

Testimony of Jesus - Vessel of the Testimony

by Stephen Kaung

The church is a vessel of the testimony of Jesus, and it must be pure and suitable to bear the light of God's truth and revelation.

Duration: 1:13:29

Scripture: Matthew 16:18, Matthew 18:15-17, Matthew 18:20, Acts 2:42, 2 Corinthians 4:7, Revelation 1:12-13, Revelation 1:20

Topics: "Testimony"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of having a vision among God's people. He refers to the vision that John saw on the island of Emmaus, which included the Son of Man in the midst of seven golden lanterns. The speaker highlights that the testimony of Jesus is given to the church and that the vision of the Son of Man is connected to the seven churches of Asia. He emphasizes that one cannot see the church until they see Christ, and that God works through the local assembly to bring about His ultimate plan. The lack of vision among God's people is identified as a problem that needs to be addressed.

Transcript

The Lord, ask the Lord to open our hearts, our ears, and our eyes, that we may see him, and know what is his mind. We ask you now, Lord, to get our attention, cry our heart and spirit, and soul before you, Lord, that you are here at my commandment. Amen.

Lord, we ask your blessings upon our servant now, Lord, that your word would be the heart, that it might reach anointed hearts. The hearts that are prepared before you, Lord, that your word might be heard. That the meaning of what you are getting to us tonight would find its fullest deposit in us, Lord.

To bring about that which would be a gift, that which would be the burden of your heart tonight. What you would have us to give, what you would have us to be in this gathering together, Lord, that your name might be glorified, that we might see you. Lord, our hearts cry to see you.

Amen. Lord, reveal yourself unto us, that we might do nothing but call before you, Lord, and worship you. Amen.

And be that which you are. Lord, we thank you. We thank you for meeting us, Lord, for your presence.

Oh, for just taking over the whole part of our gathering tonight. Lord, don't only be in this robe, saturate the very presence of ever being here with your presence, with your glory, with your anointing power, that our hearts might be attended to you, that we might hear as you speak tonight. Lord, speak.

Oh, Lord. Your people are listening. Amen.

Oh, Lord, we rise in spirit tonight to take for thee and for thy people the fullness of this hour, that nothing shall be lost for thee, but that our hearts shall be opened, and, Lord, there shall be a real unveiling of thyself. Oh, let the Holy Spirit come and unveil the Lord Jesus. We would seek him tonight.

We pray, Lord, that in seeing him our hearts shall be made warm and glad. None other is worth it than just thyself, Lord Jesus. We claim that liberating work by which thou didst quicken and make very real and very personal to us, what it means to apprehend and to see him in his loveliness and worthiness.

So we say, Lord, be pleased in our midst tonight. Oh, have thy way. Take away any hindrance, anything of the dullness that comes in because of the hours of the day.

Give us thy freshness, thy aliveness, and, dear Lord, the portion from thyself that we claim. Oh, thank you, Lord. We take it for every brother and sister in the meeting tonight.

In Jesus' lovely, lovely name, amen. Lord, we just open ourselves to thee. Oh, may thy light shine upon us.

It is only in thy light we can see light. Oh, Lord, we pray that in thee we may see the truth. In thee we may see the way.

In thee we may see the life. And in thee we may see the Father. Oh, Lord, how we praise and thank thee.

Everything is in thee, and we are in thee. Oh, Lord, do thy work tonight. Get what thou wantest to get among thy people.

Glorify thyself with us in thy presence. Will you please turn to the book of Revelation? We'll read again chapter 1, verse 1 through verse 3. Revelation chapter 1, verse 1 through verse 3. Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave to him to show to his bondman what must shortly take place. And he signified it, sending by his angel to his bondman, John, who testified the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ, all things that he saw.

Blessed is he that read, and they that hear the words of the prophecy, and keep the things written in it, for the time is near. Verse 12. And I turned back to see the voice which spoke with me, and having turned, I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the seven lampstands, one like the Son of Man.

Verse 20. The mystery of the seven stars, which thou hast seen on my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands. The seven stars are angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are seven churches.

Exodus, the book of Exodus. Chapter 37. Exodus, chapter 37, we'll read from verse 17 through verse 24.

