Gospel

Order

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Sabbath,

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A Bible Study given by Andreas Dura

Gospel Order

Welcome to our study everyone. Last week our sermon was given in German, so we would like to repeat it again this week, in English. Our subject is the one way of practicing the healing art, which is gospel order. Gospel order is the one way of practicing the healing art. We'll start with the following parable that Jesus related.

“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* 16:1-10.

The text says, “when you fail,” but the original Greek can be translated as “when it fails.” That refers to mammon failing. That is the better translation, “that when mammon fails you, they may receive you into their homes.”

This story was a parable, but it was also an actual event which happened among the publicans. Dishonesty, theft, bribery, and extortion were all common among publicans in those days. The unfaithful steward received commendation from his master—not from Jesus—even though his actions were a sort of bribery. The publicans were smart in such matters. They were shrewd and clever, knowing how to gain an advantage for themselves. Jesus said that this was an interesting fact.

What did Jesus commend? He didn't commend the man's actions. Certainly not! Bribery is not anything to commend— especially not by Christ. He didn't commend the man's aim of self-enrichment, either. What was it that Jesus commended? He commended the man's shrewdness, or his intelligence. Shrewd is an older word. Today we would refer to it as intelligence. Jesus commended the servant's intelligence.

Let's read another verse which shows how Jesus recommends intelligence. “Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.” *Matthew* 10:16.

We are to be shrewd, or wise, as serpents. We are not to be serpents, but rather to be as wise as serpents—which is not the same thing. At the same time, we are to be harmless as doves. We are to have both characteristics.

We can learn certain attributes from God's enemies. That is what Jesus tells us in these verses. We can even learn from Satan. The attributes we can learn are intelligence, endurance, and courage. These are certainly attributes which are commendable. But they will not ultimately help God's enemies. As we have read, mammon will fail them. These traits cannot be depended upon, even though they are good in themselves.

Let's look more closely at what we need to learn from our enemies. We really need to understand this lesson.

The problem is that church members are often very unsuccessful, because they lack intelligence. They try to build up this or that, but they do not succeed. It seems that they lack common sense. They are well-meaning but they don't accomplish much.

On the other hand, people in the world who accomplish much and who attain a lot of knowledge, possessions, money, fame, and so on, do not have the character which would enable them to be entrusted with the right arm work. As much as we would like to have them among us, they don't have the necessary selfless character.

As church members, what is it that we are lacking? We are lacking the intelligence, right? We already have Christian characters, don't we? So, we just need intelligence, right? That's how the parable of the unfaithful servant is often understood. But, actually, we need both intelligence and a selfless character. What does it mean to have both of these aspects together?

The disciples also realized that they lacked some attributes which people in the world had. One of these traits was executive ability. And if we lack an attribute then we need to get it from others, don't we? So, the disciples were looking for people with the attributes they sought and who also wanted to follow Jesus. One such person was Judas. Judas wanted to follow Jesus, and he also had the abilities which the other disciples were lacking. Therefore, the disciples were very surprised when Jesus didn't receive him with the amount of enthusiasm which they thought he deserved. They imagined it would be fantastic if Judas were to join their band of disciples. Let's read about their reaction.

“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, 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.

Judas seemed to have the right character, because he wanted to follow Jesus. Who would want to follow Jesus unless they saw His spiritual power? He wasn't attractive otherwise. It meant something to join His band of disciples. Those who wanted to join that band must have had somewhat of a spiritual mind. And Judas had the intelligence which the other disciples lacked. He had executive intelligence.

There was another person, a young ruler, who also had many abilities. One of those abilities was wealth. That young man had a lot of money. He must have been shrewd to have accumulated so much money. This shrewd, rich, young person wanted to join Jesus. But Jesus made such high demands upon him—demands which made it impossible for him to follow Jesus. What a disappointment! Judas was completely disappointed that Jesus didn't receive this man. Judas thought the man was just what they lacked.

Can intelligence and all these qualities which Jesus recommends actually be a stumbling block? It seems so. In the case of the rich young ruler we read the following.

“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.'” *Matthew* 19:23.

It is hard for a shrewd man to enter the kingdom of heaven. How can we be rich without being shrewd? A rich man must be able to increase their wealth. Perhaps some rich people have their wealth by inheritance, but most wealthy people are shrewd. They know how to deal with money, to retain money, and to increase it. That is shrewdness. That's what Jesus commended in the unfaithful servant. He had made friends. He made a wise investment. Let's read another text which describes 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, or shrewd, are called. So, should we concentrate only on character? Then why did Jesus commend shrewdness?

