessings we will have, for God fulfills everything for us according to our faith and desire (see Matt. 9:29; 15:28). Above all, we must be completely obedient to God. If our thoughts or deeds are inconsistent with His laws and statutes, we must deny ourselves and submit ourselves to Him. Let us meet His requirements. We may have to pay a heavy price, but it will be worthwhile. For His grace will be upon us for life.

Watch and Pray

Prayer is the key to the heavenly treasury that supplies all our spiritual and physical needs. "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. And my God shall

supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:6–7,19).

Christians are good soldiers of Christ, who war with Satan every day. So we must wake up early every morning to pray watchfully to draw power from on high. Only then can we overcome the devil and sin. We should commit our entire day to God, and let Him control and guide our footsteps into His will. We also have to pray for others. If we bless others, we will be blessed by God. Above all, pray for God's kingdom and His works. In the victorious and honorable name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by His precious blood, rebuke Satan, destroy his plans, raze his forts and crush all his evil forces. Let's beseech the Lord to revive His church, asking Him to pour out His Spirit. May God's servants and children be filled with the Holy Spirit to preach the gospel worldwide and free the slaves of sin. “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” (Matt. 6:33).

We do not know how to pray, but the Holy Spirit will teach us. If we want our prayers to be heard by God, we must take heed of the following:

Forsake Sin

Sin is the main reason that our prayers are not answered. It is like a barrier preventing God from showering grace on us. So the wall of sin must be torn down (confess and forsake our sins) before our prayers can reach God's throne of grace. “Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins

have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear” (Isa. 59:1–2). “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear” (Ps. 66:18).

Have Faith

“But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord” (James 1:6–7). “But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” (Heb. 11:6). The Lord Jesus said, “...whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them” (Mark 11:24). When we tell God what we need, we should trust in Him completely. Once we commit everything to Him, we should not worry about it anymore. Let us just wait with thanksgiving and patience. For He will surely accomplish great things for us.

Pray in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ

When we pray, we should, first of all, confess our sins and praise God. Then, we should pour our hearts out to God and commit everything to Him. When we are finished, we must say: “In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ I pray. Amen.” Only then will our prayer be effective. The Lord said, “...whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive....And whatever you ask in My

name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it” (John 16:23–24; 14:13–14).

Trust and Obey

After accepting Christ as our Savior, we should fully commit ourselves into His hand, trust in Him and obey Him. God has His own good purpose for every one of His children, and He will fulfill that purpose according to His own plan. If we are obedient to Him, He will accomplish His work in us smoothly. But if we are stubborn and disobedient, His will shall be hindered and we will be disciplined and chastised by Him. Under the chastisement of God, we will suffer pain and grief unnecessarily. All these sufferings have no value, for they are not remembered by God. Therefore let's submit ourselves unconditionally to the arrangement of God and let His will be freely done in us. Then, not only will God be pleased, we will also have life and peace. If it is God's will that we suffer for righteousness, it will be worth it, for He will remember all our sufferings. If we suffer with Christ, we shall also be glorified with Him. “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2 Cor. 4:17).

“Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God” (2 Cor. 3:5). Since our sufficiency is from God, what have we to fear? Therefore let us praise God for everything, blessings and woes alike. In all things let us not complain, for we know they all have good purposes in the Father's

sight. “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God...” (Rom. 8:28). Since we know that everything that happens to us is from the good pleasure of God and that these work together for our good, we should “in everything give thanks” (1 Thess. 5:18).

As Christians, no matter what happens to us, we should prostrate before God and examine ourselves. In times of illness, for example, we should commit everything to Him, asking Him to help us and heal us. We should also ask Him to direct us to the right way. We should not rush to men for help, for men's help is worthless. In the past, when the Israelites were in difficulty, they did not look to God but trusted in the power of man and went to Egypt for help. God, in His anger, reproached them for their foolishness, saying, “Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help, and rely on horses, who trust in chariots because they are many, and in horsemen because they are very strong, but who do not look to the Holy One of Israel, nor seek the LORD! Yet He also is wise and will bring disaster, and will not call back His words, but will arise against the house of evildoers, and against the help of those who work iniquity. Now the Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses are flesh, and not spirit. When the LORD stretches out His hand, both he who helps will fall, and he who is helped will fall down; they all will perish together” (Isa. 31:1–3).