And he made the candlestick, which is the same as lampstand, of pure gold. Of beaven works he made the candlestick, its base and its shaft, its cups, its knobs, and its flowers were of itself. And six branches went out of the sides thereof.

Three branches of the candlestick out of the one side thereof, and three branches of the candlestick out of the other side thereof. There were three cups shaped like almonds in one branch, a knob and a flower, and three cups shaped like almonds in the other branch, a knob and a flower. So in the six branches which went out of the candlestick.

And in the candlestick were four cups shaped like almonds, its knobs and its flowers, and a knob under two branches thereof, and again a knob under two branches thereof, and again a knob under two branches thereof, for the six branches which went out of it. Their knobs and their branches were of itself. All of one beaven work of pure gold.

And he made the seven lamps thereof, and the snuffers thereof, and the snuff trays thereof of pure gold. Of a talent of pure gold he made it, and all his utensils. Brothers and sisters, we remember what the word says.

The spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus. What God is interested today is in the testimony of Jesus Christ. A testimony as we mentioned before is a declaration, an affirmation of a fact, a truth, a reality.

The testimony of Jesus is a declaration of Jesus. It is an affirmation of who Jesus is and what he is. And this testimony of Jesus Christ is today committed to his church.

That's the reason why on the island of Patmos, when John turned to look at the voice, he saw seven golden lampstands. And in the midst of the seven golden lampstands is one like the Son of Man. We mentioned last night the vision of the Son of Man.

In the midst of the seven golden lampstands is the testimony of Jesus. The words that he spoke to John. I'm the first and the last, the living one.

I became dead and am alive forever. And I hold the key of death and hating. These words constitute the testimony.

Brothers and sisters, there is nothing greater. There is nothing more important than who Jesus is and what. This is what God is interested in.

And this is what God intends to reveal to his people. The revelation of Jesus Christ was given to the apostle John. Not just for him alone.

It was given to him that he might report it to the seven churches of Asia. And through the seven churches of Asia, today, we are able to hear it and to see it. In other words, the testimony of Jesus is given to the church.

The vision of the Son of Man is the foreground. But the background is the seven churches. You cannot see the church until you see Christ.

You cannot see the body until you see the head. But after you have seen Christ, after you have seen the head, you should see the body. You should see the church.

Because this constitutes one vision. It is true. You should never lift the church higher than Christ.

And yet, how can Christ be lifted up if there is no church? How can the light be lifted up if there is no lampstand? So these two go together. Brothers and sisters, if the Lord has given you a vision of who

Christ is and what He is, I believe you will see what the church is. So this evening, we would like to fellowship together on the vessel of the testimony.

The testimony of Jesus is departed in a vessel. And the church is the vessel and the instrument of the testimony of Jesus. Just like in the Old Testament time, the testimony of God was departed in the nation of Israel.

It was a tremendous privilege of all the nations. The nation of Israel became, as it were, the guardian of the testimony of God. They had the oracle of God.

They had the law of God. They knew the one living God. And they were to be a nation to bear witness to this tremendous testimony.

A great privilege. But at the same time, we know it was a very great responsibility. Today, the testimony of Jesus is given to the church.

A great privilege. But it is also true, a tremendous privilege. Why is it that the Bible used the lampstand as representing the church? The seven golden lampstand representing the seven churches in Asia.

Why? A lampstand is to uplift light. Do you remember our Lord Jesus said in Matthew chapter 5? No one lights a lamp and puts it under a bushel. When you light a lamp, you put it on the lampstand that the light may shine to all.

The purpose of a lampstand is to uplift the light. Even though today people may make a lampstand very exquisite, very artistic lampstand, and you may just put in your house as a kind of adornment, ornament. Just leave it there for people to see.

But God is too tactical for that. When God mentions lampstand, He has a very specific purpose in mind. And that specific purpose is to bear the light.

It is to bear witness to the Lord Jesus. That is the one purpose and only purpose of a lampstand. A lampstand is not a purpose in itself.

A lampstand is not an end in itself. A lampstand is just a means. It is just an instrument, a vessel to be used by God for some specific purpose.

