

Message Six (b)
A Praying Church in the Unique Stream of the Work of God

"And when they entered, they went up to the upper room where they were residing, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the brother of James. These all continued steadfastly with one accord in prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers." (Acts 1:13-14) Recovery Version

"But we will continue steadfastly in prayer and in the ministry of the word." (Acts 6:4) Recovery Version

"And when they heard this, they lifted up their voice with one accord to God and said, Sovereign Master, You are the One who has made heaven and earth and the sea and all things in them, Who, through the Holy Spirit, through the mouth of our father David Your servant, has said, "Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples devise vain things? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against His Christ." For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, To do what Your hand and Your counsel predestined to take place. And now, Lord, look upon their threatenings and grant Your slaves to speak Your word with all boldness, While stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may take place through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus. And when they had so besought, the place in which they were gathered was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God with boldness." (Acts 4:24-31) Recovery Version

II. The book of Acts shows that the apostles never initiated any work without prayer; whenever they wanted to do something, they stopped themselves by their prayer, giving God a way to come into them, to fill them up, and to saturate their entire being—1:13-14; 2:1-4, 16-17a; 4:24-31; 6:4; 10:9-16; 12:4-14; 13:1-4; 16:23-26; 22:17-21:

- A. Our God in heaven needs men on earth to cooperate with Him for the carrying out of His plan; after the Lord's resurrection and ascension, the one hundred twenty disciples had an "upper-room consecration" to meet God's need by continuing steadfastly with one accord in prayer—1:13-14; cf. Rev. 3:18.
- B. The book of Acts shows that our working together with God to build up the church is a spiritual warfare and that prayer is the secret to accomplish God's work—4:24-31; Psa. 2:1-2; Eph. 6:10-20.
- C. The prayers we utter before the Lord must stand against and resist "counter-prayers" that are directed particularly against the church and the work we are carrying out to build up the church—John 17:15; Matt. 6:13; cf. Psa. 31:20.

"And he showed me a river of water of life, bright as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the middle of its street." (Revelation 22:1) Recovery Version

III. The book of Acts does not have an ending because it is a record of the unique stream of the work of God, the stream of life, which is still flowing and never stops flowing—Rev. 22:1, 3; John 5:17; Matt. 25:21:

"For My people have committed two evils: / They have forsaken Me, / The fountain of living waters, / To hew out for themselves cisterns, / Broken cisterns, / Which hold no water." (Jeremiah 2:13) Recovery Version

"For with You is the fountain of life; / In Your light we see light." (Psalm 36:9) Recovery Version
"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 springing up into eternal life." (John 4:14) Recovery Version

- A. The Bible reveals the flowing Triune God—the Father as the fountain of life, the Son as the spring of life, and the Spirit as the river of life—Jer. 2:13; Psa. 36:9a; John 4:14; 7:37-39.
- B. The source of the flow is the throne of God and of the Lamb—Rev. 22:1.
- C. In the Scriptures there is only one flow, only one divine stream, the unique stream of the Lord's work—1 Cor. 15:58; 16:10; 3:12; cf. Gen. 2:10-14.
- D. The book of Acts reveals that in the move of the Lord there is only one stream and that we need to keep ourselves in this one stream—cf. 15:35-41:
 - 1. The flowing of the divine life, which started on the day of Pentecost and has been flowing throughout all generations to this day, is just one stream.
 - 2. The history of the church shows that throughout the generations there has been one stream of the Spirit flowing all the time; many have been working for the Lord, but not all have been in the flowing of that one stream.
 - 3. The work in the flowing of the Holy Spirit is not a burden but a rest; the work is easy to do and the burden is easy to bear when it is the processed and consummated God as the Spirit living in us who does the work and bears the burden—Matt. 11:28-30; Phil. 3:3; Rom. 1:9; 1 Cor. 15:10.

"And He is the Head of the Body, the church; He is the beginning, the Firstborn from the dead, that He Himself might have the first place in all things;" (Colossians 1:18) Recovery Version

- 4. We must maintain the flowing of the stream within us by giving the Lord within us, the inner flow, the preeminence—Ezek. 47:1; Col. 1:18b.
- 5. What we must do today is to go along with the flowing, the current, of the work of the Holy Spirit; whatever we do must not be according to our natural thought but according to His flowing—*Hymns*, #907:
 - a. "Not where we elect to go, / But where Jesus leads the way, / There the living waters flow, / There our darkness turns to day"—stanza 1.
 - b. "Not our self-appointed task / Will the Lord's approval win, / But the work we did not ask, / Finished humbly, just for Him"—stanza 2.
 - c. "Thus we die, and dying live / In the heavenlies with the Lord; / Thus we serve, and pray, and give, / Christ Himself our great Reward"—stanza 5.