Let's fix our eyes on God alone. “I will lift up my eyes to the hills—from whence comes my help? My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth” (Ps. 121:1–2). If you believe, you will see the glory of God. All His promises and grace are for those who trust in Him. He never fails to keep His word, and He never makes mistakes.

If you depend on Him with all your heart, you will not be put to shame. He is a faithful God. He will guide you safely through the valley of the shadow of death and help you overcome all difficulties. Then you will know Him as the God who is trustworthy and reliable, worthy of honor and love.

Win Souls for Christ

The Lord Jesus laid down His life on the cross for all mankind. He was not willing that any should perish, but that all should be saved. The Bible says, “He [Jesus] shall see the travail of His soul, and be satisfied” (Isa. 53:11). Today the Lord is still not satisfied, for millions of souls have yet to hear of the gospel. The Lord said, “And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd” (John 10:16). Every Christian has an obligation to bring lost sheep back to the Lord's fold. Before the Lord ascended to heaven, He commanded His disciples, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matt. 28:18–19). If every Christian assumes his responsibility to preach the gospel, distribute tracts, witness to friends and relatives and bring them to Christ, and pray for all men, the gospel will soon be preached far and wide. The Lord will only be satisfied when sinners repent of their sins and are saved.

A Christian should bear fruit. The Lord is the vine, and we are the branches. The branches draw nourishment from

the vine daily. Their job is to bear fruit. Unlike the branches of other trees, vine branches cannot be used for making furniture or for other purposes. They have only one function: to bear fruit. The Lord will prune every branch that bears fruit, so that the plant can bear more. The branch that does not bear fruit is cut off and is withered. Such branches will be gathered, thrown into the fire and burned (see John 15:6). We should always desire to be filled with the Holy Spirit and abide in the Lord. We should also desire spiritual gifts so that we may bear good fruit, to the glory of the heavenly Father.

Brothers and sisters, how many fruit have you borne so far? The fig tree, which for three years had failed to produce fruit, was condemned by the owner: “Cut it down; why does it use up the ground?” What a terrifying fate! Fortunately, the keeper of the vineyard appealed to the owner, saying, “Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilize it. And if it bears fruit, well. But if not, after that you can cut it down” (Luke 13:6–9). We may have been neglecting our duty to bring people to Christ. But the Lord has mercy on us and still gives us opportunities to win lost souls for Him. If we don't make up for our past shortcomings now, when will we do it? “I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work” (John 9:4). Besides bringing unbelievers to Christ, we should also look out for the lost sheep of the Lord—Christians who have left the Lord and become weak. We must bring them back to the fold of Jesus Christ, the great Shepherd of our souls. “If anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will

save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins” (James 5:19–20).

Keep the Word Continually

The word of the Lord saves us, and this Word is the Lord Himself. Since we have believed in the word, we should be doers of the word. “Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead” (James 2:17). As Christians, our duty is to search the Scriptures continually and demonstrate the truth through our daily lives. Many people do not read the Bible, but they do observe the livelihood of Christians. If Christians live a holy, Christ-like life, people around them will be influenced and converted by them. The Lord Jesus is the Word that became flesh; He came to the world to save us. And He wants us, who are in the flesh, to become the word to bear witness for Him on earth. “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh...” (1 Tim. 3:16).

When filled with the Holy Spirit, we will naturally manifest the glory of Christ and emit His fragrance in our lives. A life that testifies to the truth is far more effective and powerful than any sermon delivered from the pulpit. For this reason, before we preach the gospel to others, we must examine ourselves first to see whether we are leading a Christ-like life. For by its fruit, the tree is known. If our lives are characterized by goodness, holiness, love and joy, people will know that we are Christians. “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome” (1 John 5:3).