So dear brothers and sisters, the Church of God is but a lampstand. It is never God's purpose that the Church becomes an end by itself. It is a means for an end.

And the end, the lampstand does not exist for itself. The lampstand exists for the light. The Church does not exist for itself.

It exists for Christ. For this reason you'll find the Bible use the lampstand to represent and you know the law says you do not light a lamp and put it under a bushel. Nor do you light a lamp and put it under a couch.

When you light a lamp, you put it on a lampstand. Why? Because if you light a lamp and put it under the bushel, it's covered. The light is limited, restricted, covered.

If you put it under a couch, again you'll find the light is restricted. But when you put it on a lampstand, then it spreads out. Bushel is what we use to measure wheat, flour, rice, or fast food.

So in a sense it represents the things of this world. If we seek the things of this world, the care of this life, the riches of this world, we will cover up the light. The couch is where we take it easy.

We rest, relax. In other words, if we seek for comfort and ease of life, again we limit it, limit the light of Christ. But brothers and sisters, if it is a lampstand, then you'll find the light is uplifted and shines far.

So I do believe that the reason why the Bible uses the lampstand to represent the church is very, very meaningful. There is no description here of the lampstand. When the Apostle John turned back, he saw seven golden lampstands.

That's all. No description. But we can believe, being a Jew, well acquainted with the Old Testament and the temple service, naturally to him there was no need for description.

Because the lampstand in the temple was described in the Old Testament. Dear brothers and sisters, you'll find in the scriptures sometimes different presentations of the same thing. Sometimes you'll find the Bible says we have a treasure in the earthen vessel.

We are the earthen vessel. Whether you look at it individually or corporately, we are but earthen vessel. In other words, we are nothing.

We are very cheap, very common, nothing special in ourselves. That's what we are, naturally. But thank God he put a treasure in the earthen.

You know, brothers and sisters, if you have a treasure, will you put the treasure in an earthen vessel? Probably, if you have a treasure, you will put the treasure in a gold casket, something that is noble. Because it doesn't seem to fit to put a treasure in an earthen vessel. But this is God.

The wonder of God that he should put the treasure in the earthen vessel. Of course, the treasure speaks of Christ. He is the treasure.

And yet God put Christ in us. God put Christ in us who are but earthen vessels. I hope it never gets into our mind to think that.

Because we have believed in the Lord Jesus, because we are saved by his grace, because he has blessed us so much, therefore, we are something. We are somebody in ourselves. That's foolish.

It is the mercy of God. It is the grace of God. So far as we are concerned, we are but dust and ashes.

We are earthen vessels. Very fragile. Easily.

We think we are strong. We think we have arrived somewhere. But then a little thing happens and you crack.

We are not. We are but earthen vessels. But thank God there is a treasure in us.

Brothers and sisters, when we think of the grace of God, this is how we feel. And we will feel forever. But on the other hand, there is another presentation.

And the other presentation is so far as the sense of responsibility is concerned. Not grace, but responsibility. When you look from the viewpoint of responsibility, brothers and sisters, there must be a suitability.

God will not trust his light to a bushel. God will not trust his light to a couch. God trusts his light to a lamp.

In other words, there needs to be a suitability. A spiritual likeness. These two things are not contradictory.

They complement each other. When you look at yourselves, we are always unworthy. Like earthen vessels.

But thank God there is grace. There is treasure in the earthen vessel. And that draws from us worship and prayer.

But when you look at God's purpose, at responsibility, there is a tremendous demand upon us. God requires a suitability to him. He cannot commit himself.

He cannot trust himself to anything that is not suitable to himself. He won't do it. You know John? That's Lord's Day.

You can imagine. He must be sitting probably on a rock on the island. And he must be looking east.

Because that's where the Roman carvings of Asia was. The seven churches were. So he must be sitting there looking east towards the seven cities.

Faintly he could see the outline of Asia. And he could imagine the seven churches there. I don't know.

When he was thinking of the seven churches in Asia, what was his feeling? You know one thing struck me very much. When Paul wrote a letter to the Philippines, there was something very precious. Because when he wrote the letter to the Philippines, he said, every remembrance of you brings sweet memory, brings thanks, praises to God.

