Making Friends  
with Angels

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Sabbath,  June 9, 2018 | A Bible Study given by Andreas Dura |

Unless otherwise stated, all scriptures taken from the New King James  
Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission.  
All rights reserved.

Making Friends with Angels

Welcome to our study this morning everyone. Today we'll be studying about angels, but our general topic is still the one way of practicing the healing art which heaven approves. We will specifically study about gospel order today. Let's begin by reading a Bible text.

“He also said to His disciples: ‘There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and an accusation was brought to him that this man was wasting his goods. So he called him and said to him, “What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward.” Then the steward said within himself, “What shall I do? For my master is taking the stewardship away from me. I cannot dig; I am ashamed to beg. I have resolved what to do, that when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.” So he called every one of his master's debtors to him, and said to the first, “How much do you owe my master?” And he said, “A hundred measures of oil.” So he said to him, “Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.” Then he said to another, “And how much do you owe?” So he said, “A hundred measures of wheat.” And he said to him, “Take your bill, and write eighty.” So the master commended the unjust steward because he had dealt shrewdly. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light. And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon, that when you fail, they may receive you into an everlasting home.” *Luke* 16:1-9.

This story is an object lesson, but it also actually happened. The people involved listened to Jesus and knew exactly that their story was being told. It must have been interesting. They were evidently tax collectors.

The biblical account is divided into two parts—the actual story and then the explanation which Jesus gave. The rich man who praised the unfaithful servant does not represent Christ. Rather, he was the servant's boss. The servant had deceived and bribed in order to save himself. And he was indeed still fired. But yet his boss thought he was a clever man. Deception was very common in those days, especially among the tax collectors. It was so common that it was thought of casually—as not being especially bad. The servant had to leave his job because of his previous actions, but the deception itself was not considered such a problem. Instead, the employer thought he was shrewd and that he had done well, despite the fact that it had cost him. The deception itself was quite normal.

Jesus didn't praise the servant's approach. He praised neither the methods nor the aim. What did He praise? Actually, He didn't praise anything. He simply said that the man was shrewd. That's what the servant's boss had said.

There are certain characteristics which we can indeed learn from the enemies of God. We can even learn from Satan. Such characteristics include cleverness, endurance, and courage. But these characteristics didn't help the unfaithful servant. He still was fired. Similarly, these characteristics will not help us, because they will come to an end. And if we don't have friends when they come to an end, then that's the finish. So, mammon doesn't help us. The wrong methods don't help us. They are all limited in time.

Mammon is an Aramaic word which means money. We can substitute this word into the verse as follows. “Make friends for yourselves by unrighteous money, that when the money ends and has no value, then at least you will have friends who will receive you.” This is what Jesus said.

What exactly are the lessons in this parable? What exactly do we need to learn from the enemies of God? That is an important question because we often learn the wrong things from them. And when we learn wrongly, then it's all over.

People are often very successful in temporal matters, and yet they are not qualified for the gospel work. That is because they are lacking in character. On the other hand, there are those who do seek after God, but who accomplish nothing because they are lacking wisdom—spiritual wisdom. This is the point. We could also call it spiritual intelligence.

The disciples marveled at wisdom. We probably do also. When someone manages to do something special, it's great. We marvel at people when they have an excellent career, or when they make a lot of money. The disciples also marveled at such people. They marveled at Judas and the fact that he could manage everything so well. They thought that his talent was definitely needed in their little team. Let's read about this.

“The disciples were anxious that Judas should become one of their number. He was of commanding appearance, a man of keen discernment and executive ability, [That's wonderful, right?] and they commended him to Jesus as one who would greatly assist Him in His work. They were surprised that Jesus received him so coolly.” *The Desire of Ages*, 294.1.

They did not understand it. Such a talent must be used!

The same situation happened when the rich young ruler came to Jesus, offering to follow Him. The disciples thought that someone with so much money could not be simply sent away. But Jesus placed such a high requirement upon him that he wasn't willing to come along. The disciples were puzzled by it.

The disciples valued wisdom, but they didn't value spiritual wisdom. That is the important point. Jesus doesn't tell us that we should be actually as clever as the people in the world. Rather, He says that cleverness is good, but that we also need the counterpart to it, which is spiritual wisdom. Are cleverness and wisdom hindrances which keep us from working in God's kingdom? It seems so. Jesus spoke about this in the following verses in relation to the rich young ruler.

