



The New Life Mission

SERMONS FOR THOSE WHO HAVE BECOME OUR COWORKERS

(III)

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SERMONS FOR
THOSE WHO
HAVE BECOME
OUR COWORKERS

(III)

*One's own
thoughts.*

PAUL C. JONG

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Dear Coworkers,

I yearn to provide the bread of life to the whole world with our fellow coworkers.

Christianity has made ceaseless efforts to follow the Lord. Such signs are easily detected in religious meetings and in the writings of many religious leaders. Nonetheless, there is no sign anywhere that anybody has followed or believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

I feel as though the world is declining like a setting sun. Countless souls are dying in hunger and thirst, not knowing where the fountain of life is. In such a time as this you and I should share the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the fountain of life, to more people in this world. Otherwise, they will not be able to drink the very living water from the fountain of life and will soon die of thirst. Therefore, in such a time as this, you and I who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit should live out our faith honoring the Lord's will.

From the Author



**SERMONS FOR THOSE
WHO HAVE BECOME
OUR COWORKERS
(III)**

PAUL C. JONG

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SEOUL, KOREA

*Sermons for Those Who Have Become Our
Coworkers (III)*

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Preface

To My Fellow Workers

These messages on the Book of Genesis are a compilation of lectures from the Missions School or sermons delivered at my Church, and they are strictly intended for the saints. I have come to the point where I would like to share God's Word from these sermons with our fellow workers in the faith who are overseas. In the Book of Genesis, there are messages on salvation and spiritual growth for both sinners and for all those who already believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The reason is that, even before Creation, God the Father had planned to save mankind from their sins through His Son and make them His children.

We who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must live out our "second lives" by living as disciples of Jesus Christ. In order to do this, we must have spiritual training. How can you receive



this discipleship training? There are two ways. First, you must meet with a servant of God who believes in the righteousness of Jesus Christ, learn about the faith and apply this faith in your own life. Also, those of you who are abroad must be trained indirectly. In order to do this, you must have regular spiritual fellowship by email, Skype or telephone with The New Life Mission.

Dear fellow workers in Christ, I have experienced much persecution and loneliness while serving the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which is the righteousness of the Lord. You will no doubt also experience suffering and loneliness as I have because of this gospel. Nevertheless, we will be victorious by faith which fulfills the righteousness of the Lord and the commands of the Lord. We will thus continue living the life of a true disciple and await the day the Lord allows us to meet... ☒

April 21, 2009
From the author

SERMON

1



The Lord Who Turned The Darkness into Light

< Genesis 1:1-5 >

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. Then God said, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the first day.”

From what perspective should we be reading the Word of God from? We must look into the Word and follow it by believing in the God of righteousness.

Then, on what basis should we follow God? We can follow God by faith by believing in God’s Word of righteousness. Our God has promised us with His Word to give us the remission of our sins and He also has fulfilled this promise with His Word. Seeing those who have received the remission of sins by believing in the Word, God approves them as the righteous people. And He gives spiritual blessings of Heaven to us who have become the righteous saints. God is the God of covenant who fulfills the promises that He has spoken to us. We have to meet God and follow Him. However, God is invisible to our naked eyes. Then, how can we meet Him? How can we follow this God only? God has given His Word to us and He meets those of us who believe in this Word, and makes such believers follow Him in this Word.

Here, the Lord God said, *“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1)*. The Bible continues, *“Then God said, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good.” (Genesis 1:3-4)*. We come to meet

the Word in today's Scripture passage in Genesis 1:3 which states, "*Then God said, 'Let there be light,'*" through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and we also come to know and meet God who created the heavens and the earth in the beginning through His recorded Word which states the same truth. In other words, we meet God and the true salvation which God gave to us through His Word. We meet God by believing in the Word of promise which God has spoken to us. Then, we come to experience this God who has spoken to us.

God promised Abraham that He would bless those who bless him and curse those who curse him. God then made a covenant with Abraham, saying, "Circumcise your people. Then, I will become God of your descendants. If your descendants are circumcised, then that will be the sign as my people. This is the shadow of the spiritual circumcision that I make you with My Word of promise." And God also said, "Although I have chosen you and your descendants as My people, all the uncircumcised will

be cut off from the Israelites and the descendants of Abraham." God was saying that any person who has not been circumcised spiritually before the presence of God will not be considered as a child of God.

When we see how God works, we come to know that He works by His Word. God becomes the Lord God to those who believe in His Word of promise and follow it by faith. God promised us by His Word concerning how He will establish a relationship of love with humans and also became the God of salvation to the people who believe in this Word of promise. And God bestows the blessing of salvation upon the true believers in this Word. Like this, God establishes a relationship of love with His people only within His Word.

It is written in Genesis 1:1, "*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*" The entire universe and everything in it are the creation of God. Humans are also creatures of God. What has God then planned for humans who are His creatures? In order to establish a relationship with these human

creatures, He has planned to save them all. God had decided to deliver us from all our sins according to His plan. God always manifests Himself to us humans by His Word. What we must absolutely remember here is that God made His people to be accepted and to be able to believe in His Word of promise. This is the main point of His Word which He has spoken to us from the Book of Genesis.

It is written, *“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”* Chapter one of Genesis is often called the blueprint of God’s plan for humans. In this chapter, God shows His creation, the temptation of Satan, the fall of man, salvation in Jesus Christ, and humans becoming the children of God, including the blessing of His grace. Therefore it states, *“The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters”* (Genesis 1:2). The Lord God said here that He created the heavens and the earth and that the *earth* was without *form* and was *void*. The word earth in

the Bible often denotes us humans or our hearts. This implies therefore that humans have gone into chaos by falling into sins.

God Has Given Every Creature Its Reason of Being

God originally had a plan to make us humans as His children even before He created man. Within God’s plan, God wanted to raise the status of humans who were the creatures of God as His children. God created us humans under such an amazing plan. We can know God’s plan and intention through the Word of God. God created us humans and wants to fulfill His will through us. And He has allowed even the paths of hardships in order to fulfill this. Also, God has planned to blot out all our sins through Jesus Christ. In other words, He decided to make us the born-again who have received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit

as His children.

God has thus planned all things within His providence without any relation to our wills, and His plan was to save us and make us His children and give us the beautiful Kingdom of God. It means that God fulfills everything according to His original plan, and not according to our plans. What we have to do is to just enter into God's plan by faith and follow His will by faith the things that have already been approved of in His will. Hence, Jesus referred to Himself by saying, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life*" (*John 14:6*).

Through the Word, God has made us grasp His plans and His goals towards us. God has a plan for us. And God has manifested this plan to us by and through His Word. God has shown His plan to us in written languages and fulfilled this promise to only those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Therefore, when we believe in the righteousness of God, we must place the basis of our faith on God's Word of covenant. We can meet God

when we go before Him with the knowledge and faith in what the Word God has promised. And we then only come to know God's will. Even after believing in God, we must be careful not to be thinking whatever we want to think or decide according to our hearts' desires lest our thoughts fall into chaos of again. In order to really meet the righteousness of God and follow Him consistently, we must believe and follow His Word of promise steadfastly. Therefore, the God of righteousness has given us His written Scriptures. We cannot meet God if we do not have these written Scriptures, that is, the Holy Bible.

What is this Word? It is the Word of God. It is the written Word of God. It is the Word of promises to be fulfilled. God tells us His plan by His Word, comes to us by His Word in order to fulfill His Word to and in us, and also meets us by this very Word. Our God is the God of the Word. God's Word precisely is God to us. God precisely is the Word, and God manifests Himself through the Word of promise

whenever He wants to speak to humans. We must now remember that God manifests Himself and His will by His Word and meets us within His Word.

Therefore, we must not read the Word like we are reading a novel or reading a history book. We must first know and believe that the Word of God is itself God. The Bible is the Word with which God has manifested Himself to us, and it also manifests His promises. This Bible also manifests that it is His own Word. God meets us in His Word. Therefore, we must know that this Word is the Word of God when we first encounter the Bible.

God's Word Is the Light of Salvation

It is written, *“The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. Then God said, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good;*

and God divided the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the first day” (Genesis 1:2-5).

This Scripture passage shows us God's determined plan that He would deliver those from all the sins who were held in bondage to sins. It also means that it is the Word of God that drives out the sins of humans and their chaos, void, and darkness. Then, who is the light of the truth here? Who is the light that is recorded in the Word of God referring to here? It is referring precisely to Jesus Christ, the Savior of all humanity, the Savior of sinners. Then, who are those in the midst of the deep chaos, void, and darkness? It is speaking precisely of us humans who have fallen into sin.

Humans were created by God. But in this passage *“The earth was without form”* it is telling us that humans had fallen into the deception of Satan. God mentions from the beginning that humans had fallen into sin. God then is saying, “I will save you

when you fall into chaos. And those who accept the light of My Word will escape from their sins and become My children of light. But those who have not accepted My Word of light will remain in utter darkness.” What kind of plan did God have for us as humans when He first created man? The ultimate purpose of His plan was to raise the status of us humans to the status of a deity, the children of God. God intended that He will recover our status as the children of God, and not His mere creatures.

God Has Given Man the Free Will to Choose

There is no one who makes something without a purpose. Everything is made with a purpose. God also created us humans with His special purpose. The first passage of this Holy Bible says, “*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*” God created us humans, His creatures, like a mechanical robot. Then God gave us a free will. God

then said to us, “Each one of you can accept or reject with your free wills the blessing and grace of salvation that I will give to you.” This means that God has given us humans the free will and allowed us to choose whether or not we accept the blessing of salvation that God had fulfilled. Therefore, the Gospel of John Chapter 1 states that the one who loves the light comes to the light. It also says that such a person comes to the light because he wants to reveal his deeds in the light. But a person who loves darkness does not come to the light. Between the light and the darkness, we must be able to distinguish what is the light from what is the darkness. However, even though we who are His creatures, have this privilege to decide which one we will accept.

God would not be the Holy and Just God if He did not give us the privilege to choose, that is, a free will. However, God created the heavens and earth in the beginning and manifested His name and His justice to us by the gospel of the water and the Spirit. God says to us, “I am the God who created you, but I

have given you a free will. If you really desire the righteous things, then, receive all the blessing and live in Me by accepting the way of righteousness that I give you, but if you desire filthy things and darkness, go ahead and live like that.” God thus approves those who choose and enter into the light. For such people of faith who believe in the righteousness of God, God makes them enjoy eternal life in His infinite and glorious blessing.

However, the people of darkness do not accept this grace and rather cherish their own righteousness. Therefore, it is appropriate for such people to go into chaos that they have chosen and receive much suffering. This is the just truth of God. This shows us that God is the just God. This shows us also that He is the perfect One. God did not coerce us to choose the light. Instead, God manifested Himself to us within His Word of covenant. Therefore, it is appropriate for God to be praised by us humans justly and be worshipped by us.

In this way, God blesses those who really

choose the light and the righteous thing before His presence. But He judges those who choose evil for their wickedness. Today’s Scripture reading shows us that He is really the just God who judges fairly and perfectly. No one can say before this Word that God is not just or that He not fair. God has made it so whoever wants to receive all the blessings from God who created the heavens and earth can receive all His blessings by faith. God has given humans the privilege to choose. God has made it so if anyone does not like the blessings from God and rather cherishes curses, then, he can receive whatever he wants from that menu. On the contrary, God has given all His promised blessings to the one who cherishes and accepts God’s Word of light. Our God who created heavens and earth is saying this to us.

God is perfect. God alone is righteous and perfect, and He is the only God to all creatures. God is the Creator. He is the Sovereign God. There is no one who can challenge His authority. We have seen that He is the God of covenant. We were able to see

through the Word of God that He has promised His salvation to us by His Word and also that He has been fulfilling this Word of promise to us.

God created the heavens and the earth in the beginning. God really created the universe and everything in it as well as the light. Do you acknowledge this? God has given us the privilege to choose between the light and the darkness, and His grace or curses falls upon us according to the choice we make. There is no such a thing as “No” in the Kingdom of God, there is only a “Yes” in His Kingdom. It’s because there is nothing that is irrational in God’s world.

All Things Has Been Done within the Plan of God

Today’s Scripture passage says, *“The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over*

the face of the waters. Then God said, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light.” The Bible mentions first, *“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,”* and it continues, *“The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep.”* You can see here in this Word that the temptation of Satan is presumed in the plan of God.

If the Book of Genesis chapter 1 and 2 denotes the plan of God, then the Word starting from Genesis chapter 3 shows us how He intended to fulfill this plan. About a decade ago, a huge department building in Korea collapsed suddenly because of frequent remodeling of the building. Many people became victims in that man-made disaster. In this manner, we humans are prone to change our plans as we desire. But God has never changed His blueprint after drawing it up once. God did not just leave us His creation as mere creatures, but He had planned to recreate us and make us born again as a new creation. What needed to make us humans born again was the light of salvation that was made of His justice and

love. The Word of God was the ingredient of the salvation that made us His creation born again from all our sins.

God allowed us humans to fall into sin first in order to make us His children. If we had not fallen into chaos, void, or darkness, that is, if we had not been deceived by Satan, we could on no account be born again by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. However, owing to the fall of man, we humans have come to receive the grace of becoming the children of God by believing in Jesus Christ who is the righteousness of God as the Savior. All these intentions were included in the plan of God.

Adam and Eve who were the very first ancestors of humanity were tempted by Satan. But even this was in God's plan of salvation from the very beginning. We live as sinners and then become the righteous by meeting and believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit just like the way maggots dwell under the ground for years and then become cicadas. Like the way maggots have to stay in the

dark ground in order to become cicadas, it was in the will of God for humans to be tempted and ruled by Satan in the first place. Humanity had to become sinners in order to become the children of God by believing in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. This is why God allowed the temptations and attacks from Satan on humans.

The Promise of Salvation from All Sins

Humans fall into the depths of these three things, namely, chaos, void, and darkness when they refuse to believe in the Word of God. Such chaos comes to a person when he departs from the Word of covenant of God who created him. It is written, "*The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.*" Now, among the descendants of Adam, those who have not met the gospel of the water and the Spirit which Jesus Christ

gave have all fallen into such chaos.

Why have humans fallen into this chaos? It's because they have not known the Word of promise which God had spoken; it's because they have not known the gospel of the water and the Spirit by which God has saved them perfectly. Then, what must sinners do in order to come out from this chaos? Of course, they can most certainly meet the Lord who is the Master of all truth if they return to the Word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. All humans have fallen into void. They gain no satisfaction. God originally created us humans in the likeness of Himself. Therefore, we attain satisfaction when we return to God.

The Bible mentions that God created humans as imperfect beings at first. Why did God create us humans imperfect from the beginning? God's plan really allowed our imperfection in order to fulfill His profound purpose. Thus, humans are to fall into void without gaining satisfaction. Therefore, we humans must have the righteousness of Jesus in our hearts by

faith, and we must have the Word of the righteousness of God. The Word of the truth which is God Himself must be found in our hearts. God the Creator must be in our hearts.

We humans can become whole only when the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, is inside our hearts through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We humans feel emptiness unless we meet the righteousness of God. But satisfaction comes to us when we at last meet the gospel of the water and the Spirit through Jesus Christ. Therefore, today's Scripture passage is admonishing us to believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. God is telling us in this Word, "*The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep.*" We who were dwelling in the world of earth, not of Heaven, have been trapped by the schemes of Satan and had fallen into chaos and sin. God spoke about this even before we were born sinners. And God then said that He would save us from all our sins through the righteousness of Jesus Christ, His Son. God promised

that He would save us from chaos and sins. God had already promised that He would save us from the depths of the sins of the world and the void and the dissatisfaction of heart. This is the implication lying in this passage, *“Then God said, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light” (Genesis 1:3)*. And God has already fulfilled this Word of promise perfectly within the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Jesus Christ Who Is the Creator and the Savior

Jesus Christ is the Protagonist of this Bible. It is written here, *“Then God said, ‘Let there be light,’”* and the light here is referring exactly to Jesus Christ who saved you and me. Jesus is God who created the universe and everything in it, everything we now see is what He created? Jesus is the Creator who created the heavens and the earth that we can now see and experience. Jesus Christ will make the second heavens to come about also. It is written, *“In the*

beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” Jesus is the Creator who created this earth and the heavens. And God the Father sent His Son who created this universe to this world and blotted out all our sins at once by the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It is written, *“Then God said, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good.”* And the Bible goes on to say, *“God divided the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night.”*

Jesus Christ appears only as God here in the Book of Genesis, but later on appears as our High Priest. Jesus Christ manifests Himself as our Savior. And He also manifests Himself as the Prophet who teaches everything to us. Then who is the Lord here who manifested Himself as God? Who made the light in this world, in this universe? He is none other than Jesus Christ. The Scriptures state that Jesus Christ, the Son of God the Father, is God to you and me. Therefore, the Apostle John states in the Gospel of John, *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word*

was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1). Truly, Jesus is God who created this universe. God the Father created the Kingdom of Heaven through His Son, and Jesus Christ also made the heavens and the earth that we can see with our naked eyes. Therefore, we must know this Jesus Christ properly. We must know and believe that Jesus Christ is God Himself.

Where Has the Providence of God Manifested?

God manifested the light here in His Word. In other words, God had already promised to us through today’s Scripture passage that He will save us from all the sins in our hearts through His Son who is sinless. In this manner, God promised His salvation from the beginning. This is the reason why we call God the God of covenant.

We can also meet with the Triune God through

today’s Scripture passage. When the Son created this world, God the Father saw that it was good. It is written, *“The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.”* Who then is this God hovering over the face of the waters here? He is the Holy Spirit. God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit all appeared in this scene of creation. God the Father and the Son created this universe, and God the Father promised to save humans who had fallen into this chaos and void through His Son. And it means that God pours God the Holy Spirit upon those of us who have received salvation from all our sins by believing in the Son of God. This Holy Spirit cannot come into us if we still have sin in our hearts. Therefore, God the Father made a covenant to send His Son to this world to save us completely. God made the covenant with us His creation. The Holy Spirit goes inside and works in the people who believe according to the Word of salvation that God has promised. This is the plan of

God. Hence, the God of Trinity manifests Himself here in this Word of the Book of Genesis.

Therefore, we must know the meaning of this Word that God saw it was good when He created the world of the heavens and the earth. It means that God the Father saw it was good when His Son created this universe and all things in it. It means that God was pleased to make us humans as His children in the likeness of Jesus Christ through His Son. Therefore, the Scriptures state that God the Father saw that it was good. The Apostle Paul also looked deeply in this grandeur plan of God and said,

“Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!

‘For who has known the mind of the LORD?

Or who has become His counselor?’

‘Or who has first given to Him

And it shall be repaid to him?’

For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen” (Romans 11:33-36).

All things have come from God and return back to Him. How can a created one disobey the Creator who made it? Thus, the Scriptures state that anyone refusing the righteousness of God commits sin. At any rate, God has promised these things to us with His Word. God also divides His people from the people of the Devil with His Word. And therefore, you also can become the light when you accept by faith this Word God has spoken. Dear fellow believers, come into God by believing in Jesus Christ and the gospel of the water and the Spirit which He gave to us. Then you can also become the light of this world eternally. ☒

SERMON

2



CONTENTS



God Builds His Church Through His Servants

< Genesis 2:1-3 >

“Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.”

We humans are the witnesses to the work of creation that God accomplished during the first six days when He created the heavens and the earth. Today I would like to share the Word with you regarding what God actually did on the seventh day of creation. It is written in Genesis 2:1-2, *“Thus the*

heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done.” God says here that He completed creating the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them. But on the seventh day of creation He rested, because all His work had ended.

We need to carefully examine if there was anything lacking in this God-made dominion. It’s our God who created the heavens and the earth, but was there anything imperfect or lacking in all of God’s creation? Indeed, when we look at what God actually did, we see that there was nothing imperfect at all. Spiritually speaking, the fact that God finished all His work of creation means that our God made us in perfection. God made each and every living creature under the heavens and on the earth. What did God place in the Garden of Eden in particular? It was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

In Genesis 2:9 we read, *“And out of the ground*

the LORD God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” What we need to realize here is that in addition to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, our God also placed the tree of life. In other words, it should be understood that God planned everything in perfection to enable man to eat from the tree of life and live there forever.

God’s Possessions Are Made Ours by Believing in His Word

Today’s Scripture reading shows us that God ended all His work of creation on the seventh day. In all the work of creation that God had accomplished, there was neither anything imperfect nor anything lacking. During the first six years, God made the whole universe and all its hosts to perfection. Today, what does God tell us to do after He made everything

to perfection like this? God told us in Genesis chapters 2 and 3 to eat from the tree of life and enjoy everlasting life forever. Who is allowed to take this God-made dominion? God says that it is us, we the redeemed; it’s our faith in His Word that makes it possible for us to enjoy all the dominion of His creation. In other words, those who are allowed to enjoy everything that God had completed are those who have faith in His Word. Only the people of faith who know and believe in the righteousness of God can achieve everything in God’s dominion and enjoy their accomplishments. In contrast, those who have no faith in the righteousness of God are unable to enjoy God’s dominion, and are driven out of it. This is what God is teaching us in Genesis chapter 2.