Now brothers and sisters, we need to feel Paul's feeling. You know? If you are laboring, say, among the believers. And if you spend your life for them, when you remember them, before God, when you pray for them before God, what is your inward feeling? As you think of them, as you pray for them before God, does it bring back sweet memory, encouragement, joy within you? Or does it bring back pain, agony, sadness to you, because they are not what they should be? I wonder when John looked to the seven churches in Asia, in his mind, what went through his mind? As he remembered Ephesus, as he remembered Smyrna, as he remembered Pergamos, as he remembered Tychirus, as he remembered Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea, as he remembered these churches, probably his mind traveled from one church to another.

And as he remembered them before the Lord, recalled them in his mind, I wonder what feeling he had at the moment. Did they give him much joy? Or did they give him much concern? I don't know. Then he heard a voice.

What you see right to the seven churches in Asia. And the voice came from behind. So he turned around and he saw the seven golden lampstands which stand for the seven churches in Asia.

Brothers and sisters, do you see the picture? He was looking east, in his mind, at the seven churches in Asia. But the Lord turned him around to see seven golden lampstands in the presence of the Lord. In other words, if we look at the churches that we know, we will never rise above the situation.

God wants us to turn around as if you haven't seen them. Brothers and sisters, you will never see what the church is if all you are looking at are the churches that you know. The reason why you do not have the vision of the golden lampstand is because you see all these churches on earth.

We can never rise above what we see. I know that is the problem of many believers. The more you love the Lord, the more you long for the fullness, the more you see that which is there.

And you wonder, is there anything else? Dear brothers and sisters, there you'll find John. The Lord turns him away. Away from the temporal land.

Away from the earth land. Away from the situation. Not in any sense to be blind.

We'll go into that later. If not tonight. But the Lord wants John to have a vision of what the vessel of the testimony is as God has ordained.

Brothers and sisters, does the vision mean if all you see of Christ is the man of Galilee, Jesus of Nazareth. In spite of the fact he had done wonders. Everything he did was good.

And yet if that's all you saw, you will be offended by it. So, came to the conclusion that Jesus of Nazareth must be wiped out. But then on the road of Damascus, he saw Christ in glory.

And that delivers. Brothers and sisters, if what we see is only the physical, only that which we can touch with our hands, see with our naked eyes, hear with our naked ears, if that's all we know, brothers and sisters, we are the most hopeless people in this world. But thank God, he turned us away.

And he turned us to see the vessel which God has ordained for the testimony of Jesus. And brothers and sisters, if you can see it, you're caught. No matter what happens on earth, there is something that you can live by.

So there you'll find it. The Lord turned him around. Turned him around.

The second look is all right. Not the first look. And when he turned back, he saw the seven golden lambs there with the Son of Man.

Brothers and sisters, that's a beautiful, beautiful thing. The vessel of the testimony of God, as God ordained, is in perfect suitability to the testimony. And if you read the Old Testament, of course you know.

The seven golden lampstands that appeared before John was none other but the golden lampstand in the holy place. So if you want to see what the golden lampstand is like, we have to go back to Exodus chapter 13. There you'll find God commanded Moses to build a golden, to make a golden candlestick, a golden lampstand.

And it is said in the Bible, it is of pure gold. Not an alloy. No mixture.

Nothing impure. It is of pure gold. Gold in the Scripture always represents the nature of God.

The glory of God is like shining gold. It never changes. All of God.

And none. This is the material for the golden lambstand. Brothers and sisters, what is the church of God? It is true.

The church of God is made up of people. That's true. I think we all know that the church of God is not made up of dead stones.

We call it church. But it is just a church building. Peter says, as we come to the Lord, we are as living stones being built up together into a spiritual house.

The church of God is made up of living stones out of that one. What is the church of God? What kind of vessel is it for the testimony of Jesus? Remember one thing. We cannot bear the testimony of Jesus unless the vessel is pure.

The church of God is made up of people. What kind of people? Those whom God has called out of every nation, town, people and tribe. And gathered them together unto Christ the head.

Thank God. Out of every nation, every town, every tribe, every people, God has called us out. Out.

And into. But remember one thing. After we are called out and gathered unto Him, something happens.