“Then Jesus said to His disciples, ‘Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.' [That is quite a statement! Worldly talents are hindrances. So, His disciples wondered who could be saved.] ... But Jesus looked at them and said to them, ‘With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.'” *Matthew* 19:23-26.

With God it is also possible for a rich person to enter the kingdom. With God it is possible for a clever person to enter the kingdom. Paul said something similar as well. Let's read this. “For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called.” *1 Corinthians* 1:26. Not many wise are called. That is because it is often a problem. What kind of wisdom is needed in order to be able to work in the kingdom of God? What is spiritual wisdom, or spiritual intelligence? We can see two aspects in the parable Jesus told.

First, the servant thought about the future. Most people think only about the temporal. They want to have recognition and money now, without seeing that there is something eternal to gain. Whenever we have difficulty understanding God's ways, it is because we see only the temporal matters and miss the eternal ones. If we could see the eternal, and if we could keep this in our view, then we would see so much wisdom in God's actions. We would see so much righteousness in how He acts. Spiritual intelligence doesn't see merely the temporal. It sees the eternal. It sees beyond the present.

The second aspect is that we need to seek and make the right friends—those who will receive us in eternity. Those friends are the angels. Do we seek friendship with the angels more than we seek friendship with people? Do we seek friendship with the heavenly beings—with God and His angels?

These are the two aspects which make up spiritual intelligence. Spiritual intelligence is involved with the spiritual and invisible world, and with the future which we do not see yet, but that is promised to us in His word.

How do we make friends? How can we become friends with the angels? This is the question we will consider today. Angels are often mentioned in the Old Testament. The angel of the Lord is especially mentioned. Abraham, Lot, and many others met angels. Adam and Eve also met them in *Genesis* 3.

Looking at how some people have fought against the angels also helps us to see what the hindrances are which keep us from cooperating with them. There is one man who refused to cooperate with the angels. The Moabite king, Balak, wanted to curse Israel. He sought out Balaam, who was purported to have magical powers. Balaam was also a prophet of the Lord. He was supposed to curse Israel, being paid a great deal of money in return. Balaam wanted to do this, but God didn't allow him to. Ultimately, he went ahead anyway. He was allowed to go there, but he was not allowed to achieve his goal. Let's read the story as he traveled with the Moabites.

“So Balaam rose in the morning, saddled his donkey, and went with the princes of Moab. Then God's anger was aroused because he went, and the Angel of the Lord took His stand in the way as an adversary against him. [Here we see a person who didn't work together with the angels. The angel was not his friend. Instead, the angel stood against him. It was a conflict. If we act in a way which makes the angels have to stand in our way, then we're not co-working with them. We are then working against each other. That's not effective.] And he was riding on his donkey, and his two servants were with him. Now the donkey saw the Angel of the Lord standing in the way with His drawn sword in His hand, and the donkey turned aside out of the way and went into the field. So Balaam struck the donkey to turn her back onto the road. [Balaam fought against the angel. Of course, he didn't see the angel. Therefore, he could excuse himself and say his actions weren't so bad. He could blame it on his lack of understanding. Similarly, we don't see the angels. But we should know when we are working with them and when we are working against them. This we should know. Balaam should have known this too. How could he have known it? Let's think about this.] Then the Angel of the Lord stood in a narrow path between the vineyards, with a wall on this side and a wall on that side. And when the donkey saw the Angel of the Lord, she pushed herself against the wall and crushed Balaam's foot against the wall; so he struck her again. Then the Angel of the Lord went further, and stood in a narrow place where there was no way to turn either to the right hand or to the left. And when the donkey saw the Angel of the Lord, she lay down under Balaam; so Balaam's anger was aroused, and he struck the donkey with his staff. [Balaam thought it was just the donkey, but there was actually much more going on.] Then the Lord opened the mouth of the donkey, and she said to Balaam, ‘What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?' [It's astonishing for a donkey to speak. But Balaam was in such a rage that he didn't even register that fact.] And Balaam said to the donkey, ‘Because you have abused me. I wish there were a sword in my hand, for now I would kill you!' So the donkey said to Balaam, ‘Am I not your donkey on which you have ridden, ever since I became yours, to this day? Was I ever disposed to do this to you?' And he said, ‘No.' [Now Balaam starts to understand] Then the Lord opened Balaam's eyes, and he saw the Angel of the Lord standing in the way with His drawn sword in His hand; and he bowed his head and fell flat on his face.” *Numbers* 22:21-31.