I've written these two words on the board next to each other. On one side we have shrewdness, or intelligence. On the other side we have a character of selflessness. Those with intelligence may say that that's enough. To have character would only be a hindrance to their wealth. Those with character may say that they have enough, because intelligence would be a stumbling block to their eternal life. But Jesus says we must have both attributes.

What does it mean to have both attributes? What does it mean to have both a character of selflessness as well as intelligence?

We often compartmentalize these two attributes. We keep them separate in our minds. We sometimes live in one universe, so to speak, and sometimes in the other. For instance, if we are going to school, we live in a different universe from when we are in church. That is compartmentalizing.

Jesus didn't mean for us to compartmentalize. He intended for both attributes to become one. This means that we have a different intelligence. It's not mere street-smartness. Instead, it's a different wisdom. We'll call it spiritual intelligence. I would say that spiritual intelligence is much more than intelligence. That is my thesis now, and we will study more to prove this point.

If people with intelligence are so successful, how much more successful should we be with spiritual intelligence? We should be much more successful! Let's read a statement about spiritual wisdom, or spiritual intelligence.

“A minister once said that he could but think that Christ must have known something about science. Of what could this minister have been thinking? Science! Christ could have opened door after door of science. He could have revealed to men treasures of science on which they might have feasted to the present time. But knowing that this knowledge would have been appropriated to unholy uses, He did not open the door.” *Mind, Character, and Personality* 2:702.4.

Jesus did have such knowledge. He could have spoken about it. Then we would speak of Him today as we do of Pythagoras, Plato, or other famous scientists. In fact, these men would all be a mere shadow compared to Jesus. He would be the greatest astronomer, the greatest chemist, the greatest man in medicine, and so on. Door after door He could have opened. He had all the knowledge. But He did not use it to give Himself fame. Rather, He used it to be a blessing for humanity. He did that in an unobtrusive way—in a way which people wouldn't realize.

Why is it bad to make all knowledge known to people? Consider what happened when Einstein and his peers realized that their knowledge had led to the construction of the atom bomb. It was a horrible burden for them. They probably wished that they had never contributed their knowledge to it.

Jesus knew beforehand what would happen. He had the wisdom to know that giving all knowledge to humankind would not always lead to a blessing. That is why He used it wisely. We don't know what it was that He could have said, but certainly He could have explained many aspects of modern science. Jesus had a lot of intelligence. But He had spiritual intelligence. He always used that intelligence for the blessing of others— not only in His present time, but for all of the future. It's impossible to create such a movement as Christ began without intelligence or spirituality. These two aspects were completely married within Him. We need to understand this further.

What is spiritual intelligence? It is intelligence which is guided by a selfless character. Spirituality and divine wisdom are two other names we could use for it. It means that we think of the future, not only of what is present. It means to see the spiritual, not only the earthly. It means to build on the eternal, not on the temporal.

This reminds us of the famous “Marshmallow Test.” It is a test given to children in which the researcher gives a child a marshmallow, or something similar, to test their self-control. The child can either eat the marshmallow immediately, or they can wait a few minutes until they are given a second marshmallow. Those who were able to wait have been shown to have more success in later life as well. The question is whether their ability to wait was a predisposition in their character which also made them more intelligent later, or did their education train them to be able to wait and cause them to develop more successfully in life? And what did the children ultimately do with the capital they had, namely being able to wait? These are interesting questions to consider. But the main point is that the children who waited were able to gain the future reward.

What is more important for us? Is the gratification of our present need more important, or can we wait for the future? And it's much more than this. Are we able to see the eternal in comparison to the temporal? Are we able to see the spiritual in comparison with the earthly? Are we able to see the selfless in comparison with the selfish? Are we building on the eternal, or on the temporal?

Mammon is an Aramaic word for money. Making friends with mammon, or money, means that we don't cling to it. It means that we let it go. And we make friends when we let it go. Who do we make friends with? We make friends with the good angels.

There are two kinds of angels—those who work for God and those who work against Him. The good angels are those who work for God and whom He sends out as ministers. They are a protection and guide for us, as we read in *Hebrews* 1:14.