Many Christians merely hear the word but don't live by it. In church, they act like Christians—singing, praying, reading the Bible and offering their money. They seem so pious and God-loving. But once they step out of the church, they are disciples of the devil. They smoke, gamble, drink, indulge in revelry, watch movies and curse people; they are greedy, arrogant, deceitful and adulterous. They do anything they want to. If a Christian lives such a disgraceful life, what difference is there between him and a non-Christian? Such a Christian cannot bring people to Christ; instead, he will be a stumbling block to the unsaved. Woe to him who stumbles others! God will require of him the lives of those whom he has stumbled. Such Christians, who are only hearers but not doers of the word, will one day be held accountable before God. Shouldn't we repent quickly and ask Him for forgiveness?

Every Christian has the duty to keep the word of God. We must also defend and uphold the truth faithfully. Do not be carried about with every wind of doctrine or follow after heresies, for all such teachings are against the truth. Christians should be like-minded with Christ in all things. The Lord Jesus was crucified because He severely rebuked the Pharisees who did not keep the truth. Likewise, we should also hold fast and faithfully defend the pure faith which the Lord has committed to our trust—whatever the price. Never compromise with false doctrines or heresies. Of course, Christians should be loving and appeasing, but we must never tolerate or compromise with anything that goes against the truth.

The Lord Jesus said, "He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad.

Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes will be those of his own household. He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me” (Matt. 12:30; 10:34–37). Such conditions exist because of our lack of faith. So we must put faith above all things, for Christians are called to testify for the truth on earth.

Many saints throughout the ages have willingly been martyred because they were true to their faith. We should have the same mind to defend the truth. “For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth” (2 Cor. 13:8). In these last days, evil teachings and heresies are on the rise. Most people will not endure the sound doctrine of the Scriptures, because they have itching ears, and turn aside to fables. But we should “contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 3).

Wait for the Lord's Coming

A Christian is like a diver harvesting pearls in the deep sea. Although there are many fascinating sights and rare treasures in the sea, he can't afford to spend time gazing at them. He knows that somebody is waiting for him to surface, so he has to hurry and collect the pearls. He will then sell them, and enjoy the fruit of his labor. This describes the sole purpose of a Christian in life: To win souls for Christ. Although there are many attractive things in this world, we are not interested in them because we

know the Lord is coming soon. When He comes, we will be caught up in the air, along with other precious souls, to meet Him. Then we shall see how beautiful is the incorruptible inheritance He has prepared for us in heaven. And we shall enjoy it forever.

Therefore we have nothing to do with those who seek worldly fame, wealth, luxury and pleasures, “whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things. For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ” (Phil. 3:19–20). “Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ...to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you” (1 Pet. 1:13,4).

When the Lord comes, we shall all stand before His judgment seat. He will ask us if we have done our work faithfully and lived a godly life. So let us work diligently for the Lord today in exchange for the heavenly inheritance. “Pursue peace with all men, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: looking diligently lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled; lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears” (Heb. 12:14–17). Let this be our warning, lest we lose our eternal heavenly inheritance for some temporary worldly pleasures.

Before the Lord comes, the devil will be even more rampant. He will not leave Christians alone unless they do not love the Lord. Therefore we must “be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world” (1 Pet. 5:8–9). “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints” (Eph. 6:12–18).

The bridegroom (Christ) is coming soon! Is the bride (the church) ready? Have we taken a good look at ourselves in the mirror? Are we neatly adorned in our pure white robes, waiting for the bridegroom to come and receive us? Fellow Christians, “denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:12–13). Amen.

Let us pray: *Dearest Lord Jesus, I thank and praise You for Your great grace. You died for me on the cross and redeemed my body, soul and spirit with Your precious blood. I am willing to offer my heart and body wholly to You. May You guide me for the rest of my life. Lead me to be baptized into the church, which is built on the foundation of pure faith, so that I may be nourished and edified in Your truth. Baptize me with the Holy Spirit and fire that I may have the power to depart from sin and the devil, to pursue holiness, and to bring my family, relatives and friends to You. Please enlighten me when I read the Bible. Give me the strength to pray that I may trust and obey You completely. Let me draw near to You at all times. Help me love You, Your church, and all souls. Help me fight the good fight of the faith to resist the devil by Your grace and be more than a conqueror. Please provide for all my needs and keep my spirit, soul and body completely blameless. Teach me to wait watchfully for the coming of my Lord. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ I pray. Amen.*