It is written in today’s Scripture reading, *“Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done”* (Genesis 2:1-2). As it says here, God ended all His

work of creation on the seventh day. All His work of creation was completely finished, so there was nothing lacking or incomplete. Do you realize the implication of this? It means just as God had ended all His work of creation on the seventh day, so He also finished all His work of salvation. Do you think creation is an on-going process? No, God ended all His work of creation on the seventh day to perfection. Likewise, our salvation has also been completely achieved. All that remains for us to do while living on this earth is to receive God's blessings and to enjoy them. Those who receive and enjoy God's blessings do so because they have faith in the righteousness of God. All of us must make God's blessings ours by believing in the salvation that He has fulfilled through Jesus Christ, give all praise to God for His blessings, and abide in these blessings.

However, there are many people who still remain incapable of receiving and enjoying this perfect world of God's creation. Such people can

neither receive nor enjoy God's perfect world because they do not believe in what He has accomplished for them. That is why they keep on trying to do something by themselves to make everything perfect, for they feel that there are still flaws in God's creation. But God finished all His work to perfection, and therefore all that we have to do is just take His every blessing by placing our faith in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. For what God has given us now, we only have to take it by faith.

The Lord Said That He Had Already Finished Everything

To reach our salvation, the only thing we need to do is to just take it by faith. Once you take God's completed work of salvation by faith, you will receive the remission of sins and enjoy everlasting life. Just as the Bible says, "Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished," God

wholly completed all His work of salvation. In the dominion of faith, all that you have to do is just take by faith what God has already finished, and live your life according to His providence. It is none other than faith that makes it possible for us to enjoy everything made by God. God has already prepared and guaranteed all our happiness and blessings. The only thing remaining for us to do is to just believe in what God has completed. True faith is all about believing in what God has completed. I have done many things in my life of faith, and all these things were done by faith in what God has already finished. In other words, it's by my faith that I take what God has already accomplished rather than doing something on my own.

And God has already decided to fulfill everything through His Church. He also has prepared and fulfilled everything regarding His Church for us, so that we may serve His Church, unite with it and abide in it, and live by our faith in the righteousness of God under the leadership of His Church. Put

differently, God prepared everything for us to live by faith in His Church, and He is waiting patiently for us. We are now taking God's blessings into our lives on account of our faith in the righteousness of God. Our God planned to build His Church by the gospel of the water and the Spirit in the age of the New Testament. With all these things in mind, God created the heavens and the earth and all their starry hosts in six days.

And when He finished creating these things, He rested on the seventh day. This implies that God has already finished all His work of salvation and is now resting in peace. As we now see from His Word, what He accomplished makes us realize that God has completed His Church with the gospel of the water and the Spirit and thereby perfectly restored our relationship with Him. By faith, we have taken and are enjoying what God has already completed. This means that we are actually taking God's blessings and enjoying victory in our lives, all through our faith.

Do not worry about how to build a beautiful Church of God or how to share wonderful fellowship among the saints. God Himself has already fulfilled all these things through His righteousness. All that we need to do is just take them all by faith. God did not tell us to build His Church. Rather, God said that His Church is the place where the holy saints who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit are gathered. In God's Church, there is a leader who has been raised by God; there are servants and saints who all believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, all of them living a holy life. And God is carrying out His work through His Church's order. Through His Church, God is also testifying His glory, love, and Truth. In other words, it is through His Church that God manifests His blessings. By finishing all His righteous work, God allowed us to live a righteous life. He has actually bestowed all His blessings upon us. And so, whoever has faith in God's Word like this can work with and live in His blessings. In contrast, those who have no faith in the righteousness of God

are striving in vain by their own efforts to receive these blessings. But God's Church is not something that can be built by any means or human efforts.

Christ is our Groom and we are His brides. If God the Father recognizes us as His Son's brides, then we are indeed Jesus' brides. This can never be denied as long as God has approved us as Christ's brides. God the Father planned even before the creation to make us His Son's brides in Jesus Christ, and He has fulfilled this perfectly. He has sealed us as perfect brides, so that there is nothing more to fix or to add. God has made us perfect.

Do you know how God has built His Church? Do you know how God's work of righteousness has unfolded so far? What is God's true Church? Is God's Church recognized by looking at its rituals of worship? If so, should a pastor preach in a red gown at The Hour of worship in God's Church? Or should he perform rites in a blue gown? If neither, then should he preach in a purple gown? No, such rituals of worship are not that important. Russia became a

Communist country while its Orthodox Church was arguing over such trivial issues. Unless you realize how the true Church is built, you will focus all your attention and energy on something else that's entirely mistaken, and consequently fail to grasp what you really need to understand, that is, the gospel Truth of the water and the Spirit. However, once you discover the gospel of the water and the Spirit and believe in it, you can take God's Church by faith.

God's Will Is Surely Fulfilled If We Serve It by Faith

You will be truly blessed if you realize just how perfect all God's plans are. Those who have taken God's blessings by faith in His righteousness never live in vain. Before you say that you believe in Jesus Christ, you should first realize what God's Church is, what His love is, and what true faith in the righteousness of God really is. What should we

embrace into our hearts and what should we cast aside? The correct answer is found in the righteousness of God written in the Bible. It is by your faith in God's righteousness that you are able to take everything planned and fulfilled by God. All the righteousness of God and all His blessings are found in His Word.

What does the Bible say to us in both Testaments? It commands us to live by faith. But where should our faith be placed? Our faith must without fail be placed in the righteousness of God as we carry on with our lives. Yet countless people do not know the Truth of salvation that God has completely fulfilled, and that is precisely why they are living outside God's blessings and blaming Him for their every misery. So many lives are being destroyed because they do not know the righteousness of God. In other words, people are rejecting God's love and blessings because they are totally ignorant of the righteousness of God, and instead are worshipping idols. Unless you know and

come to understand God's righteousness, you will inevitably end up standing against it. Too many Christians nowadays have this notion that they are carrying out God's work, but in reality, they do not have a clue of His righteousness.

However, all who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit can walk in the way of God by their knowledge of and faith in His righteousness. God has given them every blessing and they can take it by faith and enjoy it in their lives. God therefore wants to fulfill His will through those who live by faith in His righteousness. It's through such people who follow His will that God testifies everything about Himself. Like this, the Kingdom of God is built and fulfilled on this earth through those who believe in the righteousness of God. This is how God's Kingdom is fulfilled on this earth. So I ask you all to live by your faith in the Word of God.

Now, all of us must grasp and believe in the righteousness of God that has already been completely fulfilled. Has God the Father not finished

all His righteous works through His Son Jesus Christ? He has indeed finished them all. This means that God has completely fulfilled the salvation of the human race.

However, rather than believing in Jesus' completed works of salvation and following Him, many Christians nowadays believe that Jesus has yet not completed their salvation. As a result, all their sins still remain intact in their hearts. If you are such a Christian, then even at this very moment you must cast your notions away and believe in the righteousness of God with all your heart. Your heart must come to rest with the realization and belief that God has perfectly saved you from all the sins of the world. In other words, you must plant peace in your heart by believing in the very Word of salvation that God has already fulfilled.

God finished all His work of creation on the seventh day. Therefore, whatever God asks us to do and whatever He says to us, all that we have to is just accept His love and practice it by faith. Even though

God has completed everything, we must actually take it by faith. It is by believing in God's love and His righteousness that our words and actions are used for God's work. God has saved the entire human race from its sin, and we must preach this by faith. However, even though God has already accomplished everything for us, if we refuse to carry out His Work thinking that we don't have enough faith, we can't pray well, or we are ill-tempered, while looking at our shortcomings instead of taking what God has finished, then God will not be able to carry out His work through us. He cannot manifest all His accomplished love and righteousness through us.

God came into this world and completed His work perfectly to save us from all our sins. And God wants to manifest His righteousness through us, we who believe in what He has accomplished. Therefore, when God asks us to carry out His work, we should realize and believe that even though He made us as fragile beings full of shortcomings, He has already finished all the work of salvation to deliver us from

sin and made it possible for us, despite our shortcomings, to spread His work all over the world. Do you understand this? Do you believe so? This is what true faith is all about.

The Lord Is Asking You to Follow Him

Matthew was a tax collector, but Jesus told him to follow Him, and then told him He would make him a fisher of men. Matthew then abandoned everything he was doing and followed the Lord. The Lord told him that He would make him a fisher of men, and Matthew followed the Lord as soon as he heard this heavenly Word.

The disciples of Jesus did not hesitate to follow the Lord. While Jesus was ministering on this earth, someone once said to Him that he would follow the Lord after burying his dead father. But the Lord told him to let the dead bury their own dead and follow Him right away, saying, *“No one, having put his*

hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:62). This means that when it comes to following the Lord, there should be no fleshly calculation to make. Like this, God bears witness to His work through those who, when commanded to follow, say to Him, “Yes, Lord, I will follow you. You have completely fulfilled my salvation. You have made me a righteous person. And You will take care of everything.” In other words, the glory of God and His precious work are manifested through those who submit themselves to what God has done for them and follow Him by faith. Do you also believe so? Do you believe that God’s work is manifested through each and every individual gathered here? This is what faith is all about. Faith in the righteousness of God requires no secular education. There is no need for any worldly gifts. All that we have to do is just say “Yes” to what God is saying to us. Is everything possible for us then? Yes, nothing will be impossible! If God says that He will use all of us who believe in the gospel of the water and the

Spirit as His instruments and manifest His glory through us, then this will come about for sure. After all, isn’t anything possible if it is God’s will? Of course it is! To believe like this is what faith is all about.

You are the second crop of students training here at our Mission School, and if you truly believe in God’s Word and trust and follow your Church leader, God will surely make you His servants and use you as His instruments. Let’s say the Church is about to send you somewhere as a minister. Do you believe that God has raised you as His worker, and do you also believe that God’s glory will be revealed and fulfilled through you? If so, then you should just say “Yes” to the Lord and follow Him by faith. That is how you live out your faith. And none other than this is the disposition of the people of faith.

When Moses was called by God, he refused to fulfill his calling at first, saying that he was too slow of speech. Who else gave a similar excuse? Jeremiah also said that he was too young and not eloquent enough to fulfill his calling. But God said to them,

“Do not fear. Go, and speak as I command you,” and when Moses and Jeremiah obeyed this Word, God’s work was fulfilled exactly as promised. His will was thus fulfilled.

Planting God’s Church

Why are we running our Mission School? It’s all to spread God’s gospel. God’s Church is absolutely indispensable to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to every nation in this world. To achieve this, God’s servants must be raised everywhere in the world. We must raise God’s laborers. What is needed is not a large church building. It will be enough if God’s servants are raised everywhere to preach His true Word. A couple of churches should be planted in each region, and several more in a large region. God’s Church is needed everywhere, in Seoul, Inchon, and every satellite city around them. Many new towns have sprung up recently, but what’s

needed there? They all need God’s Church that preaches the Truth. It’s not an extravagant church that’s needed. Nor is space an issue. Even a small room with a wooden cross and a pulpit is enough to start a church, so long as it preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit to all its visitors and everyone around it. Such a church is absolutely essential. We opened up our Mission School only recently, but I have every confidence that God has already fulfilled all His work through His Church—that is, He has already blotted out all our sins and made us His saints. I believe that God has made us happy. God’s servants are preaching the gospel by faith and leading lost souls by faith to His Church. In doing so, they are making these lost souls happy and giving hope to those who are in despair. All these things are done together through all who have united their hearts with God’s Church. That is why we are running our Mission School by placing our faith in the Word of God, all to raise up God’s servants.

Those Who Offer Themselves to God

Whatever God commands you through His servants; it will all be fulfilled according to His will. If God commands you to go to a certain region and plant His Church, then this will come about for sure. It's God Himself who fulfills everything. I have already addressed this issue before and explained to you how God's Church is built. When a new church is planted, it is strapped for finance. Of course, this will be eventually be resolved when the membership grows, but before this happens, God's servants themselves must serve the Lord by offering their own possessions to Him first. No true servant of God has any private possessions; instead, every true servant of God is a mere steward of His possessions. Anyone who follows the Lord must attain everything by believing in the Lord's Word. When God's Church is planted like this, many souls will be saved through it, and their offerings will in turn be used to plant even more churches.

What is God's will? It is for all of us to live by faith and serve this gospel. You and I have been saved by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, but unless we first live for this gospel, there will not be anyone following us. Unless you give up yourself, you cannot follow the righteousness of the Lord. Even if a church leader believes that God has accomplished everything, if he does not offer himself to God like this, then who would ever follow His order? It's those who believe in God's Word that follow the Lord. God said that He rested on the seventh day of creation because He had finished all His work. Those who believe in the righteous Word of God follow the Lord's righteousness. It's when church leaders follow the Lord and set an example for everyone else that those whose faith is still weak also come to follow the Lord. Does this not make good sense? Your faith must be clearly established in your heart. Your heart must be ready to follow the Lord with an unwavering faith. God has already completed His work of salvation to deliver every

sinner on this earth.

However, even though God has completed this work, countless people are still being destroyed for their sins because they simply do not know this Truth. That is why this work of salvation which God has completed for us must be testified to everyone. Who will then really offer himself for this work? Who will give up even his life to bear witness to the gospel and preach it? Who will really live for the gospel Truth of the water and the Spirit? Who will declare to every nation and every tribe what God has completely fulfilled? It is none other than us, we who know and believe in this Truth. God is saying to us, “Rise and shine!” Just as our Lord said to the Prophet Isaiah to go and shine the light, so is He asking us to rise and shine the light of this genuine gospel.

God speaks to those who know His will. He does not speak to just anyone who does not know His will, but He only speaks to those who believe in His will, telling them that they are the very ones called to carry out His work. Put differently, God is saying to

each and every one of us to go and shine the light of His perfect salvation. God does not entrust His work to those who do not believe in His righteousness. When the disciples of Jesus told Him that there was much to harvest and asked Him to send more laborers, the Lord then told them to go themselves. Like this, whoever knows the will of God is bound to carry out God’s work and will follow Him. Can you say Amen to this Word? Let’s all say Amen!

We are not carrying out God’s work for anyone else. We are doing His work to fulfill His will. This work is not being done by our own will or endeavors. Rather, it is God who has raised us, and it is God who holds us steadfast and works through us. All that we have to do is just take God’s Word by placing our faith in it and live by this faith. All of us must come to realize what it means to take the Word of God by faith.

Do you now understand what God’s will is? God’s will is for all of us to serve the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It’s also God’s will for us to see the Son of God and believe in Him. And so like this, we are all

working tirelessly to bear witness of His gospel.

I am preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit and laboring very hard in God's Church. And as I carry on with my work as your leader, it becomes clear to me who is completely united with God's Church and who is not. There is a gospel song in Korea that goes, "Do not show love with your eyes, do not speak of love with your lips." Like this, there are some workers who praise the Lord just with their lips and become involved with other things. But this is not what God wants from any of us. Rather, He wants all of us to offer our hearts to Him and put this into actual practice by devoting our lives to the sole purpose of spreading the gospel of the Lord. ☒

SERMON

3



CONTENTS



God Has Already Blessed Us the Believers As He Had Blessed Abraham

< Genesis 12:1-5 >

“Now the LORD had said to Abraham:

‘Get out of your country,

From your family

And from your father’s house,

To a land that I will show you.

I will make you a great nation;

I will bless you

And make your name great;

And you shall be a blessing.

I will bless those who bless you,

And I will curse him who curses you;

And in you all the families of the earth shall

be blessed.’

So Abraham departed as the LORD had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. And Abraham was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. Then Abraham took Sarai his wife and Lot his brother’s son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people whom they had acquired in Haran, and they departed to go to the land of Canaan. So they came to the land of Canaan.”

I am sure that most of you are very familiar with Abraham. Today’s Scripture reading is from Genesis 12:1-5, which describes how Abraham left his homeland and went to the land of Canaan as God had commanded him to do. And I would like to share God’s blessings with you from this passage.

Did God Give Us the Very Same Blessings That He Gave to Abraham?

God blessed Abraham abundantly. I am sure we all wish that God would also give us such abundant blessings. But, have we not already received these same blessings that Abraham received? Today, I would like us to consider this question carefully and ponder on whether or not God has given us these same blessings that He had given to Abraham.

To anticipate the conclusion, just as God had blessed Abraham, He has also blessed everyone who genuinely believes in His righteousness. What's very important here is whether or not we really believe in the righteousness of God with all our hearts. If we look at just our material circumstances, it may seem as though we have not received that many blessings. How can we then say that we have been blessed so much by God? Perhaps some of you are thinking that such abundant blessings are reserved just for Abraham or David and are not really applicable to us.

However my fellow believers, God has already blessed all of us abundantly. You need to realize here that God has given us these same blessings that He had given to Abraham, for God also loves us with all His heart. When we look at our material circumstances and physical situations, we may think that we have not really received that many blessings that are apparent, but once we realize God's love through His Word, we can see clearly that we have in fact received these abundant blessings.

We Ought to Realize God's Heart First

God's heart is full of love for us. It's absolutely important for all of us to realize that God loves us forever. And because God so loves us, He has a sincere desire to bless us. And He has indeed given us these same blessings that He had given to Abraham. God has bestowed us with these same blessings that He had bestowed on Abraham when

He said to him:

“I will make you a great nation;

I will bless you

And make your name great;

And you shall be a blessing.

I will bless those who bless you,

And I will curse him who curses you;

And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

Once we realize God’s love for us, we can all trust in Him and realize just how abundantly we have been blessed by Him. This is how God’s blessings come into our hearts. No matter how much a married couple might love each other, unless they express their love to each other, they can’t really appreciate it. If a husband becomes too busy with his work to express his love for his wife or have any meaningful conversations with her, and comes home tired only to eat and sleep as though he was just a boarder, then the wife may very well wonder, “Is this man my husband? Does he even love me?” I am sure that

every wife experiences moments like this.

But if your husband seems to be focused like this and comes and goes like a boarder, it’s not because this is what he wants. Rather, it’s because he is too busy trying to support his family in this world. So you should rather try to understand and sympathize with your husband. Newly married couples may not appreciate this, but when enough time goes by and the husband gets overwhelmed with work, he will be so busy that he will find it difficult to tell his wife that he loves her. To be quite frank, many husbands don’t even know what’s where in their homes. So their wives are bound to feel as though they are living with a boarder rather than a husband. You can imagine how frustrating this must be. This is why married couples end up in a fight. But, when trouble arises, both the husband and the wife are prone to blame each other, arguing over who started the fight. If you are having any marital problems, you need to stand back, think long and hard about what’s causing the trouble rather than just

blaming each other. You will then realize that your marital difficulties did not arise because of your spouse, but it's because of your failure to understand your spouse.

If your husband tends to not express himself that well, then you need to help him express himself better. Many husbands feel they are just too busy to tell their wives that they love them as often as the wives would like to hear. So, if you want to hear your husband telling you that he loves you, ask him gently over the dinner table, and never attack him. Few husbands will tell their wives out of blue that they love them without ever being prompted. Of course, there always are exceptions, but that's just not what most men say. And that's why many husbands say so few words over the dinner table. I'm saying this to emphasize how important it is for a married couple to understand each other's heart, as this is absolutely indispensable for them to communicate with one another, find comfort in each other, and ensure a happy marriage. When you know what is in your

spouse's mind, you can draw strength from it, but if this is not the case, then you will be very frustrated and your married life may even feel like a living hell.

The same is true for our relationship with God. If we just look at our material circumstances, then we cannot find the answer to the question of whether or not God really has blessed us, whether or not He loves us sincerely, or whether or not His love abides in us even now. On the contrary, looking at just our circumstances is likely to make us feel as though God has no interest in us, far less any love.

It is therefore very important for us to look at God's heart rather than our own circumstances. It's by looking at God's heart that we can find out whether or not He really loves us. When we look at God's heart through the Bible, we can see that He loves us so much and is blessing us so abundantly. God's unchanging heart is full of love for us as before, and He is blessing us abundantly. From His Word we can realize just how much He loves us and how abundantly He has blessed us.

Even as you believe in Jesus, there are times when things don't go your way and you struggle with the hardship of life, and as a result you wonder if God really loves you or not. Have you not had depressing moments like this, when your heart is troubled and you wonder to yourself, "Has God forsaken me by any chance? Have I done so many wrongs that He hates me now?" In times like this, it is absolutely important for you to confirm from the Scriptures that God indeed loves you with all His heart, rather than mulling over in doubt by yourself.

God Loves All of Us

God has blessed all of us. He loves us all with all His heart. Love is not something that is expressed noisily and flauntingly. That's because deep love is not manifested brashly. In many ways, deep love is not easily visible to the eyes of the flesh. However, even though this kind of love is not seen in our eyes,

we can still feel it definitely. God's love for us is like this. Although it is not seen in our eyes of the flesh, it is never-changing and forever-lasting. And even now, God loves us all. Do you believe in this?

It's because God loved us that He said, "*Get out of your country, From your family, And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you.*" It's because God loves us that He has purposely separated us from the world. If God did not love us with all His heart, then He would not have cared whether or not we stayed in our country and with our family, or even whether or not we died. However, because God was deeply interested in us and wanted to bless us all, He made us leave our country, our family, and our father's house and showed us a new land to dwell in.