God draws the Gentiles in. God draws the Jews in. And makes the Gentiles and the Jews into one body.

But when that one body appears, it is neither Jews nor Gentiles. Something happens. Anything that is not of pure gold is eliminated by the cross.

Only that which can go through the fire out of death into resurrection. That makes up. Do not think that you and I make up the church.

If you and I and all of us here make up the church, it will be a battlefield. If it's not a battlefield, it must be a court. The golden candlestick made of pure gold.

It is the Christ in you. It is the Christ in me. It is God in you.

It is God in me. Gold. Pure gold.

That made. It requires. Whenever we try to bring ourselves into the church.

Whenever we try to bring any mixture into the church. Do you know what happens? It brings in a shadow. A shade.

It affects. The church in God's court is a golden candle. There is perfect suitability in the substance.

And you know in the Bible this is not just an imagination. Because in the Bible you'll find this from Genesis to Revelation. For instance in the time of Adam and Eve you'll find that.

Adam represents Christ. Eve represents the church. But how did Eve come into existence out of Adam? She was built by God with that which was taken out of Adam.

One. One. Perfect suitability.

Of pure gold. Brothers and sisters, only that which is Christ. Only that which is God in us are used as material for the building of the rest.

How much rubbish we have. And you'll find this pure gold is made into the golden lampstand with what process? It was a beaten work. A beaten work.

In other words here you'll find a talent of gold. Talent of gold. A solid piece.

And then you'll find the goldsmith will beat on it. I don't know how many beats that talent of gold would take. But you'll find it just beat and beat and beat.

It is very slow and tedious work. And you'll find it beat and beat and beat until gradually the form of a... You know brothers and sisters we often think that if it is us if it is our flesh that needs to be beaten. No good.

But do you know even the Christ that we receive in life the new life of it needs to be beaten in order. Ourselves. The flesh.

The human. The world. These things are to be eliminated.

Not to be beaten into shape. The purpose of beating is to shape it. Oh how often we have to receive such beatings.

You know a Christian who has never been beaten can never be adjusted with other brothers and sisters. The reason why we need to be disciplined the chastening of the Lord. The beating of the Lord.

He does not beat us to punish us. Not at all. Often time we think well we are beaten by God.

He is punishing us. Not at all. He is beating us that we may be shaped accordingly.

This is where we take the beating. Oh brothers and sisters it is because we have Christ in us. We have his life in us.

Therefore we can stand the beating. There is something to be beaten into shape. If we are bastards God will not chasten us.

There is no use for it because we are sons. He treats us. He wants to mature us.

To form us. To shape us. Oh that we may be beaten into the golden ladder.

Brothers and sisters it can never be built in a day. Oh how often God puts his people together as if of one people and start to beat. You cannot get away because you are of one people.

But gradually are knitted together framed together and there it began to start. It is to be a lampstand. Nothing else.

Just a lampstand. To uplift. And of course when you see the figure of the golden lampstand you will find it is of seven branches.

There is the base. There is the shaft. And the seven branches.

And on each branch as you find it is beaten into very beautiful work. A cup. A knob.

A cup. A knob. And the cup is like element.

What is a cup? A cup is a container. A cup is to receive. Something.

To be filled. Fill my cup Lord. I live it up Lord.

A cup is an empty container. Ready to receive the dues. Brothers and sisters if we are to be a vessel of the testimony of Jesus we need to be beaten into the shape.

We must be a receiver. We must be made to be able to receive. To receive Christ.

In all things. First we must be empty. And then we will be filled.

And you find the cup is like element. Element in the scripture always speaks of resurrection. Why? Because the element is the first flower.

It always refers to resurrection. Brothers and sisters do you think that we can receive Christ? In the flesh. The natural man does not know the feelings of God.

It is folly to think. Even the receiving of Christ must be on resurrection ground. You cannot try to receive Christ with your natural mind.

With your natural ability. No, you won't be able to. Oh, the Christ of God is beyond the natural.

That's the reason why you need revelation. It is on the resurrection ground we can receive, to be our portion. Until my cup runneth over.

And when my cup runneth over it turns into a knob. What is a knob? A knob is a concentration. A solidification.