Are we interested in having such friends? Or are we more interested in having earthly friends? Whom do we appreciate more— earthly or heavenly friends? Are we more interested in the spiritual or the temporal? If we are interested in having spiritual friends, then we won't worry about whether or not we have earthly friends. This doesn't mean that we won't have any friends. Rather, it simply means that we won't be concerned about it. That is because it will be more important for us to have angels as friends, than it is to have earthly friends. We may indeed lose earthly friends when we follow principle. But we will win heavenly friends—those whom God sends out as servants. There will be powerful, invisible beings standing by our side.

What kind of attitude do we need for such friendship? Let's read a text 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.

In other words, they have no interest in this world. Their minds are completely focused on the heavenly. And when our minds are turned to this, then we should be even more successful than the man in the parable who was commended as being shrewd. And again, it was the servant's master who commended him. It was not Jesus who commended him.

How do we become friends with the angels? That is our big question. We become friends with them by adopting their character, and by following the way of God, just as they follow God. Let's read a statement about the joy of the angels and how they follow the path of God.

“But in heaven, service is not rendered in the spirit of legality. When Satan rebelled against the law of Jehovah, the thought that there was a law came to the angels almost as an awakening to something unthought of. In their ministry the angels are not as servants, but as sons. There is perfect unity between them and their Creator. Obedience is to them no drudgery. Love for God makes their service a joy. So in every soul wherein Christ, the hope of glory, dwells, His words are re­echoed, ‘I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart.' Psalm 40:8.” *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, 109.2.

“Love for God makes their service a joy.” The angels like and love to serve.

We will now look at an example of someone who did not cooperate with the angels. But this story also shows us how the angels work. Let's read the story of Balaam.

“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. 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. 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. 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?' 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.' 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. And the Angel of the Lord said to him, ‘Why have you struck your donkey these three times? Behold, I have come out to stand against you, because your way is perverse before Me.'” *Numbers* 22:21-32.

The angel stood against Balaam. Normally, angels are given for our protection, as guides and companions. They are not usually our adversaries. But this angel was Balaam's adversary. How was that possible? Could Balaam have seen that the angel was his adversary? He lacked spiritual intelligence.

How can we gain spiritual intelligence? What is it? It is very simply the following: the word of God, reason, and circumstances. These are what give us sufficient intelligence to gain even more intelligence. Let's reads this.

“There are thousands at the present day who are pursuing a similar course [as 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. [Here are the three aspects—the Bible, 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.

This shows us how to make friends with the angels. We make friends with them by following these three guidelines—the Bible, reason, and circumstances. All three of these spoke against Balaam's way. Reason spoke against it. How could he go and curse the people whom God had chosen as His representatives? That was against reason. It's also against what the Bible says about God's people. And the circumstance of the donkey pressing Balaam against the wall gave such a clear message. Everything spoke very clearly to Balaam. But he lacked the intelligence.

When are the angels our companions and when are they our adversaries?

To be friends with the angels is to work together with them for the fulfillment of God's will. It means that we adopt their character. What kind of character do the angels have? Their characters are absolutely selfless. Let's read 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.

That is the character of the angels. They give “tireless watchcare” to those who don't deserve it, for people who “are fallen and unholy.” The angels “woo the hearts of men ...” They bring us “into a fellowship with Christ which is even closer than they themselves can know.” Such selflessness! Their message to us is, “You must increase; we must decrease.” This message is given through word and action. This is the work of the angels. Only those who adopt this same spirit of selflessness can work together with them. Otherwise it is not possible.

Jesus spoke about this same principle in the parable of the unfaithful servant. The man wasn't holding on to the possessions. Jesus tells us that we will lose whatever we hold onto. He says that mammon will fail us one day. But the angels won't fail us. They will stand by us in the time of trouble. Money will not. Mammon will fail. So, it's actually not very intelligent to cling to mammon, is it?

When we are friends with the angels, then we will do what they do. We will follow the way of God with joy—just as they follow the will of God with joy. That is the character which the disciples finally gained.

Now let's take a closer look at gospel order. Gospel order is working together with the angels. It means to be friends with them. It means to be in harmony with them. It means to have the same shrewdness as they have. This means to have real shrewdness, which is thinking of the eternal, not the temporal. It is thinking of the future, not of the present.

Selflessness led the disciples from one victory to the next. The Holy Spirit really filled them with the selfless spirit of love. Let's read this.