Had Balaam been able to see the angel before, he would have certainly apologized and said, “I didn't understand.” Let's read a commentary about this.

“There are thousands at the present day who are pursuing a similar course [to that of Balaam]. They would have no difficulty in understanding their duty if it were in harmony with their inclinations. It is plainly set before them in the Bible or is clearly indicated by circumstances and reason. But because these evidences are contrary to their desires and inclinations they frequently set them aside and presume to go to God to learn their duty. With great apparent conscientiousness they pray long and earnestly for light. But God will not be trifled with. He often permits such persons to follow their own desires and to suffer the result. ‘My people would not hearken to My voice. . . . So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust: and they walked in their own counsels.' Psalm 81:11, 12. When one clearly sees a duty, let him not presume to go to God with the prayer that he may be excused from performing it. He should rather, with a humble, submissive spirit, ask for divine strength and wisdom to meet its claims.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 440.4.

Balaam could have known. How? He could have known, either through the Bible or through circumstances. The circumstance with the donkey was obvious, wasn't it? Reason is another way he could have known. Reason would have told him that it wasn't possible for God's people to be cursed at the command of a heathen, idolatrous king. That contradicts all logic. Moreover there was the situation with the donkey. And he also had the word of God which could have shown him everything very clearly. All this should have shown him in which direction the angel was going. And he could have gone together with the angel. But instead, he went a different way.

God also send angels to us, to accompany us in every work that we do each day. We are not alone. Even when it seems we are alone, we're not actually on our own. And when we are together with other people, there are still others present—the angels. These angels play a great role in all the circumstances which we experience. Let's read about this.

“For He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways. In their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone.” *Psalm* 91:11, 12.

When are our angels our companions? When are they our opponents? We need to know the answer to these questions. In the parable we read in *Luke* 16, it is obvious that the angels are our friends when we act selflessly—when we use what is entrusted to us for the benefit of others, when we give. Selflessness is a very important aspect. It makes the angels our friends. Selfishness makes the angels our opponents.

It is so critical that we have the right relationship to the things of this earth. This is true in the matter of selfishness and selflessness. Everything which is temporal— whether a possession, a house, a family, a car—and everything which binds us to the temporal, makes the angels distant. The angels see beyond it all. It's not important to them. They know that it will all burn. They know that nothing will remain permanently. And for this reason, our holding onto what is temporal makes the angels our opponents. But the angels are our friends when we fully cut these things off in our hearts. Let's read about this.

“But this I say, brethren, the time is short, so that from now on even those who have wives should be as though they had none, those who weep as though they did not weep, those who rejoice as though they did not rejoice, those who buy as though they did not possess, and those who use this world as not misusing it. For the form of this world is passing away.” *1 Corinthians* 7:29-31.

This was Paul's attitude. He didn't hang his heart on what was temporal, and this made him a friend of the angels, because they're not attached to what is temporal either—absolutely not. The selflessness which is expressed here is that we want nothing of this world for ourselves. This doesn't necessarily refer to money. It can also be praise, recognition, ease, and so on.

We need to understand what character the angels have, in order to understand how we can co-work with them. Let's read a statement about this. “The angels of glory find their joy in giving,—giving love and tireless watchcare to souls that are fallen and unholy. Heavenly beings woo the hearts of men; they bring to this dark world light from the courts above; by gentle and patient ministry they move upon the human spirit, to bring the lost into a fellowship with Christ which is even closer than they themselves can know.” *The Desire of Ages*, 21.1.

The angels have absolutely no thought of self-exaltation. That's why they remained in heaven when Satan and the others left. We're referring to the faithful angels whom God sends to accompany us. These angels are happy when they can constantly give to us, and when they can bring us further than where they are themselves. That is selfless joy. We make these angels our friends when we take part in that joy.

John the Baptist partook of this joy. Let's read about it. “He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease.” *John* 3:29, 30.

There were competitive thoughts between John's disciples and the disciples of Jesus. John's disciples came to him and basically said that Jesus was stealing his show by doing more than him. How could that be possible? John was there first. But John replied that this was the exact purpose of his existence. He was happy about it. It made him a friend of the Bridegroom. It made him a friend of the angels. “He must increase, but I must decrease.” This attitude is friendship with the angels.