You and I have been saved by the Lord. And having left our country, our family, and our father's house, we are leading our lives of faith according to the Word of the Lord. All who are loved by the Lord have left their father's house to go to God. This is the

commandment that God has given us, and this is the first evidence of the fact that God loves us.

We the Believers in the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit Are Living a Life Separated from the World

Now that you have received the remission of sins, have you really left your country, your family, and your father's house? This does not mean that you should literally leave your family and parents behind. Rather, it means that you ought to cast away the old ways of thinking and faith that you had before being truly born again by hearing and believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. In other words, rather than setting your heart on the world, you should set it on God, and having cast away your old ways of thinking, you must unite yourself with the Word and live according to the direction as shown by God.

God loved us so much that He separated us from

this world and made us depart from our country, our family, and our father's house. He did this to give us even more blessings. If God did not love us, He would not have done this. This fact alone shows us clearly that God is unquestionably full of love for us. It's because God so loves us that He has blessed us, and it's to turn these blessings into reality that He has led us out of our country, our family, and our father's house to work in our lives. If we believe in this truth, then our hearts will also become full of love for the Lord.

When Abraham heard God's commandment ordering him to leave his country, his family, and his father's house, it must have been very hard on him. Since Abraham had to be separated from his beloved family and his support base and go to a completely strange land, he must have felt very hesitant to leave at first. Perhaps he was even resentful towards God and cried, feeling that God was being cruel and heartless by giving him such an order. Even among you, maybe there are some people who think that they've come to a church that's too strict and

inflexible when it comes to its guidance. However, just because God had given Abraham a new land to bless him even more out of His love, so will the guidance of the Church bring even more blessings to you. If Abraham stayed in his homeland, he could never have received God's blessings. So, I ask you to wait patiently for God's blessings rather than being resentful.

All too often we tend to measure God's love by our changing circumstances. But God's love is not something that can be measured visibly like this. If love could be measured by some visible criteria, then it would mean that a husband who showers his wife with expensive gifts loves her, while a husband who can't afford this doesn't love his wife. But few men can actually buy expensive gifts for their wives day after day. Can we then conclude that these husbands don't love their wives? If this were the case, how could any wife trust her husband and share her life with him? A wife shares her life with her husband because she knows his heart, not because of

expensive gifts that are visible. Like this, there are times when we try to measure God's love by our material successes and failures, so when things don't go our way, we feel neglected by God. However, when we look at God through our spiritual eyes, we can see that He loves us unchangingly. God loves us with all His heart, and He has blessed us abundantly. His blessings are not just future promises, but He has blessed us already.

We Ought to Be Immersed in God's Love

Do you believe in God's love? Do you believe that God loves you with all His heart? If you believe in God's love, then your heart will find true satisfaction. That's because true love and true fellowship with God can be shared when you know His heart and trust in Him. No matter how difficult your circumstances are and how much hardship you are facing, you can still endure through them with

perseverance thanks to the Lord's love. Even if your circumstances are difficult and you are facing financial hardships, or even if God seems to be reluctant to give you material blessings, you can still lead a happy life because you know that God loves you. Like this, it's very important for our hearts to be immersed in God's love. The problem, however, is that all too often we fail to do this and instead look at the world with the eyes of flesh. When we set our hearts on temporal and material things, we end up so busy calculating our material gains and losses that we can't run to the dominion of faith. In times like this, we lose our passion for God and our hearts turn desolate and parched. We end up going through the motions without any faith.

In contrast, if we believe in God's love and what He has for us, then even the most desolate heart can blossom the flowers of faith and turn into a rich and fertile ground. When we believe in God's heartfelt desire to bless us all through His Word, the flowers of Sharon will begin blossoming in our hearts,

connection is made between God and us, and true fellowship and love are shared. I believe with all my heart that God loves us. And I am absolutely certain that it's God's heartfelt desire to love us and bless us.

The Song of Solomon is the love story of King Solomon and a Shulammitte woman. From the Book of Song of Solomon we can realize how all hardships can be overcome by love, and in the same way, we can also overcome all our trials if we know just how much God loves us. Once we realize that God's heart is full of love for us and that He has blessed us with this love, we can overcome any and all obstacles that we face while carrying out God's work in His Church. What's more, we will have an increased desire to carry out God's will even more ardently. If we really believe that God loves us and has blessed us, then we will faithfully fulfill the work that God has entrusted to us even if we are neither rewarded nor recognized for our labor. But when our labor starts bearing fruit, far from taking the credit for ourselves and boasting about it, we come to praise

the Lord and thank Him for giving us the opportunity to serve Him.

God has built His Church on this earth, and we are serving the Lord in this Church. Are we then serving the Lord in order to ensure our own material prosperity? Is our willingness to serve God conditional? No, of course not! It's because our God loved us first that we are trying to serve Him to the best of our abilities despite our inadequacies, and because we know God's love is for us that we also love Him and carry out His righteous work He has entrusted us with. Whatever is pleasing to God, we are only too happy to do it without any ulterior motives or desires. When the work we do becomes pleasing to our Lord and His will is fulfilled even a little through this work, then we are glad to devote ourselves to this work and entrust its fate to God. The very fact that we are doing something that's pleasing to God makes our hearts joyous, and so we can all work diligently without expecting anything in return. Therefore, our faith ought to begin from the belief

that God loves us so much and has blessed us with all His heart. God has bestowed His infinite love and boundless blessings on all of us, and having come to us in person, He has saved us from all our sins and given us new life. God has given us His everlasting love. And even now, our God still loves us. Indeed, even at this very moment the Lord is blessing us all. It's just that sometimes we can't appreciate this. When we seek what our eyes of the flesh can see rather than trying to read the Lord's heart by faith, we will not be able to see God's great love and end up failing to understand His mind.

Can any of us deny the fact that God loves us, that He has blessed us abundantly, and that He is helping us at every moment? Can any of us deny this love of God? No, of course not! None of us can ever deny God's love because He has demonstrated it to us so clearly and plainly. Like this, the Lord has blessed us abundantly and loves us with all His heart.

We Ought to Have the Same Faith as That of Abraham Who Became the Fountain of Blessings by Faith

God wanted to bless Abraham. It's because God so loved Abraham that He told him to leave his country, his family, and his father's house, so that God would bless him to His heart's content. God gave Abraham such an order in order to bless him not only in Heaven but also on this earth and make him a great nation. It's to demonstrate this and make us realize that God ordered Abraham to leave his country, his family, and his father's house. From the blessings that God gave to Abraham, we can see that our God loves us and has blessed us equally. So, the fact that Abraham was blessed is the evidence showing us that God really loves us also.

God said to Abraham that he would be the fountain of blessing. The faith of all who are loved by God is the fountain of all blessings. Who is blessed by God? Although God loves every human

being equally, His blessings are bestowed only upon those who accept this love into their hearts without reservation, and only the hearts of those who have the Spirit of God dwelling in them become the very fountain of blessings. Of course, Jesus Christ is the fountain of all blessings, but the hearts of those who truly believe in God are also the fountain of blessings. When we look closely at the heart of someone who believes in God and has been blessed by Him, we can see quite clearly that God's blessings are indeed found in that person's heart. Not every heart is the same. Some people's hearts are blessed while others have no blessing, and when we look at the blessed hearts, we can see that these hearts have been blessed on account of the fact they truly believe in and follow God.

Do you know from where blessings originate? They originate from those who have accepted and have planted God's love into their hearts by faith. God said to Abraham:

"I will make you a great nation;

I will bless you

And make your name great;

And you shall be a blessing.

I will bless those who bless you,

And I will curse him who curses you;

And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (Genesis 12:2-3).

This means that God, who makes His believers the fountain of blessings, blesses those who unite themselves with this faith and curses those who don't. God said that those who bless Abraham would be blessed equally, while those who curse him would be cursed. Of course, becoming the fountain of blessings depends entirely on God, but because God said to Abraham, “*You shall be a blessing,*” whether one is blessed or not depends on whether that person takes sides with Abraham or not. So, taking Abraham as the norm, God blesses those who bless Abraham and curses those who curse him. Since it was God who led Abraham's heart, to unite one's heart with Abraham's heart is to unite oneself with God. So, if

you unite your heart with Abraham's heart, then God will bless you also. That's because Abraham's heart is the fountain of blessings. And you can be blessed if you unite yourself with those who have this blessed heart. That's because God promised that His blessings would be given through those who have united their hearts with Him. Uniting your heart with the people of God is uniting with God. However, if you try to ensure your own prosperity above anything else without uniting with the heart of God, then you will not receive any blessings.

We the believers in the gospel of the water and the Spirit have received God's love. As those who have received this love of God, in our souls we not only have God's love but also His truth and blessings. Because we are loved by God, God blesses those who unite themselves with us and curses those who oppose and stand against us. Knowing this, just how much does God cherish us and how much has He blessed us that He would bless those who bless us and curse those who curse us? This is all because we

have put on God's love. It's because we have put on His blessings. Of course, we are not God, but we have faith in Him and His loving concern is always upon us, and that's why those who bless us are blessed while those who curse us are cursed. So we ought to think about just how great the love we have received from God is. It's on account of Abraham that everyone on this earth has been either blessed or cursed. Like Abraham, God has also blessed us. He loves us with all His heart, and He has clothed us in this love. He has given us such great love and blessings that He blesses those who bless us and curses those who curse us.

This is the evidence of the fact that we have put on God's love. We don't bless or curse anyone else on our own. Rather, it is God who blesses those who bless us and curses those who curse us, because God loves us with all His heart and has blessed us abundantly. This is how much God loves us all. So how could we ever say that we have not received any blessings from God? Although our acts are no better

than anyone else's and in our outside appearance we may not seem to have been blessed, regardless of how we look we have in fact received God's love and blessings, for God is holding us steadfast and taking care of us. This is not something that God said just to Abraham or His prominent servants appearing in the Old Testament. Rather, it is what God is saying to us today who are blessed by Him. God will curse those who curse His beloved people, and He will bless equally those who bless them. Why do you think God would do this? It's because God loves His people and has blessed them. Can anyone object to this? Can anyone dispute what God has done? Can anyone complain that God loves some people but not others? No, God loves every human being equally and fairly. But it is only on those who have accepted God's love that His special blessings are bestowed.

As God's Blessed People, We Are Not Lonely

As we carry on with our lives on this earth, sometimes we feel lonely, and sometimes we face various difficult circumstances. In these times how can our hearts be strengthened? It is none other than God's love. It's when our hearts are infused with God's heart that we can find true rest. When you abide in God's love, your heart is fully satisfied and you are never lonely even if you have nothing special on this earth and even if you are walking alone. You can indeed walk on this road of righteousness in joy. Though you may seem to have nothing, you are in fact rich; and though the world may seem to despise you, you are in fact honorable. That's because you believe in God's love. Because we believe in God's love, we can all be courageous and bold in this world even though we have nothing, bless the unbelievers and lead them to the way of righteousness, and become the fountain of blessings to share overflowing blessings with everyone else in our

lives. All of us who have put on God's love can live like this, and we are in fact living such a blessed life.

Do you believe that God loves you with all His heart? If you do, then have you not been blessed already? You are indeed the very blessed saints. God loves you and me with all His heart, and we have received His blessings. So our hearts are full of God's love. On account of this faith we have no fear even if we walk in this world all alone. That's because we are the blessed people living amid God's blessings regardless if no one ever gives us any recognition, or how many shortcomings we have, or how many people ignore us. Because we have received such blessings from God, no one can harm us. Neither Satan nor anyone else in this world can ever harm us. No one can curse anyone who has been blessed by God, and no one can bless anyone who has been cursed by God. As you have been saved through the God-given gospel of the water and the Spirit, you have received the same blessings as Abraham's.

Therefore, it's very important for all of us to lead our lives of faith by trusting in God who has blessed us with all His heart. We ought to lay the foundation of our faith on the fact that God's heart is full of His desire to bless us all. When we live out this faith, we can have boldness in our hearts, never to be shaken no matter what kinds of temptations and sufferings we may face, never be held hostage to the whims of the world, but instead run the race of faith to bring joy to God.

Let Us Have Spiritual Faith in God's Sight

What your eyes see is not everything that there is. Of course, there are many wonderful things in this world. Take a look at the flowers. Are they not all beautiful? But there is no flower that can last for more than a week or two without its life support. Even the most beautiful flower will wither away without fail. Nor are our fortunate circumstances

forever-lasting.

So, rather than looking at our immediate circumstances, we ought to look into our hearts. God loves us with all His heart, and this love with which He has blessed us is in your heart and mine. It is this love that gives us the strength to overcome all our adverse circumstances. That's because God's love abides in our hearts always and forever. Thanks to the Holy Spirit, we have God's love in our hearts all the time.

Therefore, as we carry on with our lives in God's sight, we must have spiritual faith. We are at the greatest risk when the things that are visible to our eyes go well. When you and I measure everything by our eyes of the flesh like this, we are actually putting ourselves at great risk. What we see with our eyes is not everything that there is. We must follow the Lord with our hearts in our lives until the day He returns and takes away to His Kingdom. We must follow God until the very end with all our hearts, trusting that God's heart is full of love for us.

I ask you not to waver by your circumstances. That's because circumstances change all the time. When Abraham's nephew Lot saw the land of Sodom and Gomorrah, it looked like the Garden of Eden. Lot followed what his eyes were pleased to see, and as a result, he was almost destroyed along with Sodom and Gomorrah. He barely managed to save his life. Just because your circumstances are good, this does not mean that everything else is fine. Even though we have faced many difficulties in our lives of faith until now, throughout the whole time we always had God helping us at our side. Although we have sometimes stumbled and faltered on our way to where we are now, we do not think that this road has been nothing but a struggle because God has always been with us. If our circumstances had been good, we could not have felt God's help. Of course, we all know how hard and painful it is to stumble and falter. But all of us must realize that this is God's guidance and His love. In other words, we ought to cast aside the conventional notion that only the good things that

happen in our lives are God's blessings while hardships and difficulties are not God's blessings.

To bless Abraham, God told him to leave his country, his family, and his father's house. Even though the way to the land of Canaan was extremely difficult for Abraham, he still had God's guidance and help whenever he struggled. And ultimately, Abraham became a blessing just as God had promised, and the nation of Israel was born from him.

God has also given us this very same promise. He has called us to lead us to a blessed way and to turn us into the fountain of blessings so that everyone would be blessed to make a great nation out of us. It's for this purpose that God has told us to leave behind all our carnal thoughts and wishes to seek after the comfort of our flesh. How do you feel now that you have embarked on this journey with Abraham? Is it just too hard on you? If God had not blessed Abraham, he would not have left when God said to him as follows:

*“I will make you a great nation;
I will bless you
And make your name great;
And you shall be a blessing.
I will bless those who bless you,
And I will curse him who curses you;
And in you all the families of the earth shall be
blessed.”*

It’s because God had blessed Abraham with His Word that Abraham left with all these promised blessings of God in his heart. If God had not thus blessed him, he would have had no reason to leave. After all, he was already living a comfortable life, and so why would he have left for a completely strange land?

My fellow believers, it’s because God has blessed you and me already that we can all live out our faith, serve the Lord, and follow Him. We took the first step in our lives of faith precisely because God loved us with all His heart and gave us all His blessings. We are following the Lord because God

has already made us His blessed people, not because we want to be blessed sometime in the future. If you are thinking mistakenly that you would be blessed if you live out your faith, you need to wake up from this misconception. Are you still following the Lord so that you would be blessed in the future? But how do you know whether you would be blessed or not? Do you think God would bless you only if you do something meritorious?

If that were the case, then none of us could have believed in the Lord, nor would any of us have had any assurance in the Lord’s Word that He would bless us. Take a closer look at our acts and our weaknesses. Even if we have accumulated many blessings, isn’t it likely that we would ruin them all? Yes, of course. This is because we are full of mistakes and shortcomings. So, even if we do something worthy of being blessed, we commit so many more wrongdoings right away that whatever merit we might have built up is all rendered obsolete. That’s how weak we all are. Given this, if we had to

do something meritorious to be blessed, then none of us would receive any blessings from God. If God had said to us, “Follow me faithfully, and I will bless you; I will cherish you if you do something meritorious,” then right away all of us should just give up on receiving any blessings. That’s because no matter how hard we try to be good, it is much more probable for us to fail than succeed at this endeavor. That’s how weak our flesh is.

However, God has already blessed us wholeheartedly. It’s because God had already blessed Abraham that he could leave his homeland with assurance. God has given us the same blessings also, saying to us, “I will curse those who curse you, and I will bless those who bless you. I will make you the fountain of blessings.” Indeed, God has blessed us already. Because the Lord already bore all the curses that we should have borne, we have nothing but rewards and blessings to receive in the Lord. None other than this is God’s love.

The Beginning of Our Faith

Abraham followed the Word of the Lord God because he believed in His blessed promise. Like this, faith begins with the concrete Word of God. That’s why we follow this Word. Because the Word of God guarantees us clearly that He has already blessed us wholeheartedly, we can follow God and begin to live out our faith unwaveringly. Every life of faith begins based on this assured Word of God and grounded in His love.

What is the starting point of your faith? Is it the fact that God has blessed you with all His heart? Or is it your own carnal thoughts, thinking vaguely that you would be blessed somehow down the road if you follow the Lord long enough? The people of faith believed that God had already given them blessings and began their lives of faith based on their unwavering faith in this concrete Word. We can realize this from the Scripture. It’s because God had already blessed the people of Israel that He told them

to follow Him. Rather than saying that He would bless them if they followed Him, God told them to follow Him because He had already blessed them. However, as the people of Israel did not realize this providence of God, they tried to establish their own righteousness through their own works, and when they failed to do so, they blamed God, worshipped idols, and kept on going astray time after time.

Far from hearing the voice of God calling for them, the people of Israel actually stood against Him even in the days of Jesus Christ, as it is written, “*O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!*” (Matthew 23:37) As a result, Israel was ultimately destroyed, and having lost their land, the Israelites were scattered all over the world. Their curses had begun all because they did not believe in God’s love. From where do blessings begin? They begin from the belief that God has blessed us wholly

and that He loves us with all His heart. It’s when we realize God’s love as revealed in the Word that His blessings begin for us on account of our unshakable faith in this Word. It is when our faith begins from this faith that our blessings also begin.

We Need to Check and Rearrange Our Faith

Even though we are full of shortcomings, God still loves us. As the Apostle Paul said, God loves us no matter how lowly we are. If we were to look at just our acts, how often have we really led a godly life? We would not deserve to be loved if the measuring rod of the Law were to be applied to us strictly; we could not possibly be loved by God, nor even expect Him to love us. However, despite our wretchedness, God still loves us and has blessed us with all His heart. It’s because God loved us first and blessed us that we can trust in Him and follow Him despite our shortcomings. It’s from here that faith begins.

Because we trust in God's love and believe that He has saved us through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we can always turn around from our wrongdoings despite our shortcomings. We can always live a blessed life by faith. If our faith were dependent on our acts, then the very moment when our acts go astray, we would not be able to come to the presence of God. Whenever we do anything evil, we would not be able to come out to God. There would then be more and more days when we find it impossible to come into God's presence, and in the end, we would be irreversibly estranged from God.

But is this what God wants for us? As the Bible says, *"In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us"* (1 John 4:10), it is God who loved us first. And perfect love casts out fear, just as it's written, *"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love"* (1 John 4:18). Who fears God? Those who don't even know whether or not there is God don't fear Him. On the

contrary, God is actually feared by those who believe in Him but cannot believe in His love and instead try to be born again through their own acts. Such people do know just how terrifying hell is, but since they cannot wash away their sins no matter how hard they try, they are afraid that they would end up in hell. However, if these people cast aside their own acts and accept God's love into their hearts instead, they can all be liberated from their fear of hell. God loves us all and He has already blessed us wholeheartedly. If you believe in this love of God, all fear will recede away. All your shortcomings and all your sins that have condemned you until now will disappear. If you believe in God's love, abide in it, and thank Him for it always in your life, then the very fact that you are abiding in God's love will bring you joy and fullness even if there is no reward in this world.

God has blessed us to live in joy. He has blessed not only the descendants of Abraham but also all His people and the descendants of faith. I am absolutely sure of this, just as you believe in this

wholeheartedly. And that's why we can never forget God's love. God loved us so much that He bore all our sins through His baptism and remitted them all away by being crucified to death. We can never forget this love. Of course, because we still have many shortcomings, we still stumble, make mistakes, and sometimes even disown God as the Apostle Peter once did. However, God blessed us even as He knew all about such weaknesses. We could reach our salvation precisely because God loved us unconditionally rather than being contingent upon our acts.

Abraham entered the land of Canaan as God had promised. Because of Abraham, countless people were blessed for generations to come, and everyone who emulated his faith put on the love of God. Don't forget the fact that all of this came about because Abraham obeyed the Word of God commanding him to leave his country, his family, and his father's house.

