

OUR EXPERIENCE OF ACACIA WOOD: THE STRONG AND PROPER HUMANITY

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THE NEED FOR A STRONG AND FIRM HUMANITY FOR THE GOLD TO STAND UPON

The boards of the tabernacle are acacia wood overlaid with gold. We know that the acacia wood signifies the proper humanity, while the gold signifies the divine life and nature. What the recovery is most short of today is the acacia wood. We are not short of gold. Actually, we almost have too much gold, because we don't even know where to put it. When we open our mouth, gold comes out, but there is no wood to bear it. We have meetings filled with gold, but there is no wood to uphold it. Eventually because of the lack of the proper wood, so much of the gold is wasted. So we must learn to take care of our humanity. Acacia wood signifies a humanity that stands firm, that remains strong, that can go through trials and face challenges. It is much more than just a healthy and moral life. It is a humanity that sees what God desires and operates accordingly. This kind of humanity will build up the churches.

To stand for the testimony of God, we must have a strong and firm humanity. We must be those who are firm. If we are always wavering, "Today I want to be here, tomorrow I want to be there; today I want to move, tomorrow I want to stay; today I want to do this, tomorrow I want to do that," then there is no acacia wood. The wood itself has problems. Whether we can be used by God or not depends on the wood, which is our humanity. It is not a matter of having a lot of Christ and thus being covered with gold. It is a matter of what is within and underneath the gold. Are we a good piece of wood? If we are, then God can use us. Our humanity is very crucial in the building up of the church. Again, in the Lord's recovery today we are not short of gold, we are short of the acacia wood. It is not the gold that stands, but the wood that stands. We already have so much Christ. We talk

about Christ, we read about Christ, our lives are filled with Christ, we know Christ within and without. But there is no wood for Christ to be laid upon. There is no wood for Him to stand upon. For the building of God's testimony, there must be the solid humanity. This is the acacia wood. Gold can never stand upon plywood. We must be the acacia wood for all the gold we have to stand upon.

THE QUALITY OF OUR HUMANITY DETERMINES OUR USEFULNESS

We must take care of our humanity. It doesn't matter how much God works if there is not the proper humanity to stand upon. On one hand, we realize that our humanity is from God Himself. He made us what we are. He gave us our talents and capability. But still we have to realize that unless we are the boards made out of the proper wood, there is nothing for the gold to stand upon. Nothing spiritual will work if the humanity has problems. This is why Satan does his best to damage the humanity that God created. Satan attacks humanity to make it absolutely useless for God. Satan attacks the wood so that no gold can stand upon it. For His testimony, God needs a humanity that is able to work, struggle, fight, and stand firm. God can only use this kind of humanity.

For example, some brothers are not trustworthy. They can only bear so much, and if they are given any more, they can't handle it. What is the reason? The piece of wood has problems. Then there is no way for God to use them. If we are a piece of plywood, then how can gold lay over us? If a little something comes to us and we can't handle it, then how can God use us? If we want to serve the Lord, then all kinds of challenges and difficulties will come. At such times we must be very firm. We must be those who can say, "I am for Christ! I am for His church! Whether it is by His salvation or by my naturalness, I don't even care! I am here standing firm for what God desires!" Then the gold can be laid over us.

If a person has a solid humanity, then it doesn't make too much difference whether Christ is involved or not. A person is just solid. If a brother is having a hard time, he must be the acacia wood to go through it. In a sense, it is almost as if this has nothing to do with Christ. Needless to say, we still need Christ. But a good piece of wood is just a good piece of wood. On one hand, the acacia wood is a regenerated and transformed humanity. But on the other hand, wood is just wood. Humanity is just humanity. These two aspects do not contradict each other. Yes, our humanity needs to be transformed. But even before salvation, humanity is just humanity. Some people learn to work hard, while some live at ease. Some are able to stand firm and face problems, while some escape whatever difficulties come to them. Whoever escapes the difficulties, whoever cannot face the problems and challenges, how can they ever serve the Lord? We do need transformation, but we should not over-spiritualize it and make it too simple. If we are not a proper piece of wood, then God has no way to operate. The quality of wood makes a big difference in operation. No matter how much Christ is involved in our lives, if we are sloppy, indifferent, too easygoing, always escaping, unable to confront storms, afraid to stand firm, then God can never use us because our humanity has problems.

We may say that we need the virtues of Jesus. This is true, but even if the virtues are not of Jesus, we should still have them. We should not just wait so that we can be transformed. No one coming into the church life is automatically spiritual. But people do come in who are a piece of acacia wood. There is just something solid about them. There is something profound about their humanity. Gold can be laid upon this person. Does transformation come first, or does the acacia wood come first? Is the gold first laid over the wood, or is the acacia wood there already? It can be argued one way or the other, but with some brothers, the humanity is there for them to stand and be overlaid with gold. Because of their humanity, the Lord can use them.

A LACK IN OUR HUMANITY WILL CAUSE THE CHURCH TO SUFFER

Many leading brothers never realize how crucial and even how precious it is to be a piece of acacia wood. So they get involved in a lot of works and activities. Then they become concerned over success or failure, but they have no ability to bear either. When they are successful, they become proud. When they are defeated, they become depressed. Eventually the whole church suffers under their care. These brothers are faithful, these brothers love the Lord, but their humanity becomes a real problem to the church. Their humanity has a lack of solidity and firmness. When they are burdened, the whole church goes forward with them. Then all of a sudden they are not burdened, and the whole church doesn't know what to do. What is the reason? The wood. The humanity. With some churches, a leading brother can be so burdened and charged that everyone in the church operates. Then when a little frustration comes in, the brother is defeated and the church goes nowhere. This is because there is a lack in the brother's humanity. Eventually it is not the gold, but the wood that stands. If the wood cannot stand, then the church will suffer.

THE NEED TO BE BUILT UP WITH OTHERS

This is why, when we serve the Lord, and especially if we are full-time, we must never be alone. When we are by ourselves, with no one to oversee our labor, no one to watch over our schedule, and no one to coordinate with us, then we can easily be ruined by our disposition. We must labor together with a group of brothers. We can never be by ourselves. Eventually we not only stand, but we are built up into the tabernacle, which is a corporate testimony. We must remember that every board of the tabernacle was joined to another board. Every piece of wood must be joined to another. No matter how much we get bothered and frustrated by the brothers who serve with us, we need them. Without them we cannot survive, and we cannot be built up.