Friendship with the angels means to have the same character as they do, which is the character of giving. We also have friendship with the angels when we do the will of God. Let's read a text about this. “But He answered and said to the one who told Him, ‘Who is My mother and who are My brothers?' And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, ‘Here are My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother.'” *Matthew* 12:48-50.

We could also say that they are friends. Jesus said exactly what the angels also think. If we were to ask any angel who their friends are, they would give exactly this answer. They would say, “Those who do the will of our Father in heaven are my friends.”

Jesus expressed this again in the following verse. “You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.” *John* 15:14. The angels would say, “You are our friends when you do what Jesus commands you.” This is exactly what Jesus wanted to say. It is also what the disciples ultimately understood, even though they didn't understand it at first. Spiritual wisdom was not natural to them, but they obtained it. That is described in the Bible too. Let's read it.

“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common,” *Acts* 2:42-44. There was a good unity among them because they were also friends with the angels. Friendship was a very important aspect of their being together. Let's continue reading in chapter 4.

“Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common. And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all. Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles' feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need.” *Acts* 4:32-35. The next verses tell of a believer who sold his land and laid it at the apostles' feet.

Gospel order is described here. And it is gospel order which makes the angels our friends. How do we see the gospel order here? Let's take a closer look. The believers sold their land and laid the money at the feet of the apostles. Then the money was distributed according to the individual needs. This means that many could probably provide for themselves. Others needed to be supported, because of persecution or other circumstances. But there was no lack in the end. Jesus also asked His disciples if they ever had a lack and they answered that they did not.

This selflessness is the character of the angels. Let's look at it more closely. The believers sold what they had and laid the proceeds at the feet of the apostles. What does it mean to lay something at someone's feet? It means that we completely give up control. We don't retain any control over it.

When it is laid at another's feet, then it is no longer under our control. We must understand this. Let's read another verse about this.

“For You have made him a little lower than the angels, and You have crowned him with glory and honor. You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet.” *Psalm* 8:6. In other words, “You gave everything into His control.” God gave everything into His Son's control. He completely surrendered it all. It belonged to Christ. And this is also what is meant when we read that possessions were laid at the feet of the apostles. The possessions were given to the apostles and were no longer under the individual's control.

We often give a gift, with the condition of getting it back again. But the angels give without expecting anything in return. They surrender it, and do not hold the control.

The tithe is another area where we recognize that what we have is not under our control. God said to give ten percent. It's not for us to decide whether we give this much or that much. Rather, God said that ten percent belongs to Him. So, we give it away, completely. It is no longer under our control. We don't determine how it is used. Instead, its use is determined by others. The same is true of other amounts which are laid at the apostles' feet. They are no longer under our control.

Alternatively, we could try to administer the ten percent ourselves and spend it according to our own opinion. We could say that we are using it for this or that missionary project—for going house to house, or for printing literature. But that is not giving it away. This is holding onto it for ourselves.

The early believers laid their money at the apostles' feet. The apostles could have announced the needs of the various believers and each individual could have given as they thought best. But that's not how it went. Instead, it was handled systematically. Everything was laid at the apostles' feet, and then it was distributed. That is gospel order. It is a very important aspect.

“And they distributed to each as anyone had need.” *Acts* 4:35. First of all, who is “they”? And what does it mean that it was given according to need. Often people will ask either for more than they need, or less than they need to live. Do we think that we would be able to distribute to everyone correctly, if we had that task? Would we be able to give to everyone exactly what they needed? That would be very difficult. We feel more comfortable dealing with our own needs, since we know what we need. The task of distribution requires much wisdom. And that wisdom is needed again and again.

Let's read about distributions given to widows. “Honor widows who are really widows. But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents; for this is good and acceptable before God. [First is described what a real widow is. Then many conditions are described.] Now she who is really a widow, and left alone, trusts in God and continues in supplications and prayers night and day. But she who lives in pleasure is dead while she lives. [Those who live self- indulgently are obviously in a different category.] ... Do not let a widow under sixty years old be taken into the number.” *1 Timothy* 5:3-9.