Cast Away Your Own Ephemeral Righteousness

Do not lead your life of faith based on your fleshly merits or virtues. I have many shortcomings. Nonetheless, I still have the conviction that I am leading my life of faith to follow the Lord because I believe that God loves me and has blessed me wholeheartedly. No matter what anyone says to me, so long as God blesses me and loves me with all His heart, I will always abide in God's love, be free in this love, and spread my faith amid all these God-given blessings.

I admonish you to not rely on your transient acts to be blessed. It's because God loves us and has already blessed us that we can and must live a godly life. We must serve the Lord and live a godly life in this world not because God would bless us only then, but because He has already blessed us wholeheartedly and we are grateful for such wonderful blessings. Therefore, as you carry on with

your life on this earth, you have the duty to do what is right in God's sight, but you should not expect to be rewarded for this. If this were tenable, it would make God indebted to us. If we were to say to God, "Lord, I've done all these things for You, and so You should reward us in this way," it would be akin to saying to God that He is indebted to us rather than the other way around.

But is God indebted to us in any shape or form? No, of course not! Not only is God far from being indebted to us, He would never allow it. That's because God loved us first sufficiently and abundantly. Even if we were to devote the rest of our lives to the Lord, there is nothing that we can demand from God in return. What we have already received from God is enough to overwhelm us with gratefulness, and so how could we ever repay Him for His love and blessings? This is simply impossible. And that's why Psalm 116:12 says, "*What shall I render to the LORD for all His benefits toward me?*" There is nothing that we can demand from the Lord. Yet, when our faith goes astray, we sometimes

insist on God to reward us for doing Him some favors. When we do this, we end up turning our relationship with God into a debtor-creditor relationship. What joy could we ever find in such a relationship?

God loves all of us and He has blessed us with all His heart. He has clothed us in His true love. He has blotted out all our sins, made us His brides, and glorified us. Given the fact that you ought to be grateful enough that you have received the remission of sins, would you still turn your relationship with God into a debtor-creditor relationship?

Our God has blessed us with all His heart, and His heart is full of love for us. We are God's people who have received such great love. When I think about this love, I am so overwhelmed by gratefulness that I don't know how I can ever thank God enough. What is so special about us that of all the countless people in this world, God would love us and clothe us in His infinite love? So many people considered to be so smart and bright in this world are heading straight to hell because they have not accepted God's

love. In contrast, we have come to enjoy everlasting life by accepting God's love even though we have nothing to boast of and are full of shortcomings. This is such a wonderful blessing that all that I can say to the Lord is, Thank You.

Let Us Praise the Lord for His Love with Our Faith

We are preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit all over the world because we are so grateful to the Lord for His love. All that we can give to the Lord in return is thanksgiving and praise, not our own righteous acts. Therefore, all of us ought to abide in the Lord's love by faith and praise Him in our lives. The exact starting point of our faith begins from the knowledge that God has blessed us wholeheartedly and loves us with all His heart. So I ask you to abide in this love by faith and praise the Lord. God has blessed each and every saint in His Church across the whole wide world. It's because

God has blessed us wholeheartedly that we could have come to where we are now. Now that we have been saved and become God's own people, we will all enter the Kingdom of Heaven. I ask you to be grateful for this and praise the Lord for such a wonderful blessing.

Faith must not be conditional. If your faith is even slightly conditional, you must cast away any and all such beliefs. Have unconditional faith in God and live in complete obedience to the Lord. Confirming this love of God from time to time, I ask you to do everything to repay the Lord for His love until the day He returns. I also ask you to practice the Lord's love and serve Him for the remainder of your life.

In not too distant future, you will enter the Kingdom of God. The Lord promised us that He would return to this earth soon. So let us all live the rest of our lives in gratefulness and praise the Lord even when we go to Heaven, remembering that even such filthy and wretched beings like us could become God's own people because He loved and blessed us first. ☒

SERMON

4



Obedience Is Better Than Sacrifice

< Genesis 12:1-4 >

**“Now the LORD had said to Abram:
‘Get out of your country,
From your family
And from your father’s house,
To a land that I will show you.
I will make you a great nation;
I will bless you
And make your name great;
And you shall be a blessing.
I will bless those who bless you,
And I will curse him who curses you;
And in you all the families of the earth shall
be blessed.’**

**So Abram departed as the LORD had spoken
to him, and Lot went with him. And Abram was**

**seventy-five years old when he departed from
Haran.”**

< Matthew 1:1-2 >

**“The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ,
the Son of David, the Son of Abraham: Abraham
begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot
Judah and his brothers.”**

It is written in Matthew 1:1-2, *“The book of the
genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son
of Abraham: Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot
Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers.”*

Why does the Bible say here that the Gospel of
Matthew is the book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ,
the Son of David, and the Son of Abraham? Abraham
is the father of faith. And Jesus Christ, the Son of
David, is the King of kings. Hence, His genealogy is
a royal genealogy. How is this royal genealogy
continued on? How do we continue to give birth to

the children of faith? How can we continue to bear spiritual fruit? These are the questions that God wants to address through the above Scripture passages.

Let's Think about Obedience

Today's Scripture reading from Matthew talks about begetting children, but today, I would like to speak to you about obedience first. When we turn to Genesis chapter 12, we see the Bible saying, "*Now the LORD had said to Abram: 'Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you.'*" God then promised Abraham that He would bless Him, and Abraham obeyed the Word of God.

Let's ponder on this account first. Abraham obeyed the Word of God, and God said to him that He would bless those who bless him and curse those who curse him. But, for Abraham to become a man

of faith and beget Isaac, the very first thing he needed to do was to obey the Word of God. Obedience was far more necessary than anything else. Likewise, for us to live out our faith, obedience is absolutely indispensable. If Abraham had not obeyed the Word of God wholeheartedly, then he could not have become the father of faith. It's when he became an obedient man that God named him Abraham. His original name was Abram.

Above all, Abraham wanted to obey God. When we first begin to lead our lives of faith, the very first thing that God demands from us is faith of obedience, and not anything else special. God does not want any special talents or exceptional devotion from us. The first thing that God wants from us is to have enough faith that enables us to obey His Word. How important is obedience for us to live out our faith? Unless we learn to obey God, we can neither taste the true faith nor maintain a true life of faith.

Obedience is extremely important, but do you really know what it means to obey God? Obedience

is all about doing whatever God asks us to do. It is about carrying out God's order with full trust. The very first thing that we must learn in our lives of faith is obeying God by faith. If you have not become a man of faith yet, you must learn to obey God first. If you accumulate nothing but Biblical knowledge, you are bound to become arrogant and boastful. In contrast, once you learn to obey God by faith, it's only a matter of course for you to not only reach spiritual faith and but also receive spiritual blessings.

Those Who Obey God Are Blessed

Among those who are blessed by God, Jacob yearned after God's blessings and sought to receive them at any price, while Isaac was blessed by God for his obedience. As Isaac did, some people receive and enjoy all the blessings of God by doing nothing but obeying Him faithfully. In contrast, some people don't obey God and instead go against His will at every

chance even as they are very good at what they do.

Let's consider these two types of people. Let's say that there is a man who is full of weaknesses and shortcomings, but because this man obeyed God, his future is bright and he has been blessed by God. Let's now assume that there is another man who is very gifted, bright, and talented, but because this man has refused to obey God and is doing whatever he wants to do, he is not only unable to receive the blessings that he seeks from God, but he even ends up leaving Him. Ultimately, whether we are blessed by God or not depends on whether or not we obey Him. I have learned from my life of faith that if I obey the Word of God even when it does not fit into my thoughts, I can then come to realize the will of God and be blessed.

We Must Learn to Obey God Truthfully

What does it mean to obey God according to His Word? We know that God has established His Church

to teach us obedience, and that through His Church and the leaders there God is trying very hard to teach us how to obey Him. And we can see that God blesses all who obey Him. Those who learn to obey and submit themselves to God face a bright and wonderful future even if they are full of shortcomings and devoid of any faculty of their own.

In contrast, those who disobey God face a difficult and rough road. What would happen to you if you fail to learn to obey God? First of all, you will not be able to receive the blessings of faith that Abraham had received. When God said Abraham, *“Get out of your country, From your family And from your father’s house, To a land that I will show you,”* Abraham obeyed this order even though he was already 75 years old. Abraham is the father of faith, but he did not become the father of faith just because he believed in God in his heart. He actually obeyed God and acted by faith. If you want to follow God, it’s absolutely indispensable for you to learn to obey God by faith, for only then can you embark on this

road to taste God’s glory, power, and blessings.

Abraham begot Isaac and Isaac begot Jacob. For Abraham to beget Isaac, he had to first learn to obey God. Everyone must learn to obey God first without any exception. No matter how gifted anyone might be, if this person does not know how to obey God, then his faith is all in vain. Even if one of our brothers is smarter than any of our pastors, he must still learn to obey the Word of God. If he does not, then all his gifts are rendered useless. He can’t take advantage of any of his talents.

When you visit a prison, you will likely see quite a few people well versed in the Word of God. Some mission organizations also train their members to memorize the Word of God. But you shouldn’t think that just because someone can recite the Word of God from memory, this person has somehow received the remission of sins, is gifted, or has faith. Even if you cannot recite the Word of God from memory, what’s important is that you know what the Word of God means, engrave it in your heart, obey it,

trust in it, and follow it. It's none other than such people who are the people of faith.

God Said That Obedience Is Better than Sacrifice

If Abraham had failed to learn to obey God, he would not have been able to follow His Word. God said in 1 Samuel that obedience is better than sacrifice. Let's look it up. The passage is found in 1 Samuel 15:22-23:

“So Samuel said:

‘Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices,

As in obeying the voice of the LORD?

Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice,

And to heed than the fat of rams.

For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft,

And stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.

Because you have rejected the word of the

LORD,

He also has rejected you from being king.’”

It's written here that to obey is better than sacrifice. It's also written that rebelling against God rather than obeying Him is like the sin of witchcraft. What does this mean? It means that disobeying God is the same as seeking divination from idols, obeying them, offering sacrifices to them, and worshipping them. In other words, the failure to disobey God is not just a trivial matter, but God treats it seriously in the same way as He treats the sin of idolatry, just as it is written, *“Stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.”*

As the believers in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the very first thing that we must learn from God is obedience by faith. You must learn first to obey God by faith. When you obey the Word of God in small matters, you can then obey Him in big matters. This is surely true. But, obedience by faith is something that you must learn; it is not something you can have just by your intellectual efforts. Obedience is faith. Once you submit yourself to God

by faith, you will find it so much easier to obey His Word. In contrast, those who don't submit themselves to God cannot obey His Word even if they want to. Because our hearts are prone to go against the Word of God, it's absolutely important for us to constantly force ourselves to obey God. We will then get used to obedience and in time we will find it so much easier to obey God. What would happen if you don't obey God? If you fail to learn to obey God, then you would fail at your life of faith also, because obedience is the very first step to living out your faith. The first thing that God wants from us is obedience. He did not teach us about faith first.

Take a Look at What Happened to Saul When He Disobeyed God

God raised up Samuel as His servant to deliver His people and to reign over them. However, the Israelites asked God to give them a king, and God

then granted their wish. The Israelites were very happy to have Saul as their king. Saul was so tall that most men came only up to his shoulder. That means he was taller than most men by at least 35cm. Moreover, not only was Saul a tall man, but he was also a very handsome man. So you can see just how physically imposing Saul was. So, all the Israelites accepted Saul as their king.

As first, Saul obeyed the Word of God for a while after his coronation. Through the Prophet Samuel God spoke to Saul and said, "I remember the Amalekites and how they had stood against Me when I brought you the people of Israel out of Egypt into the land of Canaan." The Amalekites had ambushed the people of Israel when they came out of Egypt, and God remembered this and wanted to punish them for what they had done to His people. So He said, "Destroy and wipe out the Amalekites completely. Kill every one of them and utterly destroy all that they have, men and women, young and old, good and bad." God said this to His servant Samuel, and

Samuel relayed it to Saul.

So Saul went into war and defeated the Amalekites. He also killed all the Amalekites as commanded by God, but there were some things that he spared. He spared the best of the sheep and the oxen and killed everything else. This was disobeying God. God had ordered Saul to destroy everything that the Amalekites had because they were God's enemies, yet Saul had failed to obey God completely by sparing the best of the sheep and the oxen instead of destroying them all. So God called the Prophet Samuel and said to him, "I have forsaken Saul, for he has not obeyed Me."

The Prophet Samuel then went to Saul to confirm this. When he got there, he heard the bleating of the sheep and the lowing of the oxen. So he asked Saul, "What is all this noise?" Saul then said, "I have spared just the best of the sheep and the oxen to sacrifice them to God, while destroying the rest." Samuel said, "What did God say to you? Because you have forsaken the Word of God, you

will no longer be the king. You have fallen from your throne." Saul then replied, "I disobeyed the Word of God because I feared the people and obeyed their voice."

Anyone who does not have the Spirit of God, who has not been raised by God, cannot obey Him. No man of the flesh can ever obey God. This is simply impossible no matter how anyone might wish to do so. Those who have not received the remission of sins just cannot obey God, even if they are brought to God's Church. Saul had not received the remission of his sins. So God chose David as the next king of Israel. David was a man who acknowledged the Word of God, someone who had received the remission of sins. David always obeyed God whenever He spoke to him.

God is teaching us the people of faith to obey Him at all times. You might think that you had obeyed God even before being born again, but that does not even come close to obedience. You must obey God and His Church. Whatever the Church

says, you must obey it regardless of whether you find it likable or not. Obeying God only when you find it fitting to your own thoughts and disobeying when you don't is not really what obedience is about.

God Is Most Pleased by Those Who Obey Him for the Preaching of the Gospel

God said that to obey is better than any sacrifice. You must grasp here that no matter how ardently you might worship God and how much money you might offer to Him, obeying God fully is far more pleasing to Him than any of these things.

Do you think of yourself as an obedient saint? As you are attending this Mission School, do you think that you are obeying God? Do you think it is okay to just memorize a few Bible verses before heading back home? Are you still beholden to your own thoughts, thinking to yourself, "I won't change my mind no matter what Rev. Jong says because I've

come here for my own purpose"? You might have thought like this when you left your home to attend this discipleship training course, but you cannot learn anything about faith with that kind of attitude.

Do you really love the gospel of the water and the Spirit? If you really love the gospel of the water and the Spirit, then you must serve it. While the Church needs saints, it also needs dedicated and faithful workers. The true workers of God are those who obey Him by faith. Those who obey God by faith can be used by Him for His work. Such people can preside over God's Church and lead it. In contrast, those who do not obey God are completely useless no matter how gifted they might be and how well they might preach and use the correct grammar. Such people cannot rise up to the challenge when they face adverse circumstances or spiritual problems. However, those who obey God can discern His will and obey Him by faith no matter what kind of challenge and hardships they might face.

Because our Church has continued to plant new

branch churches, some saints might think that they would be ruined financially if they continue to attend this Church. Many saints think like this. However, in reality all that we need to do is just pray to God. God will then fill all our needs. Rather than obeying God only when it's fitting to our own standard and disobeying Him when it's not, we ought to submit ourselves to God completely. As long as God's Church and His Word are right, as long as the Church preaches the genuine gospel, and as long as this is what pleases God the most, we ought to obey Him and pray to Him in unity. We can then all follow the Word by faith.

It is only proper for the Church to devote all its effort to spreading the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It's not so complicated. Some of us support the gospel ministry from behind, while others preach the gospel. Even though this may seem very difficult, it can actually be achieved if there is just one dedicated worker who devotes himself to the gospel and obeys God. It can be done if there is just one obedient

worker of the gospel. It's not something that requires a lot of people. It's very simple.

In the past I have also held down a job for a living. Where would you spend your hard-earned money? There are not that many things that is worthy of spending your money. It's a waste to drink it away, as it is to spend it on the fleeting pleasures of the flesh. Where should you then invest your hard-earned money? There is nowhere else to invest it but in the spreading of the gospel. There is a passage in the Bible that admonishes us to store our treasures in the Kingdom of Heaven, and this is indeed a very important passage. To invest in the Church and the spreading of the gospel is to invest in the Kingdom of Heaven.

The First Thing That the People of Faith Must Learn Is to Obey God

Many are called by God but few are really

obedient to His call. What is the very first thing that we must learn after being saved from our sins? The first thing the Bible teaches the people of faith is obedience. Who is the first to be rebuked then? The disobedient are the first to be rebuked. How could Abraham have begot Isaac? God had told him to leave his country, his family, and his father's house, and Abraham obeyed God. If Abraham had not obeyed God by faith, then there would have been no Isaac. Abraham would have had neither any fruit nor any descendant, and God would have used another man for His work. God told Abraham to obey Him above all else.

Therefore, obedience to God is the most important lesson that you must all learn before anything else. No one knows how long it might take you to learn this. Let's think about a worker who is afraid to face a new environment. Would you like to move from here to another city? Some people might like it, but others might not for various reasons. I am one of the latter. My body gets so tired when I travel

by a car for more than two hours that I just can't bear it anymore. I also get car-sick. I had not known motion-sickness in my past, even when I rode in a boat, but nowadays I feel ill when I am on the road for a long time. So I dislike traveling even more. So, someone like me would be prone to disobey the Church when told to move to another city to plant a new church.

However, even if you don't like to travel, if God's Church tells you to go, then you should go in obedience. Regardless of whether you like it or not, you should go wherever and whenever the Church tells you to go. That's what obedience is all about. And all of us must learn this obedience. Unless you yourself wish to learn to obey, you cannot obey God. While faith is something that you can have by believing in the Word with your heart, obedience cannot be had unless you learn how to obey.

For how many years God teaches obedience depends on whom He is teaching. Regardless of what you think, whether or not you obey the will of God

when the Church speaks to you is entirely up to you. No matter how much you learn about the Word and how much faith you have, everything will become corrupted unless you obey God. Without your obedience, God's power will never work in your life. It's only after you obey God that the work of faith unfolds.

Once Abraham submitted himself fully to God, he then actually followed the Word and put his obedience into action. God promised him that He would give him a son if he followed Him in obedience, but it took another 25 more years until Abraham begot Isaac. It's after this that God gave the fruit of faith to Abraham. Obedience should come first, not faith. It's when people first obey God and listen to His Word carefully that they receive the remission of sins. In contrast, anyone who disobeys God and challenges Him with his own thoughts and notions will be cast into hell without fail. God's work will never unfold in such a person's life.

What Kind of People Is God Most Pleased to Use?

Would God prefer to use someone who obeys His Word faithfully, or someone who is smart but very willful? God likes to use someone who obeys Him by faith. To God, it does not matter whether one is smart or gifted or not. Someone who is gifted and talented but disobedient is absolutely useless to the Kingdom of God. In contrast, those who are devoid of any special talents but are obedient are used by God as His instruments as God Himself empowers them, fills their needs, strengthens them, and blesses them. This is the way how God works.

To this very day God has taught me how to obey Him. There were many times when I wished I could do whatever I wanted to do. However, whatever God spoke to me, I still obeyed Him completely even if I did not like it. Despite my shortcomings, when I moved forward step by step in obedience, God actually worked in my life. If I had not obeyed God,

then I would be getting drunk in some tavern right now rather than preaching here.

Once people receive the remission of sins, they become divided into two groups: Those who obey God are used in His Church as His precious instruments, while those who disobey God are inevitably bound to end up in a bar fight. This is what the Bible says. The Scriptures explains just how much easier it is for God to work through the people of faith who are obedient to Him.

Therefore, I cannot emphasize enough how important it is for you to obey God. There are many things that I admonish you to do in your life. Each and every one of these things is indispensable to you. Of course, you may think that these things are trivial and doesn't really matter, but you must learn to obey God step by step from the smallest step. Without your leader in God's Church, there is no one who can teach you how to obey God.

As the Born-again Righteous, Let Us All Live in Obedience to God

Until today, you might have lived in whatever way you wanted to live. You might have done whatever you wanted to do without care. But now I, as the chief leader of the Church, have something to ask of you. Even though it may seem trivial for now, when you look at its implications down the road, it is something that you must obey without fail. If you reject even the smallest admonishment, the consequences will be grave. That's why the Church leaders make their admonishments to you step by step.

I don't want you to be just an intellectual well versed in Biblical knowledge. This will come about as a matter of course if you just abide in this Church. Don't worry about your lack of biblical knowledge. That's nothing to worry about right now. As we live out our faith together, as you obey the Word and follow it by faith, and as you listen to the Word

without missing any gatherings, I have every confidence that God will fill all your needs. But you must learn to obey the Word first. God will then surely bless you to bear much beautiful fruit. However, if you continue to disobey God, then no one else but you are responsible for the consequences. Neither God nor I can take responsibility for the consequences of your disobedience.

It is extremely important for you to listen to your church leaders. You need to realize here that although God speaks through the Bible, the Bible speaks through your church leaders and your predecessors of faith. There are those who are ahead of you in the Church. Not everyone in the Church is on the same spiritual platform. Someone who received the remission of sins a year ago is not the same as someone who received it five years ago. How many years a saint has spent in the Church is the evidence of this saint's obedience. It is the living history of one's faith. The Bible says, *"You shall rise*

before the gray headed and honor the presence of an old man, and fear your God: I am the LORD" (Leviticus 19:32). When you look at the seniors in the Church who have aged along with the maturing of their faith, they have countless experiences and stories to tell you. There is a great deal of wisdom and treasure hidden in them. They have so much wisdom accumulated over the years while living in this world as the people of faith.

