Latin America conference closing message (Nehemiah Kim)

Hope in the Lord

Isaiah 40:31 *"But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint."*

The Israelites had been exiles in Babylonia for 70 years due to their sins. Now God proclaimed that their hard service had been completed, and their sins had been paid for. "Comfort, comfort my people," says the Lord. However, they complained, "My way is hidden from the Lord; my cause is disregarded by my God." The Israelites should go back to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple of God, but they did not have a conviction. Remembering their past suffering, they complained about God. God helped them to lift up their eyes and look to the heavens. In verse 26 and 28, God said to them, "who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one and calls forth each of them by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing." "The Lord is the everlasting God, the creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom."

So, what should they do? Let us read verse 31. "But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint." They should hope in the Lord. The word "hope" in the original Hebrew language means to wait with great expectation and confidence. It’s not a passive waiting, but an active trust that God will fulfill His promise. The meaning of "hope in God" is to wait for God's grace by fixing our eyes on God, fully depending on God’s strength. Our own strength is limited, but God’s strength is limitless. Those who hope in God will be given limitless power from God. Those who hope in God renew their strength. The strength is heavenly strength, divine strength, and supernatural strength.

They will soar on wings like eagles. Sparrows fly with flapping. But eagles fly soaring. Soaring requires tremendous energy. An airplane consumes a lot of fuel to fly. It needs to run a long airstrip to take off from the ground. However, eagles are able to soar vertically, breaking through the storm. How can they do it? It is because eagles have strong wings which have amazing power. Likewise, God supplies super power energy to those who hope in God, so they can renew their strength.

No matter how young you are, when you are tired, you will stumble and fall. How many young people lie helplessly in bed, unable to leave their room? But those who hope in the Lord do not grow tired even if they work hard from dawn to night. To do this, we must study the Bible intensely. We must pray with a desperate heart. In doing so, God gives us new strength. God helps us overcome all kinds of difficulties, soaring through the storm like eagles.

Seventy years ago, there was the Korean war, which left three million people dying. Our country was devastated. Political unrest stole hope from Korean college students. We were poor and we had no resources. But God established the UBF community and inspired Korean college students to hope in the Lord. They gathered at dawn to study the Bible and pray fervently. God gave them renewed strength. He gave them new strength to go out and preach the gospel not only on campuses in Korea, but all over the world. God has lifted many UBF missionaries on eagle's wings and sent them to more than 100 countries. Many missionaries have also come to Latin America. In the past 50 years, they have pioneered many countries and made many disciples of Jesus. They have served the pioneering ministry with great zeal. It is easy to get tired because you have labored a lot. Some may think that they need to rest. But God is still working very diligently. He is expecting to do amazing things through us.

There are many kinds of storms before us - political unrest, economic difficulties, health problems, children's problems, and difficulties in co-working, but we must hope in the Lord. Then He will give us new strength, and we will soar again with eagle's wings. God will use our missionaries, local shepherds, second generations, and young people, to pioneer all the Latin countries, and send many missionaries all over the world.

Recently, the young people of Korea UBF have also renewed their desire for the Lord. We used to have about 200 people at the national student conference. Two years ago, God sent us 300 students. Last year, we had 400 students. This year, we had 470 students. Next year, we are praying for 1000 students to gather. Nowadays, we are training and raising young student leaders.

I would like to invite you to the World Mission Report and missionary conference in Korea next year, May 17th. Please come and listen to the word of God and pray together. Let's see and hear the vivid missionary works that are accomplished. Then we will long for the Lord. God will give us new strength. We will soar with divine power, ascending with the wings of eagles. I believe we will go out to campuses around the world and become new history makers, witnessing the gospel of life.

When I was 17 years old, I suffered from kidney disease. I had to visit many hospitals for treatment. I was unable to attend school for a year. This made me helpless and hopeless. Though I was a teenage boy, I was like an old man, like a falling bird with broken wings. My face was ugly, and my body was fat. I hated to look at myself in the mirror. But God took pity on me and invited me to UBF Bible study. The word of God struck me. John 1:4 came to me, “In him was life, and this life was the light of men.” Whenever I studied God’s word, new strength sprang up within me. God transformed me from a hopeless boy into a passionate young man. He gave me the strength to run around the campus and preach His word diligently.

God also gave me a vision for world mission and urged me to pray for the whole world. He woke me up early in the morning for daily bread. When I concentrated on the word of God and prayed to the Lord, God poured new hope and vision into my soul. I could feel my soul soaring towards heaven. God raised me as the Korea UBF director 2 years ago by His grace. He sent me to many local chapters and countries around the world to serve shepherds and missionaries. Some asked me, “Aren't you tired? Aren’t you weary?” But I am not tired. I enjoy it. Meeting young people and sharing the Bible is exciting for me. Seeing young people being refreshed through the Word is the greatest joy and happiness to me. Thank and praise God for saving me from darkness, renewing my strength, and making me soar on wings like eagles.

God has given us abundant grace through this conference. Let us once again hope in God and the risen Jesus. Apostle Peter looked to the living hope. Apostle Paul looked to heavenward in Jesus Christ. They went around the world with tireless zeal, preaching the gospel. They created a great history. Let's not look at the hard situation. Let us not look at ourselves. Let's hope in God, the Creator. Let's fix our eyes on the risen Jesus. He will give us new strength, new vision, and new passion. May God bless us send many missionaries and create a new history. May God bless Latin America as the priestly nation and a holy people.