Interestingly, there is a long list of rules for the support of widows. And these principles also apply to those who are workers and elders in the church. “Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. For the Scripture says, ‘You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain,' and, ‘The laborer is worthy of his wages.'” *1 Timothy* 5:17, 18. The needy people included not only widows, but also gospel workers. Many rules are described for the distribution to those in need.

As long as everything was being distributed well, the church was a very good team. They were one heart and one soul. There was gospel order, as well as the spirit of the angels and cooperation with the angels. It was as Jesus described. They had made friends with the angels. But later on, the team was threatened with collapse. Satan succeeded in bringing in prejudices and selfishness. We know this from later chapters in *Acts*, for example the story of Ananias and Sapphira. Their selfishness brought in a totally different element. They worked against the angels, instead of with them. Let's read about another attack of Satan against the friendship with the angels.

“Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, ‘It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables.'” *Acts* 6:1, 2.

The friendship with the angels was put into question. As a result, the team was also put into question. It was necessary for the apostles to give a clear leading. So, they spread their responsibility onto more shoulders. The task was given to seven deacons. Importantly, those seven were men who cooperated with the angels. To the degree that the work and needs grew, the spirit of the angels needed to be in those who made the distribution. It is not easy to make such distributions. And it won't work anymore when selfishness enters in, as it did with Ananias and Sapphira, or with those who murmured. It was absolutely necessary to have the right spirit. Thinking of others as higher than myself is such a critical aspect.

Harmony with the angels also means to have harmony with the church. Just imagine if one of the seven deacons claimed the right to the greatest share, because he had the largest piece of land. Or, imagine if one deacon had complained that another had received too much. It would not have worked. The spirit of the angels needed to be ruling. This also means that a spirit of coworking and teamwork is needed.

How can we recognize whether someone is really bearing the responsibility of the right arm work? The work of the seven deacons was right arm work. How can we know if someone is bearing such responsibility correctly?

The first aspect is that a person is following the instructions of God. Abraham's actions with regard to Ishmael show us that he meant well, but he didn't follow God's instructions. He tried to fulfill God's work in his own strength. This is the first and most important aspect in the right arm work. If we want to build up a right arm work, our good motives are not enough. The promise of God must also stand behind it.

The next point is that the principles God has taught us must be heeded. We read several principles about distribution in *1 Timothy* 6. But we could read many more. God has given us many principles in His word.

The last point is harmony with the church. We'll look at this point in more depth.

If we build up a work which is not in harmony with the church, then something is not right. Harmony with the church also means that we allow the work to be judged by the church. It means that we don't just do it for ourselves, citing our good motives and taking other things into account. Instead, it means that the whole church sees light in the work—at least those who are connected with it, such as the local church. Let's read a statement about this.

“When Satan became disaffected in heaven, he did not lay his complaint before God and Christ; but he went among the angels who thought him perfect and represented that God had done him injustice in preferring Christ to himself. The result of this misrepresentation was that through their sympathy with him one third of the angels lost their innocence, their high estate, and their happy home. Satan is instigating men to continue on earth the same work of jealousy and evil surmising that he commenced in heaven.” *Testimonies for the Church* 5:291.1.

Here we see what it means not to work together with the angels. We can see how selfishness came into the work of God. Let's continue reading a little further on.

“Let him seek meekness, and learn to esteem others better than himself. [This is an important point.] If he will work in fidelity and in harmony with God's plan he will hear the sweet words, ‘Well done,' from the lips of the Master. But if he rejects the labors of God's servants, if he chooses his own way and leans to his own understanding, he will surely make shipwreck of faith. God has not passed His people by and chosen one solitary man here and another there as the only ones worthy to be entrusted with His truth. He does not give one man new light contrary to the established faith of the body. [It would also be contrary to the angels.] In every reform men have arisen making this claim. Paul warned the church in his day: ‘Of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.' The greatest harm to God's people comes through those who go out from among them speaking perverse things. Through them the way of truth is evil spoken of.” *Testimonies for the Church* 5:291.2.

When people start a right arm project in their own strength, then the work gets a bad name.

One example of this is the Kellogg brothers. John Harvey Kellogg was a doctor. He also had a younger brother, Will Keith, who researched with him into making healthy foods. The brothers found out how to make cornflakes. They were so happy to have this new product for the people. Dr John Kellogg offered this to his sanitarium patients. His brother Will decided to do more with the recipe, so he started to distribute it throughout the country. He opened a big manufacturing operation. Unfortunately, he then added sugar to the recipe because it appealed more to people's taste. The product sold much better with sugar in it. John Kellogg opposed these actions, stating that the product was no longer healthy. He sued his brother, but lost.