To draw an analogy, let's say that we are comparing a young woman with professional training in childcare to an older one, the untrained but experienced woman to see who is better at childcare. There is no question that the older woman would do a far better job than the younger woman with formal training. Formal training is not that useful when it comes to actually taking care of a child. In contrast, because the older woman went through child-raising with her own experiences, she is able to take care of children so much better.

In a similar vein, as students at our Mission

School, you should not ignore your predecessors in the faith. You should not consider everyone else in the Church on an equal footing as yourself regardless of how long one has been a redeemed saint. When someone who just received the remission of sins a month ago ignores another saint who received it three months ago, this former one is actually ignoring all kinds of wisdom. There are so many lessons to be learned from the latter. Your predecessors of faith have so much that you have neither experienced nor tasted of yet. If you ignore them, then you are just making a fool out of yourself. You must therefore obey all your predecessors of faith in the Church no matter how far ahead spiritually they are, learn from their wisdom, and continue to move forward by faith. I can't emphasize enough just how important this is. If we know the gospel but not the life of obedience, then ultimately we will amount to nothing.

There actually is a huge difference between someone who attends the Church and listens to the Word just once a week and someone who attends

every gathering and listens to the Word at every opportunity. The students at our Mission School may seem no different from anyone else in the Church for now, but in time, there will be a huge difference. All these achievements come about by faith as one learns, obeys, and abides in what is assured.

Today, I have explained to you about the importance of obedience. The very first thing that God wants from us is obedience. The very first thing that God teaches us is also obedience. Without obedience, all learning is rendered useless. No matter what you are thinking now, you must ponder carefully on the absolute necessity to learn to obey God.

Indeed, you should never take the Word lightly or ignore and look down on the guidance of the Church. If you do this, it will become a huge obstacle to you as you try to live by trusting in God. God cannot use such people. God uses someone like the Apostle Paul. The Apostle Paul preached the gospel when God told him to do so. Wherever God told him to go and preach the gospel, he went there and

preached as commanded by God. He did everything God commanded him to do, and through him God moved the history of the whole known world during the last half of the first century.

Whom does God use? He uses the obedient. God does not use just anyone who is too willful to obey Him. How about you then? Do you really want to be used by God? Do you really want to be used as God's precious instrument? If you do, then learn to obey God, and He will surely use you for a worthy cause.

Don't try to learn anything else. Would God be unable to use you because you can't speak English or understand Hebrew? No, of course not! If you ever go abroad to preach the gospel, you can still communicate through a translator. Obedience is better than sacrifice. This is the core lesson all of us should learn well from today's Scripture reading. ☒

SERMON

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CONTENTS



God Has Given Us the Same Blessings as Abraham

< Genesis 12:1-4 >

“Now the LORD had said to Abram:

‘Get out of your country,

From your family

And from your father’s house,

To a land that I will show you.

I will make you a great nation;

I will bless you And make your name great;

And you shall be a blessing.

I will bless those who bless you,

And I will curse him who curses you;

**And in you all the families of the earth shall
be blessed.’**

**So Abram departed as the LORD had spoken to
him, and Lot went with him. And Abram was seventy-**

five years old when he departed from Haran.”

The weather has become quite chilly. It is supposed to reach freezing point by tomorrow morning. Let’s stay warm this winter. As the cold winter approaches, I keep thinking that the time for us to enter Heaven is getting that much closer. I don’t know about you, but I tend to think like this. When the season changes and winter arrives, I tend think that the time of the Lord’s promise of His eminent return is about to happen. I blame myself for thinking like this because, lets be honest, there is still a lot of work to do. It seems that the change in seasons affects my emotions. When the leaves are green, I feel like working even harder for the Lord and I feel that I must finish these things before going to the Lord. These feelings well up inside my heart. However, when the seasons change, I am happy because the seasonal changes make me think of Heaven and then I can serve God with renewed energy and heart.

There Is a Lot of Work That You and I Must Still Do

This coming Friday, we will edit the first volume of the sermon series on the Gospel of Matthew. Every sermon on the Gospel of Matthew that has been translated and proofread will be arranged into a book to be printed next week. Next up will be a book of sermons on the First Epistle of John. Publishing such books is providing spiritual bread in due time to those who have believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We will continue to provide spiritual bread in due time to people in this world. We cannot keep ourselves from spreading the gospel of the water and the Spirit when we know that it is the Truth.

Religious practitioners within Christianity believe that their sins are being remitted away incrementally by offering prayers of repentance. They say the reason for them believing in this doctrine is because the Bible says this in these two

verses: *“Forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors”* (Matthew 6:12) in the Lord’s Prayer and *“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us”* in 1 John 1:8. They also think that because they believe in Jesus, God will overlook their sin even though it exists in them. There also are some people who know that the gospel of the water and the Spirit is true but do not place their full confidence in it. They remain in a suspended bubble of not having been wholly born again. For this reason I am determined to publish a book of sermons on the First Epistle of John, and so my coworkers and I are hard at work preparing this book. In the process, I am finding it difficult to share this Word from 1 John with our readers because of many fixed perspectives, and entirely different interpretations that have been drawn from this same passage of Scripture which was taught by pastors and others who were never born again by the water and the Spirit. Interpretations from Scripture differs greatly when we apply it to a righteous person, or to

a sinner or to anyone who still is in confusion after believing in this true gospel. It is very difficult for someone like me who does not have great literary skills. But as far as the main content is concerned, it must be preached to every soul, and so I am pressing on regardless. When my books of sermons on Matthew and 1 John become available they will help people build stronger faith in God. And these books will also help those who have had contact with the gospel of the water and the Spirit through our literature ministry but do not have complete assurance, have some doubts, and also it challenges them to profess their faith to other people in this world. These sermon books will also assist our workers and servants of God to become bolder in their faith. And therefore these books will be very helpful to our ministry.

There is a lot that you and I must still do. To proclaim the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the whole world is a calling for those of us who are truly born again. Satan has slandered the gospel of the

water and the Spirit causing people not to believe. He has sowed many of his tares all over the world, and it is up to us to remove these tares and to do the work of feeding the souls of lost people with the pure and Holy Word just as it is. There is much work to do. You and I when we eat something to sustain our bodies for this ministry we should be eating wholesome foods and not junk food. It is prudent that we consume only vegetables and grains that have not been sprayed with pesticides which have been grown in good soils without pollution, and this also applies to the quality of meat and fish, so we must endeavor to feed ourselves and others with pure and wholesome foods. This is what you and I must do on this earth. I am not working alone here, but we are working together with you the workers of our Churches in Korea and with all our other fellow workers around the world. This is why I don't think that I am striving all alone in this endeavor. I know that things are hard for you just as they are for me. However, I give thanks to God for giving us this

work to do, and I really feel a sense of accomplishment in doing this work.

Those Who Have the Same Faith as Abraham's Will Be Blessed as Abraham Was

I read a Scripture passage from Genesis chapter 12 to you today. This passage as you well know is an event that deals with how God took Abraham from his home country and told him to go to a land that He showed him. And also, God told Abraham that he would be the source of all blessings, and that in him all the families of the earth would be blessed.

You and I are serving the gospel together. When we look at our footprints and the works that God has done through us, and as I work together with you and as I take a look at what God has done among our fellow workers around the world, I am convinced that the Words and promises that God spoke to Abraham are for us as well. I can see how God is faithfully

operating things. I believe this more and more as time passes. God makes us proclaim the gospel through literature ministry to the whole world, and He makes it so that we unite with one another in supporting this ministry. When I see how God has allowed both our male and female servants to do this work, I am always full of thanksgiving.

A long time ago, when I first preached a sermon in a certain meeting, I spoke on the topic of "What Kind of Faith Did Abraham Have?" I said that Abraham's faith was a faith that made him the source of all blessings. God told Abraham, "*I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed*" (Genesis 12:3) and this promise was actually fulfilled. What kind of faith did Abraham have? He had a faith that trusted in God's Word 100%. He had a faith that was led by the Word of God.

Even in this present age and time, God has given you and me the same blessings that He gave Abraham. He has given us this blessed faith and He

is fulfilling the promises of His blessings. God is also blessing those who believe in the gospel that we are preaching and He curses those who oppose us. God blesses those who bless us. And so, God has allowed us to preach this gospel to the whole world. When God looks at us whether to Abraham or anyone of us, we are all the same in His sight. And from a human standpoint, there probably is nothing for us to boast about. However, God has specially chosen those of us who have nothing to boast about in the flesh to be God's people. This Abraham was the direct descendant of Noah and Shem, and they were people who knew, believed in and followed God. Abraham came from these ancestors and was the son of Terah. Abraham in turn passed down the faith of his ancestor Noah and Shem. And so because of this, God blessed the whole world through Abraham. God wanted to invite many to Heaven so He gave blessings and promises, and He entrusted you and me with the work that brings such blessing to people.

There is truly a lot that you and I can be

thankful to God for. Is there anybody born into this world who has received as much blessings from God as we have? How many people do you think there are in this world who were called by God to do His righteous work, have been guaranteed against any danger or harm on this earth; guaranteed Heaven by Him and are entrusted with this worthwhile work that makes many people return to the path of righteousness. God meets with us, allows us to do His righteous works and through everything we do He provides salvation to lost souls through us. When we think of these spiritual things, we are truly thankful. We are truly thankful for the fact that God has given us these infinite blessings, and because of that, we grow more loyal to Him. There is nothing that we can complain to God about. We cannot help but pray without ceasing and give thanks to God in all things.

Since being born on this earth, whether I desired it or not, I came into contact with diverse religions including Confucianism and Buddhism. And then

later I started to believe in Christianity and finally discovered the Truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit in God's Word. And since then I have continued to serve and proclaim this Truth of salvation. The Lord delivered me from the religions of this world. The Lord also saved me from the many pseudo-evangelicals and allowed me to serve God's true Gospel of the water and the Spirit. God saves many people in this world through us, and He truly blesses everything that we desire to do. God also has given us many fellow workers. When I see these fellow workers and many saints, I find myself praising God. When I think of how God has given me an enormously large family in faith, my heart glows with joy. There is no one as rich as me. And, there is nobody as rich as all of you also.

God said that those who hunger and thirst for righteousness would be filled; and I really desired to do a righteous work. And now I am able to do this righteous work to the extent that my heart desires. It has come to the point where I can't do more because

I get worn out. I am so thankful that I am able to do so much righteous work. Even if you are to lose a lot of things after meeting the Lord, you still will be thankful to God. This is because in reality we have gained so much more than what we have lost. Is this true or not? It's true. We have gained much more than what we have lost.

Where Are We Going after Being Called by God?

God has allowed us to believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and has allowed us to go to Heaven. As a new dawn surely starts after the darkness is over, after we have led our lives faithfully on this earth we will go to Heaven. Isn't this a great Truth? We have somewhere to go to. And we who are following the Lord after having met the gospel of the water and the Spirit, thanks to Him, have gained a lot more things than we have lost. Is everything we

now have not from God? Your life and mine, and your possessions and mine are all God's. We do not have any personal wealth or possessions.

Dear fellow believers, do you by chance think that I might have some possessions of my own? I don't have any personal possessions. Spiritually, I am just a steward. There is nothing that I own other than my faith. I am a steward that is satisfied with three meals a day and a place to sleep with a roof over my head. I don't feel as if a certain building needs to be in my name or a certain thing needs to be mine.

There was a time when we were leasing a church building for the Busan Church. A missionary working in Russia took part in our ministry, and because of him, instead of living in the sprawling area of Busan; we leased a building on the outskirts of this city. Because that missionary Kim had a house near this building, we leased it so that he would be able to come to church more conveniently. The Church of God takes great care of new saints. But sadly, all this man ever did was to lie to us and then

he ran away. He would say things that were not beneficial to God's work at all and he would keep lying, and so I rebuked him very strongly. I said to him, "The Church helped you out when you were in despair and preached the gospel to you, so is it not your spiritual father? Then shouldn't you be led by the Church and work together with it with one spirit in unity?" I exhorted him with good words, but I also strongly rebuked him because I knew that he was scheming to con and trick us in his heart. Then all of a sudden, he informed us that he received a call from Russia and that he would no longer be able to work together with us.

You need to know what type of person he really was. For example, the gas gauge showed us that there was no gas in his rickety car. But he ignored this and just kept on driving. At last the engine of the car stalled out on an uphill road, and he had the audacity to ask us to push the car to the gas station. Would it not be possible that an accident is just waiting to happen? That incident describes who this person was like.

Those missionary sisters in Russia, who had been working with him for years, were the same type of people. We came to know them through this false missionary, but despite this, the Church of God was so good to them. Although they did not hold down jobs, we provided for them with about the same amount of money as if they were working with jobs in order that they could live by only doing gospel work. But these sisters never sent us a monthly report on their missionary activities. We stipulated clearly, “Please make a regular report on your missionary activities every month. This is your basic duty. But they were not providing these reports?” No matter how much we asked them over the phone they would not oblige. They were excellent in making requests, but when asked to reciprocate by sending in their monthly missionary activity reports, they failed to do this. They would beg, “Please buy us a computer, please lease a warehouse for the storage of the books and please get us a church building.” Because there were not many believers in their meeting, it would

have been good enough to have worship services in just one of the large rooms of one of the members’ home. But they insisted on getting a large building. We could see that they could store several thousand of books in one of their houses with ease, but instead they insisted that they must have a large warehouse. Although they were not working, they wanted things that would make them look good. And so I decided to restrain them a little bit, but still supported them. Do you know what happened then? They soon quit our ministry after taking our money.

I gave them money for the translation and told them to translate our first book into Russian. They handed in a Russian translation of our first book, but it was a total disaster. They brought the translated material with them when they came to Korea to participate in our Discipleship Training Camp, and a few of our staff workers who were in charge of the literature got together for a final check. They checked page by page, and discovered that two-thirds were missing. But when approached they insisted that they

had done a good job from their standpoint. And so, I told them that I could help them in doing God's work, but it was not right for them to say that they had finished it when they really had not. I told them that this project was not ours but was God's work; therefore it needed to be finished correctly and faithfully. We proofread it ourselves and there was no way that what they gave us could ever be published as a book. So we decided, "We are going to forget the money that was paid, and would throw that unfaithful translation away and do this whole translation again. We will not have it done in Russia anymore, but we will find someone in Korea and have them translate it. And so, we redid it just as we planned.

But when we went to see them off, an older co-worker said that she was a bit disappointed by what had happened. But can we truthfully say that it's okay or that they did a good job when two-thirds of the translation was not done? I can overlook something when someone does something wrong

because of their lack of ability. But this was God's work after all, so I could not overlook their unfaithfulness. We did not ask for the money back and we did not treat them badly?

Now we have a new coworker in Russia. He is not able to do a lot of work, but he unites with us with his whole heart and he is obedient. He does a good job. This is a real worker and a good worker. When asked to make a report, he does so and he sends all the receipts to us along with what kind of work he did. A born again person is like that. However, any non-born again people, that is, anyone who does not believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit asks only for money when they are asked to do something for the Lord. But, to the man or woman who is truly born again, God's work comes first. And, after that, if needed, money can be either received or paid.

The reason I am mentioning this case is because I want you to know that those of us who are working together are truly greatly blessed as the Lord God

said that He blessed those who blessed Abraham and cursed those who cursed him. We are now doing world missions through our literature ministry. That is why you and I are pulling our strengths and resources together and co-operating to concentrate on our literature ministry. My message today is for those of us who are doing this work. We are people who have truly been blessed with the same blessings that Abraham had received. As God blessed Abraham and gave him all the promises, and through him God accomplished His work; today God is continuing to do His work through you and me. God has called you and me to do His work, and He continues to do His work through us.

In order to do the work of proclaiming the gospel to the whole world, all of us, the male and female saints of God, must be united together in order to concentrate on this work. When we translate our books into each language of the world and place them on our homepage, the whole world will have access to it. When the sermon books on the Gospel of

Matthew and the First Epistle of John are published, those who are confused about their faith will gain a clearer and sturdier faith. For example, when the non-born again are faced with the passage in 1 John that says, *“If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us” (1 John 1:10)*, they are prone to think that they themselves are not without sin because they continue to commit sins. But they can now have the correct interpretation of this passage through our new publication.

I will apply the same notion to the coming publication on the Gospel of Matthew. The Lord’s Prayer in Matthew teaches us about our proper posture and faith when we offer prayers to God. In publishing this book, I am intending to give our readers the correct interpretation and understanding on Scripture passage from Mathew such as, *“Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.”* Through our literature, people around the world can come to understand many things that they are not sure about and so this is a very good thing. And we feel good

about publishing these books. We feel good and worthwhile because of these spiritual benefits. We do not of course take pride in having published many books. Our hearts are rather joyful when thinking of the work that will be done through these books that are being published. When I write a book, I try to make an effort so that its content and message offer great comfort to some and to others exhibit clarity in understanding the Truth. Although it can be rough around the edges, my heart is like this when I prepare any sermon book. This is very important, that is why I make this effort.

When we preach the Truth to people through our literature, they are set free by the Truth, give thanks to God, are called like Abraham was, become the source of blessings as Abraham was and do the work of God as Abraham did. It is very worthwhile and meaningful to have many people return to God. We are involved in doing the work of returning all of mankind back to God and we are to shine forth like the sun before others. The blessings that God poured

out on Abraham have been bestowed upon you and me as well. You and I are continuing to do the work that Abraham did. Abraham believed in God's Word and obeyed it. Because of that, God was pleased by what he did and His will was fulfilled. You and I are doing the very same thing. We are indeed following in Abraham's footsteps.

Although our bodies are a bit tired, our hearts are still full of joy. I am happy and so are you. Our flesh may be exhausted in serving the gospel, but spiritually we are happy people. Isn't this true? Our bodies may get tired. But, if we were to use our physical bodies for something else, would we feel this good inside? We feel good inside for we are doing this meaningful work. Whether we eat or drink, we are doing everything for the glory of God and so we feel this worth or value in our hearts. Whatever we do, it is to deliver others from sin, so we have joy in our lives. You and I are doing the work of giving life to others. This is why our bodies are tired, but despite this we are full of joy. Our

bodies keep asking to do what the flesh desires, but since we cannot do this, our bodies get worn out. Nevertheless, we continually give thanks in sincerity to God in our spirits.

Because of the seasonal changes, I have this feeling that God's Kingdom is closer now than we think. I feel that we are closer to the time when we will appear before God. I am not saying that we will pass away and go to be with the Lord soon, but I am simply saying that because of the change in seasons I am reminded of how we will be going to God when we are done with our tasks here on earth. These thoughts fill my mind. And so, although it is difficult and hard, I put together a sermon book on the First Epistle of John, had it translated, edited and published. When we distribute our books to people, those who already know the gospel will grow in the faith, and even among those who were righteous, there were a lot that were seized by Satan and were shaken, but they will be freed from his oppression. I am so happy for that, and spiritually I am singing for

joy. Are you also pleased with all of this?

Let's say I was doing something worthless instead of this. How difficult would it be for all of you if I only thought of building a large chapel or thought of making a lot of money by running a business? Since you heard this gospel, you would not be able to go anywhere else or to another church. You would be in a dilemma if I am intending to achieve some fleshly goals. But dear fellow believers, the work that we are doing right now is good for both you and me. I personally don't do anything that is not worthwhile. I don't do any type of work for my personal benefit. I am going to serve the gospel until I breathe my last breath, and when the Lord calls me home, I will go before Him immediately. I have no longings or ties to this earth. I know that it is the same with you. Do you think it's a great deal that you are younger than I am? You and I are almost in a similar situation. The reason is that the Lord's return is imminent. And that's why I'm not envious of you at all.

Whatever situation I am in, all I think about is how to serve the gospel of the water and the Spirit more effectively. Everyday all that I think about is our literature ministry, electronic books and paper books, the preaching of the gospel, our domestic and overseas co-workers and the fund raising work. That's the same for you too, right? Whatever I do, I'm going to do something that is profitable or advantageous for the proclamation of the gospel of the water and the Spirit until the day I die.

You and I are the light of the world. You and I, as God's living grain of wheat, must be helpful to others, must assist people to get to Heaven and we must edify others rather than ourselves. God said that unless a grain of wheat falls to ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain. God has commanded you and me to be the light of this world, and He has made us to be His grain of wheat for the gospel. I give thanks to God for this. You and I are such people of God. And so we are a blessed people.

