

## **The Kingdom and the Church**

Ch. 2—The Gospel of Grace Bringing in the Reign of the Kingdom

Scripture reading: Matt. 12:17-21; Isa. 42:1-4

### **The Lord not Breaking a Bruised Reed**

Matthew 12:20 quotes the word in Isaiah 42:3, which says, “A bruised reed He will not break; / And a dimly burning flax He will not extinguish.” This indicates that the Lord is full of mercy. Jewish children were accustomed to make flutes out of reeds, and reeds are very fragile. When a reed was bruised and could not produce a sweet pleasant sound, the children would immediately break it and throw it away. Often we are like bruised reeds that should be broken and thrown away; however, the Lord did not break a bruised reed.

Making flutes of reeds to produce a sweet musical sound signifies the sound and speaking that we should produce before God and man. We should be reeds producing sounds of praise, thanksgiving, songs, joy, and edification. However, we are just as fragile as reeds, easily bruised even by a small matter, and thereby losing our ability to praise, thank, and sing before God and to show meekness and mercy for man. Instead of speaking words of comfort and edification to others, we complain and criticize. Like a bruised reed, we are unable to produce a harmonious and sweet musical sound, even losing our voice. Even when we are in such a condition, however, the Lord does not break or abandon us.

### **The Lord Not Quenching A Dimly Burning Flax**

The Jews also made torches out of flax, which burn oil. When the torch ran out of oil, it could produce only smoke, not light. Then it would be quenched and thrown away. A torch signifies the conduct and testimony that we should have before God and man. We should be like a bright torch to be a witness of God, but due to the lack of the experience of the Holy Spirit as the heavenly oil, we are only a smoking torch that cannot produce a shining light. Nevertheless, even when we are in such a condition, the Lord does not quench or forsake us.

In the eyes of the Jews, breaking a bruised reed or quenching a dimly burning flax and discarding them was reasonable. When we look at ourselves, we often feel as if we are a bruised reed or a dimly burning flax because we neither love the Lord nor have a proper testimony. We are truly worthy only of being put aside. However, according to the revelation of the Bible, Christ, the heavenly King, is full of mercy and endurance toward us; He will not break us who are bruised and cannot produce a musical sound, and He also will not extinguish us who are dim, faint, and even smoking. He never forsakes anyone who belongs to Him.

### **The Lord Not Fainting Nor Being Discouraged; The Lord Not Burning Dimly Nor Being Bruised**

All those who faint are dimly burning flax, but the Lord will not quench them; moreover, He Himself will never burn dimly in these fainting ones. In the four Gospels the Lord encountered many troubles, tests, rejections, and persecutions, yet His light was always shining; it never burned dimly. The Lord is also tender but not fragile. No person or matter can bruise Him, nor stop Him from uttering praise to the Father. The more difficult an environment was, the more He

praised and thanked God; the more difficult an environment was, the more He was merciful toward man and remembered man. In Matthew 11, even when the Jews all forsook Him, He still praised, saying, "I extol You, Father, Lord of heaven and of earth...Yes, Father, for thus it has been well-pleasing in Your sight" (vv. 25-26). When He was crucified on the cross, one robber repented and turned to Him, saying, "Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom" (Luke 23:42). Jesus said to him, "Truly I say to you, Today you shall be with Me in Paradise" (v. 43). Even when He was suffering the death of the cross, He still showed mercy to man and forgave man, promising the repenting robber that he would be with Him in Paradise. When the Lord was in the most difficult situation, He still produced a sweet sound.

When the Lord was on the earth, He did not faint and was not discouraged. Today He is also not dimly burning nor being crushed within us. The Lord does not burn dimly in us. No trouble and torment that we give Him can cause Him to faint, be discouraged, or be bruised. Regardless of how weak and backsliding we may be, even to the point of being discouraged and disappointed with ourselves, He will not faint nor be discouraged. The Lord within us is always hopeful; He never faints, nor is He ever discouraged.

#### **The Lord Establishing Justice and Bringing People Into the Reigning of the Kingdom**

Isaiah 42:4 says, "[The Lord] will not faint, nor will He be discouraged, / Until He has established justice in the earth." Verse 1 says, "He will bring forth justice to the nations." Verse 3 says, "He will bring forth justice in truth." Matthew 12:20 also says, "Until He brings forth justice unto victory." The above verses all contain the word justice, referring to the Lord's establishing justice on the earth and bringing forth justice. Justice denotes law, umpire, verdict, and judgment; it is related to the reigning of the kingdom. Justice is the issue of righteousness passing through judgment. When righteousness passes through judgment, it becomes justice. The salvation we have received is the result of God's judgment on Christ. Christ is righteous, but He became our Substitute and was judged by God according to His righteous law, completely fulfilling the requirement of God's law. The issue of this is our salvation. Thus, establishing justice on the earth is the establishment of God's salvation on the earth, and executing justice is the execution of God's salvation. Christ's commission is to establish justice, that is, to establish God's salvation on the earth, and to bring forth this justice is to preach the gospel. The Lord will bring forth justice, which is salvation, to the nations, and He will establish His kingdom in us until He executes justice, that is, executes salvation, on the earth unto victory.

Although the Lord is not yet able to establish His justice, His kingdom, in most people today, He does not faint, nor is He discouraged. He is always waiting in meekness and endurance for people to turn to Him. Because of His meekness and mercy, we are willing to come to Him to receive salvation; because of His long-suffering and waiting, we are willing to submit to Him and let Him establish authority in us. When we come and surrender to Him, His justice is established in us, bringing us under the reigning of the kingdom.