“The Spirit came upon the waiting, praying disciples with a fullness that reached every heart. The Infinite One revealed Himself in power to His church. It was as if for ages this influence had been held in restraint, and now Heaven rejoiced in being able to pour out upon the church the riches of the Spirit's grace. And under the influence of the Spirit, words of penitence and confession mingled with songs of praise for sins forgiven. Words of thanksgiving and of prophecy were heard. All heaven bent low to behold and to adore the wisdom of matchless, incomprehensible love. Lost in wonder, the apostles exclaimed, ‘Herein is love.' They grasped the imparted gift. And what followed? The sword of the Spirit, newly edged with power and bathed in the lightnings of heaven, cut its way through unbelief. Thousands were converted in a day.” *The Acts of the Apostles*, 38.1.

“Herein is love.” They really grasped the selfless spirit. As they grasped it, they were mightily successful. The Spirit gave them intelligence to deal with each other in a way that would give them true success. Let's read some of these reports.

“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, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.” *Acts* 2:42-47.

That is quite the story! They were very successful in their work. Why was that? It was because they had the combination of both intelligence and character. The two aspects were combined in one. They were not separated. The believers didn't have only intelligence or only character at different times. Instead, the two attributes were always combined together.

“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. And Joses, who was also named Barnabas by the apostles (which is translated Son of Encouragement), a Levite of the country of Cyprus, having land, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.” *Acts* 4:32-37.

That is gospel order. It is working together selflessly in a team for the advancement of God's work. It's especially interesting in these verses that the believers laid the proceeds at the apostles' feet. This means that they systematically dealt with the money they got from selling their properties. The believers did not give stipulations about how their money should or should not be used. They did not individually support this or that believer with their proceeds either. Rather, it was all done systematically. Everything was laid at the apostles' feet. That was order. It was gospel order.

What does it mean for the money to be laid at the apostles' feet, instead of being given into their hands? Of course, this is a symbolic expression. Practically speaking, the money would have been given into their hands. But the Bible says that it was laid at their feet. What does that mean? There is a symbolic meaning. It means that they gave it into the control of the apostles. They gave control of those means away. That is the important point. They didn't tell the apostles how the money was to be used. They gave the control away. It was no longer in their hands.

The fact that this is the symbolic meaning is also seen in other Bible verses.

Let's read one. “You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet.” *Psalm* 8:6. This verse speaks about Jesus. The Father put all things under His feet. He put all things into His control. Likewise, when the believers laid everything at the apostles' feet it means that they gave the control away. The question is, of course, are we willing to do this? That is order.

The believers did this not only willingly, they did it because they wanted to do it. They did it out of love. Love was the motive which made them work together in such a manner. Gospel order can never function unless it is practiced with a motive and spirit of love. It will not function if it is done in a spirit of duty, or if we say, “I have to do it.” Rather, it must be something which comes from the heart.

The next step is to distribute the goods. That is very difficult. Once the proceeds were in the apostles' control, they had to distribute it justly so that no one lacked anything. We read that no one lacked anything. Everyone was cared for. How is this possible?

Just imagine that we have to feed a large group of people. As we start the task, we will come across many problems. The various people will state their different needs. But perhaps those who say they need little, actually need more, but they don't dare to ask for so much. They will still suffer then. And perhaps there are others who claim to have a great need, but they don't have the ability to handle what is given them. It's like putting money into a black hole—and they will continue to suffer. How can the proceeds be distributed then? It is a very difficult task to distribute money to needy people. Many scriptures give evidence to the fact that it was not easy in the early church, just as it is not easy in our day. Let's read one such text.

“Honor widows who are really widows. [who are *really* widows. In other words, give to those who are genuinely widows. Similarly, we could speak about the genuine, or worthy poor. What is the difference between a poor person and a worthy poor person? A poor person may simply be poor because they cannot handle money. They will lose it no matter how much is given to them. Whereas worthy poor are people who are really in need. Perhaps they have lost money because of circumstances beyond their control. They can really be helped. The same difference applies here to widows. Widows have lost their husbands, so they are in need of support. Let's continue reading.] 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 let the children help their mother.] 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. And these things command, that they may be blameless.” *1 Timothy* 5:3-7

Paul here describes how the money should be distributed. We see that wisdom and intelligence are needed for that. It would be simple to distribute the money equally among the people. But then some would get money that they don't actually need and others would not get enough. The money was distributed so that no one had any lack. This means that they distributed it intelligently.