The reason why Abraham appears in the Bible and is remembered until now is because he truly trusted in and obeyed God's Word and thus became the forefather of faith. For people who come after him, the Bible tells them to be blessed as Abraham was by believing in the Word of God just as it is. And, we have by faith become recipients of such blessings. I have shared with you from God's Word on how He has blessed us spiritually. I thank God for this. ☒

SERMON

6



Get Out of Your Country From Your Family and From Your Father's House

< Genesis 12:1-4 >

**“Now the LORD had said to Abram:
‘Get out of your country,
From your family
And from your father’s house,
To a land that I will show you.
I will make you a great nation;
I will bless you
And make your name great;
And you shall be a blessing.
I will bless those who bless you,
And I will curse him who curses you;
And in you all the families of the earth shall
be blessed.’
So Abram departed as the LORD had spoken**

to him, and Lot went with him. And Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.”

Here, there, and everywhere people are receiving the remission of their sins by hearing the gospel that we are preaching. And so, I feel that those of us who are in the Church should have proper hearts before God. That's why recently I have been preaching on our hearts as often as I can.

God has given and blessed us with so many things. We were lacking in so many things, so we prayed to the Lord and He has met our needs. When we asked for material things He gave us material things, and when we prayed for souls He brought souls into our midst. In this way, God has filled our hearts and our needs. And so, I have been thinking about what we need to be asking for and seeking from God as we live each day. And, since God has filled us with material things in order for our hearts

to be blessed by Him and for our precious faith to be passed down to our descendants, we must be the people who proclaim the blessings of God.

The Lineage of True Faith

Beginning in Genesis 11:10 we can find a list of Shem's descendants. Noah's three sons were Shem, Ham and Japheth, and out of these three, only Shem received the most blessings from God. We can say this because through the descendants of Shem the lineage of faith continued on and eventually Jesus Christ was born through this lineage.

"This is the genealogy of Shem: Shem was one hundred years old, and begot Arphaxad two years after the flood. After he begot Arphaxad, Shem lived five hundred years, and begot sons and daughters. Arphaxad lived thirty-five years, and begot Salah. After he begot Salah, Arphaxad lived four hundred and three years, and begot sons and daughters. Salah

lived thirty years, and begot Eber. After he begot Eber, Salah lived four hundred and three years, and begot sons and daughters.

Eber lived thirty-four years, and begot Peleg. After he begot Peleg, Eber lived four hundred and thirty years, and begot sons and daughters.

Peleg lived thirty years, and begot Reu. After he begot Reu, Peleg lived two hundred and nine years, and begot sons and daughters.

Reu lived thirty-two years, and begot Serug. After he begot Serug, Reu lived two hundred and seven years, and begot sons and daughters.

Serug lived thirty years, and begot Nahor. After he begot Nahor, Serug lived two hundred years, and begot sons and daughters.

Nahor lived twenty-nine years, and begot Terah. After he begot Terah, Nahor lived one hundred and nineteen years, and begot sons and daughters.

Now Terah lived seventy years, and begot Abram, Nahor, and Haran" (Gen. 11:10-26).

Terah was the father of Abraham. And Terah

was born from the lineage of Shem. Shem was the son of Noah, and the lineage of Abraham begins from Noah. Terah had his children and lived in Haran. He left Ur of the Chaldeans and lived in Haran for seventy years before he died. After Terah died, God called Abraham and told him, *“Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house to a land that I will show you.”* According to tradition, Terah was a merchant who made and sold idols. And that is why the first thing God did was to call Abraham and tell him to leave his country his family and his father's house which served these idols. And Abraham obeyed God as He commanded him and went to the land that He had instructed him to go to.

After Believing in the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit We Also Must Leave Our Country Our Family and Our Father's House

God could not have Abraham live in his father's land because Abraham was to be the source of all blessings, and God planned to establish the nation of Israel and send Jesus through that nation. This is also the first thing that the Lord says to all His born again saints. He tells us to leave our country, our family and our father's house. After we become truly born again, the first thing that God tells us is to leave our country, our family and our father's house. Sun Myung Moon, the Korean founder and leader of the world-wide Unification Church, has made many religious communities here and there and coerced and manipulated his followers to live there. Did God create such a community and would He tell us to leave our families to live there? No, not at all! God is telling us to depart from the mindset that we had

before we were born again, from the mindset of following after the flesh and simply desiring to prosper in the flesh by being soaked in the ways of the world. Before we were born again, we only looked after our own fleshly desires. But how have we changed since we have been born again by the gospel of the water and the Spirit. After our Lord called us, the first thing that He told us to do was to depart from our former ways of life that we used to follow, which was after the flesh. Ephesians 4:22 tells us to “put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts.” God tells us what we should not do after we have been born again. He tells us, “Don’t stay in your former conduct anymore and make sure you do this. Enter into the true Church, listen to the Word, proclaim the true gospel, attend Bible meetings and go to the land that I command you to go.” He leads us into and onto a new path that we have never been on before. After you are born again, you will soon see how God has been instructing you

into a new direction away from your previous old mindsets and habits.

Before we were born again, all that we thought about was how our flesh could be successful and prosper. Let me tell you of my situation again, even though you have heard this many times. The first thing that I thought of after being born again was “how I could serve this gospel on earth while having a comfortable life.” My purpose was to serve the gospel of course, but more than that I desired to have a stable lifestyle. And so, my mind was full of mixed thoughts of how I could serve the Lord on this earth in a way that was comfortable for my flesh. And so, in order to gain some stability in life, I pursued that first. However, the Lord told me to get rid of that mindset. This was because if I continued on in that state of my previous old thoughts and mindset, I could not enter into the new world that the Lord would lead me into and I could neither receive the new blessings from the Lord. And so, the Lord told me to cast away my old thoughts and to enter into the

new world that He was instructing me to enter into.

Terah also begot Nahor and Haran along with Abraham, but God chose Abraham out of these three brothers and had him leave his home country and his father's house. This was to give Abraham great blessings and to make him the ancestor and founder of one nation. Now, Abraham had to embrace the Lord who had blotted out all his sins, instead of living according to his own desires as he did while living in his father's house. This is what the Lord desired. Instead of being intent on what the flesh desired as to its eating to survive and thinking only about the material things of this world, he was to depart from this materialistic mindset and was to embrace Jesus Christ, His Word and the gospel wholly by which Jesus Christ took the sins of the world away. This was not only applicable to Abraham, but all of us who are born again by the gospel of the water and the Spirit should have this same heart in us. The Lord is saying that although we cannot live this life without material things, we

should not pour out our heart only towards material things but should rather follow in the footsteps of our Lord. Dear fellow believers, do you believe this? The Lord, who loves us so much, tells us, "Get out of your country from your family and from your father's house, and depart from your fleshly desires," so that we may live out our faith by proclaiming to others the gospel Truth which removed the sins of the world from within our hearts. So now, we must have this gospel Truth within our hearts and press on in our spiritual journey.

When Will the True Faith Arise in Our Hearts?

God said that Abraham would be the source of all blessings. The source of all blessings is Jesus Christ. However, on the other hand, God told Abraham that he would become the source of all blessings. God told Abraham to become the source of

all blessings and He promised that, "I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you." Fundamentally, Jesus Christ is the source of all blessings, but as Abraham also became a source of all blessings, so you and I can be another source of all blessings. How can we become a source of all blessings?

If we wish to become the source of all blessings, we must also have Jesus Christ in our hearts. We should not seek after material prosperity or for physical things of this fleshly world in our hearts, but when we have Jesus Christ in our hearts we can be the source of all blessings. When we embrace Jesus Christ in our hearts people will return to the proper true path by receiving the remission of their sins. When we have a proper heart like this, we can see others receive the remission of sins. Just like the Scripture that says, "*Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain*" (John 12:24), when we sacrifice ourselves,

and embrace the Word of Truth and the gospel of Jesus Christ which removed the sins of the world within our hearts then Jesus Christ will be proclaimed to many people through us. Multitudes of people will then receive the remission of sins through us. We will be a channel of blessing so that many people will receive the blessing of having their sins remitted before God.

But what will happen if the hearts of those who are born again go wrong? What if the hearts of believers are filled with materialism instead? When the born-again saints embrace wrong thoughts in their hearts the effect is truly great. As the Bible explains, "*A little leaven leavens the whole lump*" (Galatians 5:9), so will the multitudes of people they are preaching to fall into destruction when we the born-again simply seek after fleshly desires. Not only will we not be the source of all blessings, but a distorted gospel will be spread through us. When we embrace in our hearts only the material greed that can be attained from this visible world and we regard this

world as being more precious than God, then we will be proclaiming a false gospel without us even knowing it.

A long time ago, there were a lot of forefathers in the faith. Besides Abraham, Noah and the other men of faith who appeared in the Bible, there were many people of faith, but we can see that the true faith in their hearts was cut off in their generation. Why did this happen? This was because they were embracing something other than the Word of God that their spiritual teachers had taught them. They did not embrace Jesus Christ in their hearts, but instead they embraced the things of the flesh and the world. They lived their lives with the purpose of obtaining the things of this world and so they were eventually cut off from the path of faith.

Then how can we have a heart that becomes the source of all blessings? If we cast away the things of the flesh from our hearts and embrace the Word of our Lord in our hearts, then we can become the source of all blessings. A heart that has become the

source of all blessings is a heart that embraces the Word of Jesus Christ which has blotted out all our sins. Dear fellow believers, I am sure that you have received the remission of your sins. Do you then often ruminate on the fact that Jesus Christ has blotted out all of your sins? Do you live within that beautiful spiritual world ruminating on and embracing the grace of the gospel? Or, do the things of this world or the things of the flesh often enter your heart, occupying your heart and thoughts instead of the gospel of Truth, and do you follow after such things? Do worldly fame, the pleasures, and the riches of this world have ownership over your heart? After you have received the remission of sins, the temptations of the flesh draw nearer to you. And the moment you fall into such temptations, you will fall away from the source of all blessings.

In the Book of Haggai in the Old Testament, our Lord says, "*The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine*" (*Haggai 2:8*). This is because all of creation under Heaven is the Lord's. And so, if we were to need

anything, our Lord would give us everything that is on this earth. Among the people of faith who embraced Jesus Christ, is there anyone who eked out a scanty livelihood? No. Those who embraced Jesus Christ in their hearts were faithful and diligent, and God blessed the work that they did. And so there was no way that they could live in poverty. However, those who did not embrace Jesus Christ in their hearts, but rather distanced themselves from Him and embraced the world in their hearts experienced miserable endings to their lives. We can find many instances of these terrible endings in the Bible wherever we look.

For example when looking at Abraham's nephew Lot we see this tragedy. Because of his many possessions he could no longer live together with Abraham, and so Lot left Abraham and headed for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah. The reason was that when he lifted his eyes and saw all the luscious green plains of the land below, it looked plentiful and beautiful as the Garden of Eden. But he came to

complete ruin later on. He lost everything that he owned and barely saved his own life. And his wife, by her looking back because of her longing for Sodom and Gomorrah, became a pillar of salt on the spot. This all happened because of the greed of the flesh.

On the other hand, Abraham followed faithfully after the Word of the Lord God. The result of this was that he received all of God's blessings, was called a friend of God and became the source of all blessings to his descendants. If we have the Word of Truth that Jesus Christ blotted out all our sins in our hearts as Abraham did, then our hearts will be lead into an unfathomably beautiful world and we will receive the blessings that comes from the Lord. This is because the Lord abides in our hearts, speaks to us and leads our hearts. Therefore, we can keep watch over everything that our flesh does and receive the grace of God.

What Must Prosper First?

Dear beloved saints, what must prosper first in our lives? It is written, *“Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers”* (3 John 1:2). Should the faith within our hearts be put in order, or must our flesh be doing well? When one has an upright heart before God, embraces the gospel of Jesus Christ in his heart, cherishes the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and always remembers in his heart the fact that the Lord has blotted out all his sins, then this person is someone with a heart of beautiful faith. We do not become a person of faith because of something that we do or have accomplished, but by embracing in our hearts the truth that Jesus Christ blotted out all our sins; then we will become the source of all blessings thanks to our Lord. And so the Lord said that if we embrace Jesus Christ, then He will glorify us (Proverbs 4:8). And so, the hearts of the born again must prosper first. If the hearts of the saints go astray,

they will indeed become like Lot.

How difficult must it have been for Abraham to get out of his country from his family and from his father's house after living there for so long? But by choosing the difficult path of obedience towards God, Abraham became the father of faith and became the source of all blessings. And so, we too must not follow after the things that benefit only our flesh but must follow the way where our hearts prosper.

Dear fellow believers, haven't you received the remission of all your sins yet? Jesus Christ has removed all your sins once and for all by being baptized by John the Baptist. Embrace Jesus Christ in your hearts! It is good and beneficial for our hearts to run and play in His beautiful spiritual world. Instead of hearts running and playing in the physical world; it is good for our hearts to “run and play” within the realm of this gospel Truth instead. And our souls prosper when we strive with all our might to proclaim this beautiful gospel that the Lord blotted out the sins of the world to people who do not know this gospel

of Truth. When our hearts abide in this Truth, and when we embrace God's Word in our hearts, and also when we embrace the Lord in our hearts, we will become a source of all blessings. What God requires of us first and foremost, as He did to Abraham, is for us to get out of our country from our family and from our father's houses. He told us to cast away our fleshly thoughts and to press on towards what is beneficial for our hearts. Therefore, we Christians must cast away the thoughts of the flesh, this is so important. We must then embrace Christ in our souls and must first do what is good for our souls, and then press on towards it. Our Lord is speaking to us regarding these things.

Dear beloved saints, do you earnestly desire to prosper in your souls? Or do you wish for your flesh to prosper even though your souls are perishing? Do you think you've made it if your flesh is brightly adorned and you have amassed honor and wealth beyond your wildest dreams, even if your heart is like a sewer pit and there is a rotten smell coming

from it? Or do you desire to first of all to have a beautiful heart within the realm of God and also prosper in the earthly realm thanks to God? In regards to this, the Apostle John said, "*I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers*" (3 John 1:2). The prosperity of one's soul is top priority before one prospers in all things. What the Apostle John valued above all things was for our hearts to be right before God, to embrace the truth of Jesus Christ and to follow Him. Then, the other areas in our lives will prosper as well. Dear fellow believers, you must prioritize things in your hearts. We must clearly know and decide what must come first and what must be taken care of first.

Abraham entered the land of Canaan as God had commanded him. But when a famine came, without asking God first, he decided on own accord to go to the land of Egypt. And because he was afraid that the people of Egypt would harass him because of the beauty of his wife Sarah, he lied by saying his wife was his sister. In the land of Egypt, the king of Egypt

and his advisors saw Abraham's wife and were struck with her beauty. They asked who she was and when Abraham replied that she was his sister, Pharaoh's servants took Sarah to Pharaoh. But God did not allow the king of Egypt to lay his hands on her at all. Let's take a look at Genesis 12:17: "*But the LORD plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because Sarai Abram's wife.*" After Sarah entered the court, great plagues struck the household of the king of Egypt. The startled king upon finding out that Sarah was the wife of Abraham sent him away from the court, saying "What is this you have done to me? Take her and go your way." And, the king did not send him away empty handed but also gave him sufficient amount of possessions when he sent Abraham away. Clearly, Abraham had done something wrong, but instead he became a rich person because of his lie. Abraham is probably the only person who "sold" his wife but became rich because of that shameful act. Who else on this earth made a fortune by selling his own wife? Only

Abraham and Isaac did. Like father like son—Isaac did the very same thing later on as well.

The Bible often refers to the church as a wife. And so, Abraham lying that his wife was his sister and receiving wealth implies that a born again saint hiding the fact that he or she is attending God's Church because of the fear of persecution and because of the ulterior motive to gain profit from the world. However, we the born again saints must know that we have actually gained many things because of the Church and that our lives can be protected by it also. Some of us who desire to do well spiritually may sometimes find that things turn out bad in the flesh because of their attending God's Church. Some of them may say that this Church is not their church when they hear others say our Church is a heretical one. Some may say that the Word of God preached in this Church is correct, but that it seems to be somewhat heretical and so they do not continue to attend it anymore. But, you must know that whoever has truly received the remission of sins gains many

things and is protected in this Church of God.

Dear beloved saints, first of all, our hearts must prosper before God. Your hearts and my heart must be doing well before God. If we prosper in our flesh but not in our hearts, then everything is wrong. So, the very first thing that we must sincerely consider after becoming born again is to have a proper heart before God. Our hearts must spiritually draw nearer to God, our hearts must be thankful to Jesus Christ for blotting out all our sins and we must work hard to spread the gospel always abiding within this beautiful spiritual world. And when we are praying for these spiritual desires and press forward by embracing and keeping in our hearts this Word of Truth of Jesus Christ which has blotted out all our sins, our souls will prosper and God will bless our hearts.

Dear beloved saints, if there is one most important thing that I want to request of you, it is this: You must keep watch over your hearts. I am saying that you must embrace and keep in your hearts the fact that Jesus Christ has blotted out all your sins.

And, wherever you go, ponder and ruminate on the Truth of how Jesus Christ blotted out all your sins, be thankful of and share this gospel with other people around you. To who and how you are to preach this will be revealed by the Holy Spirit who is in your hearts. This is what the Holy Spirit does. And so, we must not strive to do other things. After being born again, the rest of our lives are a gift or a bonus. Just as when we buy something there is something extra given as a promotion, the life that we live after being born again is "a bonus," so to speak.

While living on this earth, we do not have to worry about what to eat or drink. God told us not to worry about such things and that He would provide for such things (Matthew 6:31-33). Even the grass on the pathways or the sparrows in the sky, God takes care of. How much more will God take care of those of us who are truly born again in the Lord? In the past, we were filled with thoughts of eating and drinking, but now we have embraced the gospel in our hearts and we are now striving to do the work of

proclaiming the gospel. And, whatever things we do on this earth, we must press on by embracing Jesus Christ in our hearts. When we do this, God will be involved in all of our affairs and He will give us His grace in our lives. We must know and must believe the fact that God is concerned with and gives His grace in even the slightest and minutest of things in our lives that we are not even aware of. When our hearts are set upright and when our hearts run pressing on towards the gospel, the Lord will then bless all of our ways and He will protect us. However, if our hearts are set wrongly and we follow the world and its fame and wealth instead, how then can Jesus Christ assist our lives and how can He pour out His love upon us? When God looks upon us and sees that we have embraced Jesus Christ in our hearts 100%, and that we are pressing on for the sake of the gospel, then He will bless us in all things. This is because He has definitely promised that He would do this. I ask that you believe this.

Dear beloved saints, first of all, our hearts must

prosper before God. After receiving the remission of sins, the first thing that we must do and the thing that we must give attention to is this. Concerning our hearts' prosperity, if we pray to God to help us in other areas, then things work out wonderfully. This is because God brings everything to pass. However, if our hearts are set wrong, everything will fail. God is speaking to us through Abraham in order to awaken us to this fact. Such a profound intention of the Lord is contained in this Scripture passage, "*Get out of your country from your family and from your father's house.*"

Abraham's father is said to be a person who made idols out of stone or wood and sold them. God clearly said not to serve idols, but Terah made and served idols and tried to obtain material wealth through them instead. To stay in such a land of idolatry would not profit Abraham in anyway. God wanted to bless Abraham and so He commanded him to leave his father's house. If our hearts are filled with just material desires, then we cannot learn the

spiritual world of God and the world of blessing within His gospel. That's why the Lord also tells those of us the born again to get out of our country from our family and from our father's house. God is not telling us to physically leave the house that we have lived in and to move somewhere far away, but He is telling us to cast away our previous hearts of having fleshly desires for the world and for its material goods. We are of course presently living in this material world, that is, within a physical realm. But, we must embrace God in our hearts and must follow after Him in fellowship with Him in it. Only in this way will we can be led to the new world that the Lord provides and we can wholly receive the grace that God gives.

God Gives Blessings to Those Who's Hearts Are Proper before Him

We are living in this world, but we must not

follow after material things only. Why did God command Abraham, "Get out of your country from your family and from your father's house to a land that I will show you?" This was to bless Abraham as He said,

*"I will make you a great nation;
I will bless you
And make your name great;
And you shall be a blessing."*

But, this does not apply to Abraham alone. Whoever has been born again through the gospel of the water and the Spirit by accepting God's Word with faith also will take ownership of these blessings. The person who embraces Jesus Christ in his or her heart and presses forward like this by faith will be known across the whole wide world. His or her name will be well known; they will be rich and will be the source of all blessings. Also, anyone who happens to meet them will be blessed. When you depart from the things of the flesh, embrace Jesus Christ who blotted out all your sins, give thanks in the gospel and

proclaim the gospel with incessant prayers, then the Lord will give you the same blessings that He had given to Abraham.

There are many in this world who are openly saying that our Church is proper and good. We did not do anything on purpose; we have just been preaching the gospel and embracing the Lord in our hearts, but the Lord has made our Church great. Not just anyone can have their name become well known. This is only possible for those who have embraced the Lord in their hearts 100%. These types of people will be known as “a perfect and just person in this generation” just like Noah was (Genesis 6:9). Our Lord has allowed us to be great and to be the source of all blessings. In this way, when we embrace the fact that Jesus Christ has blotted out all our sins and draw near to the Lord by believing in this fact and when we proclaim this gospel, many people will receive blessings through us. And we will be the source of all blessings as Abraham was.