Of that which has been received. The Lord as it were pours his riches into our cup. And when we are filled with him then gradually you find he establishes us.

Solidifies that which we have received into a knob. There is strength in a knob. Not only beauty, but often times the Lord seems to pour himself out to us.

Into the cup. Oh, our cups runneth over. How happy we are.

You think that if you are filled with his blessings then you must be very joyful. Then you will be joyful. My cup runneth over.

But when it starts to run over you find it begins to testing cups. Trials cups. Oh, when brothers and sisters are filled with the love of Christ and just love one another and just at the moment you are rejoicing.

Oh, see how we love one another. Precious. You begin to see the unloveliness in your brothers and sisters.

Your brothers and sisters become unbearable. But you know under pressure you solidify. Concentrate.

Gathering strength until it is established in the Lord. And when it is established it blossoms. The beauty of the Lord begins.

And brothers and sisters along the branch you find it is just cup, not flower. Cup, not flower. Cup, not flower.

You find the increase of Christ. And all this comes through beaten work. Nothing cheap.

Nothing easy. It all comes through beaten work. You will say, why? Why so much trouble? After all, the lampstand is not for itself.

It's just to uplift life. So if you have just one ship, ship and a plain ship standing up that's good enough. Why bother with it? With all these works? Because after all, the lampstand is not for exhibition.

But you know what? If you go to the temple you will find the priest will light the lamp. And the Bible says the light will reflect upon these branches. In other words, it is true.

The church is a lampstand to uplift Christ. But when Christ is uplifted He is reflected. He is not seen abstractly.

The testimony of Jesus is to be manifested practically in the church. The church is not the purpose. The church is not the object.

It is Christ. But how is the testimony of Jesus to be seen and heard and manifested to this world? And for this reason you will find all these works are absolute. God takes great pains in preparing His vessel for the testimony.

Lest His testimony will be distorted. In the Old Testament in the 10th of Nehemiah there is only one golden lampstand with seven branches. But here you will find in Revelation chapter 1 instead of one golden lampstand with seven branches you find seven separate lampstands.

On the one hand, the seven golden lampstands are the same as the one golden lampstand with seven branches. Yet on the other hand you will find a variation there. Now why? Because the Holy Spirit is teaching us different lessons.

Now do not try to divide these visions as if they are two different things. No, they are one thing. But He is showing us different answers.

In the 10th of Nehemiah when the golden lampstand is one with seven branches seven in the Scripture always speaks for perfection. Here you will find the perfection is the perfection of unity. Of what? There is a unity there.

But that unity is in its perfection. That you will find in the golden lampstand with seven branches. But when you come to the book of Revelation you will find seven separate golden lampstands.

Because it speaks of unity. When you come down to responsibility each local church has to be responsible. But do you think these seven churches in Asia because there are seven golden lampstands therefore there is no unity? There is.

But it is not a physical unity. The seven golden lampstands is united by the Son of Man. He unites them.

And for this reason brothers and sisters you will find in the Bible when you come to see the church as God's vessel as instrument of the testimony of Jesus you see the two aspects. On the one hand you see the church is one universal. Universally one.

One golden lampstand with seven branches. No matter how many God's people are wherever they are spread through the centuries the time and space you find God's people all around. And that's what our Lord Jesus says in Matthew chapter 16 when Peter confessed our Lord Jesus as the Christ the Son of the

Living God silent Son of Judah you are called.

Because this is not something revealed to you by flesh and blood but my heavenly Father revealed it to you. Now I tell you you are Peter I will build my church upon this rock and the gates of Hades shall not prevail. I will build my church upon this rock.

The Lord himself is the builder. The church is one. My church.

It belongs to him. Upon this rock the confession of Peter the revelation of Jesus Christ and because he has received the revelation and he has confessed it he becomes a living stone to be built on the foundation with God. And the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

No matter how Hades tries the keys of Hades and death are in the hands. So you find the whole approach is a spiritual approach. I will build my church on the spiritual principle of revelation and confession.

And the Lord himself is the builder. It is one. Dear brothers and sisters we need to see the church all those who are the Lord are built upon the one rock into history.