Even though the disciples distributed the money intelligently and were shrewd, there was still dissatisfaction. Satan always wants to take advantage of our habitual wrong thinking. He wants to strengthen it. He is present in every meeting of Christians and tries to destroy the influence of the Spirit of God. He wants us to begin to doubt the word of God. He wants to stop us from listening to the word. He may even prevent us from coming to the meetings. He is so busy and active to this end. Yet God is at the same time overruling Satan. We can be safe if we choose.

Let's read a statement about Satan's tactics.

“I saw that Satan carries out his plans well. As the servants of God appoint meetings, Satan with his angels is on the ground to hinder the work. He is constantly putting suggestions into the minds of God's people. He leads some in one way and some in another, always taking advantage of evil traits in the brethren and sisters, exciting and stirring up their natural besetments. If they are disposed to be selfish and covetous, Satan takes his stand by their side, and with all his power seeks to lead them to indulge their besetting sins. The grace of God and the light of truth may melt away their covetous, selfish feelings for a little, but if they do not obtain entire victory, Satan comes in when they are not under a saving influence and withers every noble, generous principle, and they think that too much is required of them. They become weary of well-doing and forget the great sacrifice which Jesus made to redeem them from the power of Satan and from hopeless misery.” *Early Writings*, 267.1.

The Spirit of God leads to generosity, and to nobility of mind. It leads us to place emphasis on the heavenly instead of the earthly. It leads us to think of the future life instead of the temporal life. The Spirit of God is constantly doing this.

The grace of God melts away the covetous, selfish feelings. This happens while we are under the influence of the Spirit of God. This is, for example, during our meetings when God's Spirit is influencing us. At that time, our selfish feelings are pushed back. That is really the case. They melt away. But do we really give up our covetous, selfish spirit? If we do not obtain the entire victory, Satan will come in when we are not under the saving influence.

Jesus described this situation as a house being swept free of demons. If the clean house is not filled with something else, then the demons will return in even greater number. In other words, our old covetousness will come back unless the victory is complete.

How is it possible for the victory not to be complete? It can happen when we are not fully willing to give up our old life in order to receive the new life. Or it can happen if we don't keep up communion with God. Both of these causes are possible. But an entire victory is necessary. Otherwise Satan will come back.

The wrong spirit did come back in the early church. We see this in the story of Ananias and Sapphira in *Acts* 5. They promised to give everything, but then decided to keep some of it instead. They lied about their decision and said that they had given everything. The wrong spirit also came back in the murmuring of the Greek widows against the Hebrew widows. The Greeks said that they were neglected in the distribution. These situations were Satan's work to turn the minds away from eternal, spiritual matters. It was taking away the spiritual part of the intelligence.

So, the apostles built even more firmly upon gospel order after that, by distributing their spirit and authority to others. These were the seven deacons who helped make the distributions. This was a continuation of the gospel order which God established from the beginning. It was a continuation of the selfless spirit of giving, which was present at the beginning.

The apostles could have decided to stop the system of distribution because of the accusations against them. They could have given up the responsibility and told the believers to handle it themselves. But that was not their attitude. They continued to make the distributions. They did not want to protect themselves or their reputations. Rather, they wanted the spirit of selfless giving to be continued. And it did continue. Gospel order did continue.

To do medical missionary work in the right way means to do it in harmony with the angels. And to do it in harmony with the angels also means to do it in harmony with the church. That is another important aspect.

How can we know whether someone is bearing the responsibility of the right arm work correctly? Firstly, we will see whether they follow the instructions of God. Abraham did not follow God's instructions when he produced Ishmael.

Secondly, we will see whether they observe the principles, such as those found in *1 Timothy* 5. A person is not able to do the right arm work if they give unwisely, in an effort to protect their reputation. We must say “No” to those who are not worthy. That is what we have read.

Finally, we will see whether they are acting in harmony with the church, instead of according to their own thoughts. They will act in harmony with others. When God wants to do something, He will work for the whole church—not just for an individual who is independent of the others.

The one way of practicing the healing art is gospel order. This is selflessness. It is being in harmony with the truth—as much as we understand it. It is being in harmony with the church. It is following God's special direction. And this means to work together with the angels and to have the angels as our friends. To become friends with mammon means to give it away—to let it be under God's control, and under God's control through the apostles. This is what God wants us to do. And in this way the work will be really successful—just as it was in the early church.

With these thoughts we will close for today.