Therefore, our hearts must prosper first. We

must always embrace Jesus Christ who blotted out all our sins from our hearts. We must strive to preach this gospel which saved us and pray for this gospel. This is the way our heart can prosper and the way to receive blessings from God. It is the way we can receive all the blessings that Abraham received as well. I ask that you come to know this truth and seize it as your own by faith and live out your whole life as Abraham did. I hope and pray that the blessings that were given to Abraham be also poured out upon you as well! ☒

SERMON

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God and Abraham

< Genesis 12:1-4 >

“Now the LORD had said to Abram:

‘Get out of your country,

From your family

And from your father’s house,

To a land that I will show you.

I will make you a great nation;

I will bless you

And make your name great;

And you shall be a blessing.

I will bless those who bless you,

And I will curse him who curses you;

And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’

So Abram departed as the LORD had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. And Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.”

Warm greetings to you all. Since the summer discipleship training camp, we have all labored very hard for the last half of this year to serve and preach the gospel faithfully, even though we have also been busy taking care of our families, studying hard, or holding down a job. Take a look outside. It’s been snowing heavily since yesterday. As everything here is covered in snow, I have every confidence that thanks to our diligent efforts the gospel will also be preached widely to cover the entire world. I see that all of you gathered here today have not changed much from the last summer discipleship camp, and I am very thankful for your unchanging dedication. The very fact that we can once again see familiar faces here is in itself a wonderful blessing of God.

The Way to Follow the Most Blessed Word

The Lord God called Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldeans and told him to leave his country. God

said to him, “I will make your name great, and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you. In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” Upon hearing this, Abraham obeyed the Word of the Lord, and Lot went with him also. Abraham was 75 years old when he left Haran. Yet despite his old age he still followed the Word of God. God the Father said to Abraham that every nation would be blessed because of him. The Scripture says that Abraham obeyed this Word of the Lord, and God gave him all the blessings as He had promised.

I believe that just as the Lord God had blessed Abraham, He will also give us all His blessings. It’s not just to Abraham that God gave such blessings, but He has also given us these same blessings of faith. And He blesses those who bless us and curses those who curse us. When our God said to Abraham, “And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed,” He was saying that each and every tribe in this world would be blessed through those of us who

have been saved by God and become His children. The Bible says that “*Abraham departed as the LORD had spoken to him,*” and this short passage shows us that Abraham obeyed the Word of God, and it is such a blessing to us, and it shows us the right way clearly.

It’s the right path and a blessing for you and me alike to follow the Word of the Lord God in our lives of faith. However, even as we obey the Word of God faithfully, sometimes we are deceived unwittingly, so we fall into temptation and doubts, wondering if we really have to follow the Word of God and thinking that it’s okay for us to do whatever we want to do. Our Lord said, “*When desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death*” (*James 1:15*). This means that there are times when we are led by our own desires into thinking that we can do whatever we want to do rather than following the Word of God, lead our lives like this, and allow ourselves to be led by our own greed and be unable to obey the Word of God. But, just as Abraham followed the Word of God, so must

we also follow the Word of God with an unshakable conviction rather than being led by our own desires of the flesh, realizing clearly that this is the way for us to be blessed.

For the saved, there is no life that's more blessed than the life that's led according to the Word of the Lord God as Abraham had. There is no one in this world that is living a more blessed life than those of us following the Word of the Lord God. Those who live a blessed life and walk on the path of the immovable Truth are those who believe in and serve the gospel of the water and the Spirit in their lives. All of us ought to realize what a great blessing it is to follow the Word of the Lord God in our lives. When we realize just how assured and blessed this path is, the Holy Spirit dwelling in us will be pleased and joyous with us.

From time to time we fall into our own thoughts, and we often see leaven entering our hearts. The words floating around us, whether meaningful or meaningless, don't just disappear without having any

effect. These leavened words can sometimes shake our hearts from the very foundation. Some words may appear to be true and Biblically sound. There are surprisingly many claims that resemble the truth so much that they can confuse us. So, in some ways, it may seem as though those who believe in and follow God while adding some man-made doctrines or human thoughts to their faith are better than those who follow the Word of the Lord God completely and wholeheartedly. Like this, we are constantly bombarded with deceitful words, sometimes shaking our hearts and even undermining our faith in the worst case scenario. However, no matter what we hear, what is going on in this world, what our thoughts are, and what our desires and feelings are, we must never forget that the will of God and His written Word are what's most important to us. This written Word of God is our absolute first priority above all and any circumstance.

Although we are prone to change often like a reed shaken by the wind, the Word of God is never-

changing. As human beings, we are sometimes seized by our own greed or held captive by our own flawed thoughts or mistaken purposes. In contrast, the Word of the Lord God is the same yesterday and today, always holding the will of the Lord and speaking to us through the written Scriptures. Therefore, no matter what happens to us and how the world changes, the Word of the Lord God never changes. The Word of the Lord God speaks the Truth and nothing but the Truth to us, from the very beginning to the end. It is therefore absolutely imperative for all of us to have this desire to follow the Word of the Lord God in our lives of faith like Abraham; actually to obey the Word of God, and realize that this is the most blessed life.

Abraham Led His Life in Obedience to the Word

Following the Word of the Lord God means to

reflect everything upon the Word of the Lord God. What kind of faith we should have, how we ought to live, how we ought to look into the future—all these things are found in the written Word of the Scriptures. When we hold fast to the Word of God, even if we go astray for a short while, we can still find our way and return to the Lord God. It's such a tremendous blessing for us to follow the Word of the Lord God. The passage that says, "*Abraham departed as the LORD had spoken to him*" is so inspiring to me. I am absolutely certain that this passage teaches me the most blessed and proper way to live my life. So I yearn to have such faith and live accordingly by faith.

Indeed, it's my heartfelt desire for all the saints and the servants of God in our Church who have been born again of water and the blood should lead their lives as Abraham had lived, in obedience to the Word of the Lord God. Abraham entrusted his everything to the Lord, his life and his faith, and he lived according to the Word of God. Abraham was

completely obedient to God. He followed the Word of God in order to be saved, and He obeyed the Word of God because he wanted his descendants to become God's own people. Abraham obeyed the Word of the Lord God even when arranging his son's marriage. Like this, he devoted all his life to following the Word of the Lord God. And when it was time for Abraham to leave his earthly life behind, he still worshipped the Lord God and made his last will for his descendants in obedience to the Word. Indeed, his entire life revolved around the Word of the Lord God. And for obeying the Word of God like this, he received abundant blessings from God. Abraham followed the Word of the Lord God even when he begot his son.

Because Abraham walked according to the Word of the Lord God, God was pleased to be the same faithful God to his descendants. When Abraham's son was circumcised, God said, "I will be your God, and I will be the God of your descendants also." When we turn to Genesis 17:7, we see God saying,

"And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you." With His Word of the covenant God promised Abraham and his descendants that He would be their God and give them the land of Canaan.

God then said to Abraham: *"This is My covenant which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: Every male child among you shall be circumcised; and you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you. He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised, every male child in your generations, he who is born in your house or bought with money from any foreigner who is not your descendant. He who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money must be circumcised, and My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised male child, who is not circumcised in*

the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant” (Genesis 17:10-14).

God made His promise to not only Abraham but also to his descendants, saying, “You and your descendants should be circumcised in obedience to My Word, and I will be your God and also the God of your descendants.” So, the Lord God not only became Abraham’s God, but He also promised that He would be the God of the circumcised descendants of Abraham. The Lord God promised all of this to Abraham with His Word, and accordingly, Abraham trusted in the Word of the Lord God and obeyed it completely.

From then on, the people of Israel had all their male children circumcised when they turned eight days old. God was so strict with this requirement that He rejected anyone who was not circumcised without exception. He said, “I am not the God of the uncircumcised. Even though they may be Abraham’s descendants in their flesh, since they do not follow

My Word, nor obey it, nor believe in it, nor practice it, they are not My people. I will cut them off from My people. I am the God of the circumcised, not the uncircumcised.”

Having called Abraham, God blessed him, and Abraham believed in every Word of the Lord God, obeyed it, and practiced it. This is the exemplary model that Abraham, our father of faith is showing us. If we trust in and follow the Word of the Lord God like Abraham, then we will receive all the spiritual blessings of Heaven as well as the fertility of the earth; however, if we fail to follow the Word of the Lord God by faith, then even if we received the spiritual blessings of Heaven, we will not be able to receive the fertility of the earth or the blessings that the Lord God had given to Abraham’s descendents.

The Safest Way

Every aspect of our lives, from the very

beginning to the end, must be committed to following the Word of the Lord God, whether it's about our salvation, living out our faith, or fulfilling our purpose on this earth. For Abraham, it was only a matter of course to follow the Word of the Lord God. Some of you may then think, "Abraham followed the Word since he was the father of faith. There was nothing unusual about this. Why is Pastor Jong then spending so much time on this obvious point and overestimating Abraham so much?"

However, my fellow believers, we must realize what a great blessing it is for us to live in obedience to the Word of the Lord God. Whoever follows the Word of the Lord God faces neither curses, nor destruction, nor wants, nor hardship. It's only when we do not follow the Word of the Lord God that we suffer, get angry, feel frustrated, and struggle with hardships. As long as we follow the Word of the Lord God, everything will be just fine. We will be at peace in all things. Following the Word of the Lord God is the safest, the most assured, and the most beneficial

thing to do. There is nothing sounder or more assured than following the Word of the Lord God. Even though there are uncertainties in our lives that make us feel uneasy and worried, by following the Word of the Lord God, we can still lead a blessed life in full confidence.

Not a few people have left the Word of the Lord God, even though they once followed it. I have witnessed on many occasions how someone who had been so obedient to the Word of the Lord God changed his mind all of a sudden and departed from God. This is more than possible since everyone is only human. However, the undeniable fact of the matter is that there is no way that is safer than following the Word of the Lord God. Living according to the Word of the Lord God is the safest thing to do. It may appeal to you for a short while to forsake the Word of the Lord God, depart from it, and embark on a path of your own choice. However, because this is not the upright life that abides in the Lord God, you will realize later on what a giant

mistake you have made. But by then it will be too late and no amount of regret will be of any use. We should never forget that it is only when we abide in the Word of the Lord God and follow it in our lives that we can find true peace and have the most assured guarantee of our blessings.

Two Kinds of People

Although following the Word of the Lord God is the safest, the most proper, and the most blessed thing to do, but sometimes living according to the Word seems to entail a hefty cost. When people around us consider us too dense, stubborn, and inflexible, we may wonder if we are not living a backward life. When we look at ourselves and see how we have been following the Word of the Lord God so singularly and unwaveringly, it's possible for us to wonder if we are not getting behind everyone else; indeed, it may even seem foolish at times. We

may seem like fools, but in reality, we are very wise. Fools are stubborn. And once they get stubborn, it's next to impossible to change their minds. In contrast, a smart person knows when to give up his stubbornness. A fool knows no compromise. He never bends his will. When we see someone foolish, dense, or inflexible like this, we usually do not think well of this person. However, since we now know that Abraham and his descendants were blessed throughout their entire lives for following the Word of the Lord God so stubbornly, and we also know that this is the right thing to do in God's sight, all of us must follow His Word alone like Abraham, like stubborn fools.

When I look at those who have departed from the Word of the Lord God completely, I see that at first, they only took a step away from God, but eventually they took more and more steps until they ended up leaving Him completely. This has been the case for everyone around me who left God. Even if one deviates from the Word of God ever so slightly

that it is hardly noticeable as Lot had left Abraham, down the road, this in the end brought about devastating consequences to him. Lot saw all his possessions burnt to the ground, while Abraham gained so much prosperity. The contrast in the outcomes could not be more obvious. You probably know someone around you who seems to be drifting a little away from the Word. In reality, what's visible to the naked eye is not that important. What's really important is what's going on one's heart. One may take a step away from the Word of the Lord God without thinking too much about it, but it can ultimately lead this person to depart from the Word completely. When we see such people, it's our responsibility to hold them steadfastly. We have the duty to open their ears and make them listen to the Word.

There are two kinds of people: Those who follow the Word of the Lord God, and those who don't. There are countless people who don't follow the Word of the Lord God. These people are walking

on the broad way. In contrast, those who are following the Word of the Lord God are extremely few. They are very rare. And in some ways, they seem dense, foolish, and dimwitted. However, it's these people who are blessed by God. There aren't that many people in this world who are blessed by God. Those who are blessed by God are the followers of His Word, and such people are few and far between. That's because many people who followed the Word at first end up drifting away eventually. Any of us can drift away for a while and go astray a little, but all of us must return back to the Word. The problem is that some people continue to go astray and drift away irreversibly. This happens because these people allow themselves to become prisoners of their own desires and follow their own greed. Because everyone is a foolish human being, it's possible for anyone to be gripped by his own desires and go astray. However, while even those who follow the Word of God may go astray for a short while, they all return back to God without fail.

It's impossible for those who have not been born again of water and the blood to follow the Word of the Lord God. In contrast, it's more than possible for those who have been born again of water and the blood to follow the Word of God. So long as they cast aside their private desires, they can all trust in the Word of God completely and follow it faithfully. And they can live the rest of their lives amidst all the blessings given by the Lord God, receive eternal blessings in the next world to come, and even pass on these blessings of the Lord God to their descendants in the surest way. Just as Abraham was blessed by the Lord God, so can we all become a blessing to all the nations of this earth and share our blessings with them. This is a special privilege reserved only for those who follow the Word of the Lord God. So, those who have been born again of water and the blood are the happiest and the most blessed people. Even though there are countless people in this world, there is no one who is more blessed than those who follow the Word of the Lord God, nor is there anyone

who is greater, either in this world or the Kingdom of Heaven, than those who follow the Word of the Lord God. Therefore, all of us ought to grasp that those who follow the Word of the Lord God are the greatest and the most blessed people in this world.

Foolish people do not follow the Word of the Lord God out of their ignorance, and they also disobey the will of God and even forsake His Word entirely. To them, it looks more desirable and appealing to take another path. But you should never allow yourself to be deceived foolishly by such temptations. The safest thing to do is to look towards the Word of the Lord God alone, and just walk on the right path patiently and unwaveringly even if this seems a bit foolish and unwise. Those who follow the Word of the Lord God unwaveringly and quietly no matter what anyone says—these people alone are the truly blessed people of great faith.

It Is Only Right for You to Follow the Word of the Lord God

How many people in this world are following the Word of the Lord God? What would happen if we were to try to follow the Word of God on our own apart from the Church? Is it right or wrong for us to try to keep the Word of God individually as Lot did? Such questions come to our minds from time to time. But, no matter how hard and long we think about them, the conclusion to reach is that following the Word of God in His Church is the right thing to do. No matter how the world changes, how people's faith changes, how doctrines change, and how hearts and minds change, we must follow the Word of God.

All of us have lived to this day with many selfish and greedy thoughts. However, we ought to live the rest of our lives mindful of at least the following questions: "Have we been following the Word of God? Do we want to follow it? Do we know that this is the right thing to do? Do we believe that we absolutely

must follow the Word of God in our lives? Are we moving forth towards a clear purpose with a clear standard of faith? Have we resolved ourselves to do so?" Although in our acts we have not been able to live in this way completely, we must at least know clearly what the right thing to do and that is, to follow the Lord God according to His Word, and live with a clear established determination. Only then can we follow the Word of God despite our shortcomings, and only then does God give us the strength to follow His Word, and only then does He give us all the blessings that He promised in His Word.

To repeat, those of you who are following the Word of God are the happiest people. I am also happy beyond description. To be honest, there are times when I rebuke myself and feel tormented by my shortcomings. However, my suffering is nothing compared to my joy and happiness. This is not because of my own merits, but it is all because I believe that following the Word of God is the right thing to do, and God is pleased by this. Even though I

am inadequate in all other things, God is pleased by the fact that I am following His Word, and that is why my joy far exceeds my suffering.

The Happiest People on the Planet Earth

Although we each are living a different life, all of us are blessed people. I often tell myself that I am a blessed man. You may then wonder what's so blessed about me. I'm blessed because I believe in and follow the Word of God. So, I often find myself smiling all by myself with an overflowing joy in my heart that makes me happy and content. When we get angry, we get extremely petty and irksome, but when we feel content, we feel very happy as though the whole world were ours. That's how I feel whenever I think about the Lord God. Even though we may get irritated and exasperated when we think about just ourselves and our shortcomings, all of us following the Word of God are blessed, just as Abraham was

blessed for following the Word of God. Because you and I are all following the Word of the Lord, we are all blessed tremendously.

My fellow believers, if we had not followed the Word of God, there is no telling what might have happened to us. The consequences would no doubt have been devastating. I might have even killed myself. That's how foolish and lacking we all are as human beings. Yet, we are still sitting here as the most blessed people in this world, all because the Lord God has held us steadfast to follow His Word, reigning over our hearts, our souls, our circumstances, our thoughts, and our faith.

In my view, all of you gathered here are great men and women of faith, having been tremendously blessed by God. I do not think little of you. I'm not saying this just to sweet-talk you into liking my sermon. I truthfully believe that you are all blessed in God's arms. And when I reflect my own heart upon the Word of God, I am sure that I am blessed, and I believe that your faith to follow the Word of God

together with me is also blessed. I have every confidence that if the Lord gives us enough time before He returns, countless people will be saved through our gospel work and come to glorify God. We can all live a truly worthy and blessed life full of energy, working tirelessly all over the world to preach the gospel to an unimaginable number of people to the glory of God. I truthfully believe that the very fact that you and I are on this earth is in itself a tremendous blessing for everyone else waiting for deliverance. Although we are still only human with many shortcomings, we are following the Word of God, and all of us ought to grasp just how wonderful this is.

Sometimes we go astray, but we return back to the right way. As a dog wandering around eventually returns to its owner, so do we return to God. We must return. Returning to God is what's really important. When a lost dog finds its way back to its owner, the owner would no doubt be happy beyond description. How much more would the Lord God then be pleased

when we return to Him after going astray? With an overflowing joy He will say to us, "Yes, you are indeed My people and My servants. Even though you go astray and stumble from time to time, you are still My children, My people, and My servants for sure. You will surely live with Me forever. You have surely been blessed by Me."

My fellow believers, those who follow the Word of the Lord God in their lives are far more blessed than those who don't. The most blessed people on this planet earth are those who follow the Word of the Lord God. All blessings are added to whoever follows the Word of the Lord God. Even his future descendants will receive every blessing, every assurance, and every splendor. Whenever I meet with my fellow ministers throughout Korea, I appreciate even more just how tremendously we have been blessed. This belief is the basis on which I am leading my life of faith, and it is also what guides my dealings with you. Even though we may be struggling at home, in the Church, or at work, we

have truly been blessed.

It's written in Psalm 1:1-6:

“Blessed is the man

Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly,

Nor stands in the path of sinners,

Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;

But his delight is in the law of the LORD,

And in His law he meditates day and night.

He shall be like a tree

Planted by the rivers of water,

That brings forth its fruit in its season,

Whose leaf also shall not wither;

And whatever he does shall prosper.

The ungodly are not so,

But are like the chaff which the wind drives away.

Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment,

Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

For the LORD knows the way of the righteous,

But the way of the ungodly shall perish.”

Who are the ungodly? They are those who do

not follow the Word of God. Only those who follow the Word of the Lord God are righteous and blessed.

The Way to Blessings

I don't know how you might have lived your life until now, but from this very moment on, when you believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, all the riches and splendor will be yours, and you yourself will be the greatest of all. The way to this is believing in and following the Word of God.

The Lord God approves the way of the righteous. The righteous follow the Word of the Lord God. Because the righteous follow this Word, they are full of joy, and because all their needs are provided for by God according to His time, they have the strength to live a bold and vibrant life without any worries even if this world crumbles down. As we carry on with our lives in this world, not a day goes by without worrying. That's because this present age

is so unstable. There is nothing stable in this age and time. So, many worries and anxieties can make their way into our hearts without even realizing it. However, my fellow believers, if you follow the Word of the Lord God, then He will take care of you and protect you completely both now and in the future. Everything is up to God.

In fact, this present age is actually the most ideal time to receive blessings. If you want to live with assurance and free yourself from all the worries of this world, you must follow the Word of the Lord God. If you really want your soul to be blessed and you wish to embark on the blessed way, then you must follow the Word of the Lord God. When you thus follow the Word of the Lord God and abide by your unwavering faith, you will surely be freed from all the heavy burdens of this world. Everything will go well if you follow the Word of the Lord God. So I urge you to realize here that there really is no one on this planet earth who is as blessed as you and I who have been born again of water and the Spirit. It's

those who follow the Word of the Lord God who are the people of faith like Abraham.

When Abraham arranged his son's marriage, he made sure that the bride would be from his own kin. He did this also in obedience to the Word of the Lord. It's wrong to think that there is no difference between someone who follows the Word of the Lord God and someone who does not. The difference between these two types of people is in fact huge. So I admonish you to live out your faith understanding this important difference.