Of course, this story is about worldly gain and success. But what if you were doing something to serve the people, and someone were to come along and do exactly the same thing, only adding sugar, so to speak? They would be doing it for personal gain, and it would no longer be a service to the people. That's sad, isn't it? But this is exactly the problem. It is precisely what happens when we build up a work in opposition to the principles by which the church works. It happens when we're not open—when we do what we do for ourselves. It causes great harm to the cause. People will only be confused between the two works.

People who understand the nature of sugar would say that W.K. Kellogg gave the people a very bad product. It is a crime against society when we think of all the sickness and dental cavities caused by it. That's what they would say. They would not respect him.

This specific case is not our concern at the moment. But the point we want to make is that the greatest damage to the work of God happens because of those who stand up from within the midst and speak falsehoods. They use what God has given and change it a little. Then they use it to exalt themselves. That is what it means to work in opposition to the angels.

“Let none be self-confident, as though God had given them special light above their brethren. Christ is represented as dwelling in His people. Believers are represented as ‘built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief Cornerstone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.' ‘I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord,' says Paul, ‘beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long- suffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.'” *Testimonies for the Church* 5:291.3.

Let none say, “I have more light than you!” That is presumption. That is not working together with the angels. To work together with the angels means three things. Let's repeat them.

First, it is to follow the instructions of God.

Second, it is to obey the principles.

And third, it is to act in harmony with the church.

The one way of practicing the healing art which heaven approves is gospel order. Gospel order means selflessness, harmony with the principles of truth as we understand them today, and harmony with the church. All this is to work together with the angels and to have them as friends.

Amen.

Additional points from the Discussion

I would like to make a few additions to the study.

First, the choosing of the seven deacons was an important step in gospel order. But the problem is that we often misunderstand it. We often think that there was an unjust distribution and that the seven deacons were chosen in order to make the distribution more fairly, because the apostles couldn't do it anymore. But this is a wrong assumption.

The problem was not unjust distribution. Instead, the problem from the beginning was the murmuring. This murmuring came up because of old prejudices between the Christians in Jerusalem and those who were outside of the city. There had always been prejudices between the groups. Those who were in Jerusalem were thought to be better than the others. They were the elite. It's like the differences which exist between the races today. One group thinks they are better than the others.

*Audience*: Today we can compare it with being in Dickendorf or Giessen, versus the rest of the church.

*Andreas*: These old prejudices were the problem. The seven deacons had the simple task of spreading the spirit of Christ, which is the spirit of selflessness. They were to stop the problem at the root. It was not their task merely to distribute the gifts fairly. The murmuring needed to be stopped at the root.

Jesus did the same work when the two brothers came to him to have their inheritance divided. And slavery was also dealt with in a similar manner. The root was dealt with. That was the task of the seven deacons. It's not just about a fair bookkeeping. It all depends on the spirit.

The second point is about laying everything at the feet of the apostles. How do we do this? We do it by being open from the very beginning. It is not true openness when we present our work only after we have already built it up. In such a case, it is hard to change anything. For instance, once the sugar was in the cornflakes, the whole project would need to be started all over again from the beginning. It is also embarrassing and hard to be open about these mistakes. So, it is best to be open from the very beginning.

Another difficulty is when we present an idea and ask what we should do. But we can speak with joy if God has given us something, just as Joseph Bates was happy to tell about the Sabbath truth. There will be harmony as well. But if we just ask what we should do, then we are placing our responsibility on others. It's not really teamwork. Thinking as a team is to know that we are led by God and then to lay it at the apostles' feet. In this way there will be harmony with the angels and with the church.

Again, the three principles which make angels our friends are selflessness, harmony with the truth, and harmony with the church.

*Audience*: Earlier, you mentioned that the first point was to follow the instructions of God. And actually, we can only understand God's instructions when we are selfless. We will always misunderstand them when selfishness comes in. Obedience and selflessness are basically synonyms.

There is an obedience which is from fear, as well as an obedience from duty. But fear is not in love. We will never hit the real point if we have fear. Love drives out fear. And selflessness and love are synonyms.

*Andreas*: Yes, thank you. Now we will have time for questions.