

The future is bright, if you can see it and build toward it

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A recent Sunday service
Unofficial notes: Ken Bates



I have not heard ANY other pastor or Unification Church leader speak with this kind of authority or clarity in the past number of years. If anyone knows where there is a Unification Church pastor who really deals with God's providence, current issues, and future vision in a meaningful way, and is willing to challenge their congregation to take the message seriously, please let me know. For me, this is a principled, pertinent, and moving message that reminds me of many times sitting on the floor trying to write down every word Father was saying... These are personal notes from Ken Bates on Sunday morning service with Hyun Jin Nim. They may not be complete or precise, but are my direct impression of the speech given.

The future is bright, if you can see it and build toward it. Many things will start to unfold there, way beyond anyone's expectations. The first and most important thing is to find gratitude and stand humble before God. By setting Jung Sung, everything is put in the proper perspective. Standing humble before the will of God and heaven is the most important. It is us, through our life course and decisions that allow God to work. He can only realize the principles behind his creation through us. Only if we have absolute ownership over them like God does, can we really allow God to work. Religions raised people spiritually by shunning the physical world as a course of restoration.

Happiness is not defined by physical things; it's based on meaning and purpose. Creation puts things in such clear perspective. Personal expectation is a sure-fire way toward unhappiness. If you don't expect anything, then you are grateful for anything you receive. You will find happiness and peace in the lowest places, not the highest places. When you have nothing, the simplest things are so precious (like toilet paper). Where can you find the time to really experience that? It's usually in creation.

If you feel that you need to take everything with you when you go out into creation, you can't go very far. You need to pare things down to the bare essentials. If you want to go far, you only need the bare essentials. What about your spiritual life? Do you really want to be encumbered by all the things of life that are not essential, or do you want to live an unencumbered life that is rich in its experiences and opportunities? Only when you are pushing to the limit do you truly understand what is essential and what is extraneous.

Human beings have the capacity to overcome anything they face. We induce our own limitations based on our wrong attitude and perspective. If I change my attitude and my perspective, I can overcome and

succeed in any situation! Think of what a great gift that is! What allows us to be great is how we face adversity. You can't determine the circumstances of life. Things will happen that you don't expect or like. That's when you need to take action and do the right thing. Regardless of circumstance, it's how you engage with that circumstance that makes all the difference. Most people who die in the wilderness die because they gave up. Rather than find the way to survive, they gave up.

When I think about the past 6 years, I was challenged on every level. It can't even be put into words. But I see this as an opportunity given by God for me to prove the legitimacy of True Parents and God's presence within the Unification Church community and the global community. The path to hell is paved with good intentions. Satan has many sob stories of how difficult his life is and how justified his resentment is. That plays on your emotions and stimulates pity. The path to bring about the subjugation of Satan is true love. Where a man or woman representing God's side endures the most unreasonable, unendurable situation. That is what gives true victory and legitimacy to God's presence in your life. When the truth is known, there is no one who can deny the true greatness of following God's calling through the most difficult circumstances.

Maintain the attitude of gratitude and humility. That is how to invite God into your life. True greatness comes from aligning with the will of God and continuing through what seems impossible. No human being is perfect. Redemption is a gift given to us by Heavenly Father. In order to receive redemption, we need to come face to face with our own responsibility or lack thereof. From that point we improve, learn, grow, and become a better person. This is something that many of our Blessed Central Families should contemplate. When I say that they need to change their ways, it's not about judgment and being a bad person. It's about reconsidering how God is working and how to align with that. Judgment can only come from yourself and your relationship with God. During the last days we come face to face with who we really are. Repent for what was not right, become a new man or woman, and be guided by embracing the standard of Heaven. Become a true son or daughter. That is how to receive blessing for our Blessed families. Unfortunately many are not there yet. Redemption is there for all who can receive it. The question is can you take it? Can you admit what needs to change and make the effort to become aligned with God's Will?

I keep realizing that there is not much that I have done myself. The successes have been done for me by God, by my parents, through the fortunate circumstances of my life, and from the abilities given to me that I never asked for. The older we get, the more we realize how little we have done ourselves and how much God has done for us. If only you can bow down and be grateful for all that God has done, then God can work through that. Repentance is a purging of all your self-centeredness, your own desires and selfishness. The tears that come from your eyes are like a waterfall that is cleansing you internally. Only then will you fully understand His love, His grace and His blessings. Before heaven you should be grateful and be exemplary to those around you.

The Rocky Mountain region is populated by a lot of Mormons. The STF program is like the Mormon mission commitment. To send a child for two-year missionary work is not mandatory, but most Mormons do it. That costs about \$20,000 for each child, and the family pays for that, not the community. One of my contacts in Colorado is a Mormon leader. He is a high school football coach and hunting guide... he doesn't make much money. He sent two sons on missions; that's \$40K investment by his family. At the beginning, the STF program didn't even cover its own expenses and was paid for by me, not by the Blessed families. What a contrast in terms of ownership! Main line Christians see Mormons as a cult because they believe in latter day saints and modern day revelations. When the modern day prophet gives a command, they follow it. The prophet gives them the assignment of where they go on their mission. The Mormon faith was so prepared to recognize Father! Father's Hoon Dok Hae family church is more like the Mormons' community structure. Do you think it was really that difficult to contact the Mormon faith and introduce them to Father's beliefs? The leaders of Unification Church didn't understand the potential, so they went to small storefront churches. That was easier.

As these errors in leadership become more apparent, I start to understand how much more could have been accomplished. History will see that those things can still be accomplished even if they are delayed. Those who are aligned with God's ideal will be vindicated eventually. What will happen to those who are naysayers and judging me because I stood my ground and stayed consistent in my relationship with God? They will be the fools of history.

You have so much to be proud of as Blessed families. Never lose sight of that. Remain grateful for all that God has given you. Divine Principle can only be embodied through us. It's not a finished, completed book on the shelf. The western world sees perfection as an end or destination. Eastern thought on perfection has no end, and is the journey itself. I quote Confucius and the Tao to Christians as well as the bible. The Christians and Muslims and others still believe that their way is the only way to God. Only Father truly believed that God is universal and works through all the great faith traditions. There are universal traditions that all faiths share. THIS should be the message and essence of our spiritual life.

Both my wife and I graduated from UTS, and we understand the strengths and weaknesses of theology. My fortune line on my left hand goes all the way up. Jun Sook Nim's right hand goes all the way up, too. That means good fortune on both sides. Almost everything is being done by Heavenly Father; we are just trying to provide the foundation through which God can work. All you have to do is your 5% and then God's 95% is provided to you. How much do you have to be grateful for? I had to be careful writing the second chapter of my recent book in testifying to Father, so that people don't disregard it. I had to tone down my true feeling so that the average reader doesn't think I'm exaggerating. More and more, people will want to know more about Father and will ask questions.

Unfortunately, many 2nd Gen have gotten confused and lost. You can't believe everything you read, or get swayed too easily. You need to look inside and really seek to understand what is true and what is not. The dignity, honor, and glory of True Parents may be clouded now by the cacophony of noise, but that will go away, and the somber truth will still stand. There will come a time that you will be vindicated for standing true to your beliefs and ideals rather than giving up because of the difficulties.