And throughout the centuries how the gates of Hades try to swallow not only saints but it will be used of God to overthrow to bring in the kingdom of Christ. But then as you move to Matthew chapter 18 you know when our Lord Jesus walked on earth even though the church is what he comes for and yet from the record of the four gospels he mentioned the word church only twice. Once in Matthew 16 and the other time in Matthew 18.

And there in Matthew 18 he said if your brother sin against you go to him out of love not out of vindication go to him and tell him something with the intention of restoring him. But if he does not listen to you you take one or two brothers with spiritual weight as witnesses to go to him and try to convince him. Now if he does not listen to them then you tell the church.

And the church will deal with that man. And if he does not listen to the church then you look upon him as a publican and a sinner. Now brothers and sisters if your brother sin against you naturally that brother must be very close to you.

If a brother lives in South Africa and you are living here it's very difficult for him to sin against you. You know we have a problem. We say we love all the brothers and sisters in England but you find it difficult to love the brothers and sisters who are with you.

Because God has put them with you and you begin to love them. If your brother sin against you must be with you in the same place very close. Oh learn to love your brother.

You love him to such an extent you are willing to go through all these troubles. You know if we are in trouble we have to go through the trouble. But if our brother is in trouble that's his business.

But because of love you are willing to go through all these troubles trying to restore him. If he does not listen you tell the church. Oh the church it fills the universe.

But how can you tell him? Whom are you going to tell? It is too big. It is too big. There is no way to tell it.

So the church here must be the assembly. The local where God's people assemble in the same place. The church.

And you know in the church universal you only have spiritual comfort. You do not have brothers and sisters problems. Your problem is with Satan.

But when you come to the level of the church local your problem is with your brother. If the golden lampstand with seven branches stands for the emphasis of the church universal then the seven golden lampstands separately but joined by the Son of Man represent the local assembly. The seven local assemblies in Asia.

As a matter of fact at the time of the Apostle John there were more than seven local assemblies in Asia. But the Holy Spirit used these seven local assemblies just to represent the other aspects of the church. So dear brothers and sisters the vessel of the testimony of Jesus is the church.

All who are the Lord are built upon the Lord. But because we are still in this body we are still limited by time and therefore the practical work the practice of the principle are in the local assembly. God's people whom God sovereignly has placed in a certain place there they become that golden lampstand to uplift light through the dark light that the testimony of Jesus as the church universal is one.

The church local is one. Not two candlesticks in Asia. Only one.

One candlestick in Africa. One candlestick in Sumer. One candlestick in Pergamon.

One candlestick in Tahitira. One candlestick in Paris. One candlestick in Philadelphia.

One candlestick. Oh how God's people should manifest the oneness in Christ in this. How is God building the church? Does he build the church by sending materials to heaven and build it there? He is building the church right now.

It is for this reason. You find in the first three chapters of the book of Revelation we are given the vision of the seven golden lampstands. Why? Because this is the time that the Spirit of God is working, is building, is perfecting the vessel for the testimony of Jesus.

But when you come to the last two chapters of the book of Revelation you do not see seven cities. You see only one city. And if you try to visualize the description there actually that city is a giant.

The twelve foundations serve as the base of the lampstand. And the wall as the shaft. And there you'll find God.

So you'll find God is working through the local assembly. Because that is the only practical way of working it out. And if you allow him to work out then eventually you will find it is finalized, consummated in the one holy city.

The giant golden lampstand. And like you need to have a vision of the Son of Man and you need to see the Son of Man. I believe God wants us to turn away from anything and everything that we may be given a chance to catch a vision in the midst.

We are not visionaries. But we need to see visions. If there is no vision the people disintegrate.

And brothers and sisters that is what is happening. The problem with God's people is there is a lack of vision. There is no lack of activity.

There is no lack of zeal as our brother mentioned. But the one thing that is lacking among God's people is the lack of vision. What is the vision that John saw? The Son of Man in the midst.

Brothers and sisters once if you are caught by that and by that vision there is no alternative anymore. And you find it. The vision unites us with God and unites us.

So dear brothers and sisters knowing the importance of the vision all the light needs the light that the light may be lifted up. And for this reason we need to give ourselves to the Lord. And let us pray.

Just before the Lord.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/0/SID0946.mp3>

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