We Must Resolve Our Will

Those who follow the Word of the Lord God are vibrant and green throughout the seasons like a tree planted by a river. They are always ready to bear fruit, and they always bear fruit according to the season. There are many variations in our lives of faith. We need to examine ourselves from time to

time to determine what kind of life of faith we want to lead. We need to ask ourselves whether we are content to let our lives of faith succumb to everyday complacency, or we want to resolve our will and live out our faith faithfully and dynamically according to this purpose. You may then say that it's already hard enough for you to lead your life of faith as it is. You may even resent me for admonishing you to follow the Word of the Lord God. But this is absolutely indispensable. Only those who follow the Lord God to the end can put on the crown of joy. Therefore, the harder it gets, the more diligently you must follow God. You and I alike must resolve our will before the Lord God and live out our faith according to this determination. If we are instead leading our lives of faith half-heartedly and malleably depending on our own circumstances, then we can't say that we are really living out our faith. It's absolutely imperative for us to resolve our will above all else and live out our faith according to this resolve.

What would you do then? Would you follow the

Word, or would you go on your own way? You must choose one of the two, and only if you choose to follow the Word of God and practice it in your actual life can you say that you are leading a proper life of faith. You must decide whether you would follow the Word of the Lord God and thus receive all His blessings as a righteous saint, or you would instead live according to your own wishes rather than following the Word and thus remain as an ungodly person. What's clear is that there is a huge difference in terms of the outcome between those who follow the Word of the Lord God and those who don't. Those who follow the Word of the Lord God by faith will receive all His blessings just like Abraham, and even their descendants will be blessed and prosper.

In contrast, those who do not follow the Word of God may laugh at first thinking that they are free, but down the road, they will be so miserable that they won't even have the energy to cry. This is the Word of Truth. That is what the Bible teaches us. It teaches us that whoever follows the Word of the Lord God is

blessed, but whoever does not follow it receives no blessing. So, the Word of the Lord God is not something that we can choose to follow or ignore, but it is something that all of us must follow without fail. If we want to continue to carry on with our lives of faith, then we must follow the Word of the Lord God unwaveringly. We must resolve our wills to do so.

This world is uncertain and unstable. However, we are leading an assured life and walking on a sure path. We are running towards a clear goal. If we follow the Word of the Lord God, then not only we but also our descendants and everyone around us will be blessed, but if we otherwise don't follow the Word of the Lord God, then not only we but also those around us will be cursed. Realizing this clearly, all of us ought to follow the Word of the Lord God by faith and run towards our goal, recognizing that this is the right thing to do. Only if we follow the Word unwaveringly like this can we receive the same blessings that Abraham received. And only then can we say that we are leading a proper life of faith.

We should never let our lives drift around without any purpose, wasting our time year after year. Instead, we must strive towards a singular goal until the day the Lord returns and we stand before Him face to face. If we live in obedience to the Word of the Lord God according to His will, then our lives would be considered truly successful and worthwhile.

It's also important for us to believe that there is no other way but following the Word of the Lord God. There can be no compromise. Even more important than a strong will is the faith to follow the Word of the Lord God. Unless we follow the Word of God, we cannot expect to see any benefits. Why would we then want to compromise with the kind of life that offers us no benefit? Compromises are made only if there are some benefits; without any benefits, why would anyone bargain in the first place? That is precisely why I live my everyday life according to the Word of the Lord God despite my shortcomings. So, recognizing our shortcomings and believing that it is only proper for us to follow the Word of the Lord God,

let us all strive towards this goal and live by this faith.

It is my heartfelt desire for all of our ministers and brothers and sisters in our Church in Korea and around the world live by this kind of faith. It is absolutely not the case that our number is small. Some of you may be worried that there are too few of us the righteous. But our number is actually not that small. There is no need for us to be worried about this. After all, were there many righteous people in the days of Abraham? No, at first, there was just one righteous man, Abraham. How many children did Abraham have? He had only one son, Isaac. Yet, of all the countless people in those days, the Bible says and records that only these two men, Abraham and his son Isaac, were blessed. How many children did Isaac have? He had just two, Esau and Jacob. Of these two men, who was blessed? Jacob alone was blessed. Why was Jacob blessed then? He was blessed because he followed the Word of the Lord God. Like this, only those who live by faith in obedience to the Word of the Lord God can enjoy His blessings.

How many sons did Jacob have? He had twelve

sons. The Bible writes that there were twelve sons of Jacob and these twelve sons formed the twelve tribes of Israel. It records that these twelve tribes ruled over the whole land of Canaan. How many disciples did Jesus have? That's right; He only had twelve disciples. Yet, despite their small number, the Bible writes that they were the Lord's true disciples, and that they were blessed.

Just because there are a lot of people in a church, this does not mean that this church is blessed. Rather, those who are blessed by God are those who follow the Word of the Lord God wholeheartedly. In contrast, whoever does not follow the Word of the Lord God is walking on the way of the ungodly only to be cursed. Whether one is blessed or cursed depends on whether that person follows the Word of God like Abraham or not.

Today, we shared the Word on how Abraham followed the Word of God. All of us gathered here are also following the Word of the Lord God. I hope and pray that at the end of our lives; we would all be recorded as those who had led their lives in obedience to the Word of the Lord God to His pleasure and delight. ☒

SERMON

8



CONTENTS



Have the Faith That Hopes for The Kingdom of Heaven

< Genesis 12:1 >

**“Now the LORD had said to Abram:
‘Get out of your country,
From your family
And from your father’s house,
To a land that I will show you.’”**

Here God said to Abram,
*“Get out of your country,
From your family
And from your father’s house,
To a land that I will show you.”*

Noah had a family of eight, including three sons named Ham, Shem, and Japheth. All human beings in this world descended from these three sons of Noah.

Shem, Ham, and Japheth each bore children, and these children continued to multiply.

Before the flood of Noah, the average lifespan for human beings was around 900 years. But the life expectancy fell sharply after the flood, from about 900 years to around 200 years, as we can glimpse from the fact that Abraham passed away at the age of 175. In contrast, it wasn’t until Noah was 500 years old that he began to build the ark, and it wasn’t until he turned 600 years that the rain came down for 40 days and nights to inundate the whole world. After the water receded, Noah and his family disembarked from the ark and the human race began to multiply again through his three sons. The people in those days still lived for a long time, so it was common for several generations to live in the same house. In other words, the whole clan lived next to one another.

Shem begot Arphaxad at the age of 100. After he begot Arphaxad, Shem lived for 500 years and begot more sons and daughters. And nine generations down the road from Shem, Abraham was born.



Abraham's father was Terah, a descendant of Shem, and therefore Abraham was also Shem's descendant. It's written in Genesis 11:10-11: *"This is the genealogy of Shem: Shem was one hundred years old, and begot Arphaxad two years after the flood. After he begot Arphaxad, Shem lived five hundred years, and begot sons and daughters. Arphaxad lived thirty-five years, and begot Salah. After he begot Salah, Arphaxad lived four hundred and three years, and begot sons and daughters."* Like this, Genesis chapter 11 records Shem's genealogy for ten generations, up until Abram, Nahor, and Haran, the three sons of Terah. But we see here that although Shem begot Arphaxad at the age of 100, his descendants begot their first child in their early 30s. It took about 290 years for Shem's descendants to reach their tenth generation. In my calculation, using the generational gap between Shem's firstborn son and his descendants, it took about 290 years to reach the tenth generation.

But Shem lived for 600 years. He begot

Arphaxad at the age of 100, two years after the flood, and he lived for another 500 years and begot more children. Yet, while Shem lived for 600 years, it only took around 290 years before he saw his tenth-generation grandchildren. This means that Shem lived long enough to actually spend some time with his descendants all the way down to the tenth generation. So, by the time the tenth generation was born, Shem was still alive. Since Shem begot his first son at the age of 100, adding 290 years would make him 390 years old; and since Shem lived for 600 years, he was still in his middle ages when the tenth generation was born. In other words, Shem was still in the prime of his life. Seeing this, I came to recognize how the faith of the forefathers in the ancient age was transmitted to their posterity.

Shem was Noah's son. He had seen his father Noah building the ark, he had actually boarded the ark, and he had actually witnesses the judgment of God with his own two eyes. Shem was therefore able to inherit his father's faith intact as well as pass it



onto his descendants as a living witness of Noah's faith. We can imagine Shem having his grandchildren of many generations sit on his lap and telling them about what had happened with the flood.

In Korea, when the elderly tell stories about their past to their grandchildren, they often tell them about the grinding poverty and hunger that they had endured. The grandchildren cannot fully understand this as they are now living in a prosperous era, so they wonder why their grandfathers didn't just have some instant noodles. But back then, there weren't any instant noodles. I am old enough to remember the first president of South Korea. I have lived through every presidency and witnessed the tumultuous modern history of South Korea, from its very foundation to the heydays of industrialization and the difficult transition to democracy. I know how things were under President Lee, the first president, and how things were under President Park who presided over Korea's industrialization.

Poverty was deep and widespread under the Lee

administration. In those days most Korean people were so poor that having three square meals a day was considered a luxury. Rice was so scarce that a lot of people ate grass roots and tree bark. That is how desperately poor South Korea was under the first presidency. It wasn't until the Park administration that large amounts of flour and powder milk were supplied as aid. I still remember getting caught after sneaking into the kitchen and eating the powder milk raw. I got so startled that I nearly choked. In those days, rice was too expensive for most Koreans to afford, so they had to rely on flour and corn instead.

Later on, instant noodle was introduced. Of course, nowadays instant noodle is cheap and available everywhere, but back when I was a child, it was so expensive and rare that I used to pine for it. Even biscuits were hard to come by, something that most people could have only in the military. When a young married man was drafted into the military, his children would wait eagerly for their father to come home on leave so that he would bring them some

army-supplied biscuits. That's how poor Korea was back in those days. Even instant noodles were considered a luxury that only the rich could afford. I used to wonder if I could ever have as much instant noodle as I wanted. Later on, when instant noodles became very affordable, I once ate three packets of instant noodle all by myself. It had been my childhood wish to get stuffed for once, not from just drinking plain water to ease the pangs of hunger but from actually eating too much food. When instant noodle was introduced, I used to let the noodles be soaked in the soup so that it would expand and I would feel fuller in my stomach. Now, of course, South Korea is so much more prosperous today, but it wasn't too long ago that poverty and hunger were widespread. The people of my generation are the living witnesses to this.

“Get Out of Your Country, From Your Family And from Your Father’s House, To a Land That I Will Show You.”

God said to Abraham, *“Get out of your country, From your family And from your father’s house, To a land that I will show you.”* God did not say anything to Abraham here about faith or the flood. Since Shem lived for 600 years, he was still alive in Abraham’s days. Shem was actually alive. Although Terah lived only for 70 years, when we do some calculation we can see that Shem was still alive in the days of Abraham. Terah was born as the ninth generation of Shem’s descendants, and he begot three sons including Abraham. This genealogy of Shem should not be overlooked, as it shows us that Shem’s faith was passed down to his descendants from one generation to the next. It wasn’t just the flesh and the way of life that were passed down, but spiritual faith was also passed down directly from their forefathers. So, as Shem’s faith was passed directly down to his



descendants and they lived as a family, Abraham was able to follow God by faith.

The same is true for this present age. In this age also, there are those who are ahead spiritually and there are those who are following. And the predecessors of faith who have received the remission of sins first are passing their faith and spiritual experiences to their followers, who are their spiritual descendants. Whenever young saints struggle with problems, their predecessors of faith teach them what to do. For example, new saints often find it hard to deal with their fleshly desires. It's because even the saints, despite the fact that they have been born again, still have two kinds of desires in their hearts. They would not become confused if they only had one desire, but because they have two kinds of desires, they want to do different things apart from the Church. As these young saints still have strong desires of the flesh, they often wonder why they are not allowed to do certain things. The dilemma is that we have two kinds of desires; one is

of the flesh and another is of the Spirit. However, the mature spiritual saints are able to deal with both these desires.

It's precisely for this reason that the predecessors of faith share fellowship with the younger saints. As the former have gone through the experience of grappling with both types of desires, they know which one is beneficial. This is why they sternly admonish these newly redeemed brothers and sisters in the Church not to follow the desire of the flesh. In other words, your predecessors of faith have already gone through what you are going through now, so they know what is good for you; and that is why they admonish you to do certain things but not other things.

What would Shem have said to Abraham if he were to sit down with him and talk to him? Shem had been on the ark along with his father Noah, and so he had seen the flood with his own eyes and knew all about it. He would have therefore told Abraham to have faith, taught him how he ought to live,



admonished him to follow the Word of God, and counseled him to never do anything according to his own fleshly desires. That's because Shem, as someone who had walked before Abraham, knew all about what had happened in the days of Noah, and so he would have taught Abraham the right way to live. The saints who have received the remission of sins just recently are still grappling with this desire of the flesh and the desires of the Spirit, and yet they do not know which desire is the right desire to follow. Of course, once their faith grows and they follow God, God will give them the wisdom to discern the right desire, bless them with material blessings also, and guide them in both body and spirit. However, because so many new believers do not realize this, they still want to have the things of the flesh, and when God forbids these things, they think mistakenly that God is somehow not reasonable and they even become resentful of Him. But the young believers must realize that this is the desire of the flesh. Once their faith grows in the Church, they will realize one

by one from their own experiences that the guidance of their church leaders is right. God always wants what is good for you; He never wants anything bad for you.

The redeemed saints are to gather together to form God's Church. It is absolutely important for those who have received the remission of sins to dwell together in God's Church. From the grandfather to the grandchildren everyone is living as a single family. This is none other than the body of God's Church. All of you gathered here in the Church form the same family, regardless of how old or young you are. In fact, just as Shem and his descendants down to the tenth generation including Abraham lived together as one family, the same is true for this Church. The younger saints ought to listen to their predecessors of faith, see them in action, and follow them by faith.

In the old days, the predecessors of faith lived as a single family. They passed on their faith to their descendants. When we turn to today's Scripture



passage, we see God saying to Abraham, “*Get out of your country, From your family And from your father’s house, To a land that I will show you.*” Here God told Abraham to leave his own country, his own family, and his own father’s house and go to a land that God would show him. Abraham had lived all his life in his country with his extended family, but now God was commanding him to leave everything and everyone behind and go to a land that He would show him.

Noah’s three sons were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Of the descendants of these three sons of Noah, God called Abraham, a descendant of Shem. Terah was Shem’s descendant, and he begot Nahor, Haran, and Abraham. But God told only one of these sons to leave his country, his family, and his father’s house and go to a land that God would show him. In other words, of the three sons of Noah, God chose Shem, and of the three sons of Terah, a descendant of Shem, God spoke to Abraham.

This is very important. There are countless

people of various races and ethnicities living in this world. Yet, of all these countless people living in this world, it is only the few of us who have been selected by God. We have been chosen. We have been chosen by God from countless people to live by faith and receive the blessing of becoming God’s own children. Chosen by God in Christ, we have been blessed to become God’s children and the people of His Kingdom. This is a tremendous blessing. God did not speak to Nahor or Haran, but He spoke only to Abraham. It’s specifically to Abraham that the Lord God said, “*Get out of your country, From your family And from your father’s house, To a land that I will show you.*” Just like Abraham, all of us who have received the remission of sins are also God’s blessed people chosen in Christ. In other words, of all the countless people in this world, it is we who have been chosen by God as His spiritual people just like Abraham and Shem.



You Should Know How Blessed You Are Because of God's Church

To grasp this fully, you must mature in your faith. When your faith matures, you can realize that you have been saved through God's Church and that you are now living out your faith in His Church. When you realize just how blessed you are in God's Church, you cannot thank God enough for His Church and your church leaders. In contrast, if your faith remains immature, then you are likely to be annoyed by the admonishment of the Church, wondering if you really have to follow its guidance. Even though Terah actually had three sons, God spoke only to Abraham. It is only Abraham and his descendants whom God had blessed.

The same is true for us as well. As we have been chosen in Jesus Christ, it's we who have become the blessed as God's precious people and children. God told Abraham to leave his country, his family, and his father's house. God also told him to go to a land that

He would show him. Would it have been easy for Abraham to leave his father, his country, and his family? I've already told you that the people in those days all lived together in one big extended family. The whole clan lived in close proximity. Though they probably lived in different houses, they all lived in the same town or community. So, it was no ordinary thing for Abraham to hear God commanding him to leave his hometown. Yet God told him to do so and go to a land that He would show him.

Where is the land that God directed Abraham to go? Where did Abraham and his descendants settle down eventually? Where did Abraham go? It was to the land of Canaan. Later on, Abraham's descendants left Egypt and entered the land of Canaan once again. Egypt here refers to this world and the land of Canaan refers to the Kingdom of Heaven. After living as slaves in Egypt for 400 years, Abraham's descendants crossed the Jordan River, the river of death, and entered the land of Canaan under the leadership of Moses and Joshua. They lived there,



and they are still living there even now.

What is God saying to us, we who have received the same blessings as those received by Abraham? God is saying to you and me to get out of our country, our family, and our father's house to a land that He would show us. Where is this land? It is the Kingdom of Heaven, and God is telling us to go to this land shown by Him. This means that even though we are still living on this earth, we should never let our hearts become joyous or disappointed by this world. Of the descendants of Shem, it is Abraham upon whom God bestowed His blessings; it's Abraham whom God commanded to leave his country, his family, and his father's house; and it's Abraham whom God instructed to enter the land of Canaan. Today, all of us ought to realize that God is saying the same thing to us as well.

The Land That the Lord Is Showing Us

It's absolutely imperative for all of us to realize where this God-shown land is. Where is this land? It is none other than the Kingdom of Heaven. It is not this world, but a new heaven and a new earth, God's Kingdom. To us, we the spiritual descendants of Abraham chosen in Christ, God is saying that He would give us the land of Canaan. He is saying to us that He would give us the Kingdom of Heaven.

What kind of land is this land of Canaan, the Kingdom of Heaven? Where is this land that God is showing us to enter? Let's turn to the Book of Revelation here:

“Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men,



and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away” (Revelation 21:1-4).

It’s also written in Revelation 22:1-5: *“And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever.”*

The land that God ordered Abraham to go was

the land of Canaan. Likewise, God is also telling us to leave our country, our family, and our father’s house to a land that He would show us, and this land is none other than the Kingdom of Heaven. Even though we are still living on this earth right now, God is saying to us that He will give us His Kingdom, and He is commanding us to go to this land. God is showing us a new heaven and a new earth. Where is the land that God is telling us to go? This land shown by God is not on this earth, but it is the Kingdom of Heaven. This land where we will enter and live is the Kingdom of Heaven. God is showing us the Kingdom of Heaven. With His Word He is telling us that this is where we will enter and live.

It’s then absolutely important for us to obey God. It’s also imperative for us to listen attentively to God’s servants. I cannot emphasize this enough just how important it is for all our saints to discern the will of the Lord while living on this earth. All of us ought to not only realize that we have received the remission of sins, but we ought to also be mindful of



the fact that we have been commanded by God to go to His promised land. God is saying to us to leave this earth and head toward His Kingdom. Put differently, our hearts should be set on this Kingdom of Heaven where we will enter and live forever in the future. You and I are the very people who will live in that kingdom.

People nowadays often speak of generational gaps. Someone once called me an old hat, while he insisted that he belonged to a new generation. Which generation do you think is better prepared to lead a proper life of faith, the old or the young? Is the new generation better positioned to lead a proper life of faith? In God's sight, which generation is on the right footing? You need to know the right answer to this important question. You can put your hope on the Kingdom of Heaven only if you turn yourself into an old hat on this earth. Only then can you look toward the God-shown land in your life.

Let's spend a moment and consider what exactly is meant by the so-called new generation. The people

of the old generation had dreams and hopes while growing up. They had an ambition and a hope for their future, believing that they could accomplish anything if they worked hard enough. Because they had a dream, no one had to nag at them to study hard. They studied diligently into the wee hours, even in a time when there was no electric light. Have you ever used charcoal as a writing instrument? I actually used charcoal on the ground for writing in my childhood. It's not because I was an extraordinarily diligent student, but it's because I had a hope and a dream. I wanted to succeed, to break away from grinding poverty, and to escape from the constant hunger that I faced. So I worked hard and did my best to be diligent. This was true for my generation.

In contrast, the young people of today, the so-called new generation have no dreams. They have no hope, nor do they have any purpose for their lives. They know very well that nothing will change no matter how hard they work, and that the world is hopelessly doomed. They know what will happen to



this world. They know that this world will come crashing down. And they know nothing they do has any meaning. This is why so many young people nowadays are living just for the moment and mindlessly chasing after fleeting pleasures, because they have no hope for the future no matter how hard they work. This is what defines this new generation. Far from having a more progressive outlook, the young people of this age and time have no dreams. They have nowhere to go. There is nothing but destruction awaiting them. So they live for the moment.

We must be old-fashioned. Although we have no hope in this world, we must hope for the God-shown Kingdom of Heaven in our lives. Even though we have no hope on this earth, we must still live every day with hope. We should never allow ourselves to become like the young people of this age. We should never turn into a hopeless generation. We the Christians must have a dream. We must live by faith, cherishing the hope that because we have received

the remission of sins, we will go to the God-shown Kingdom of Heaven and live there in all glory.

Do you know how fleshly this young generation is? Every youngster wants to be tall nowadays. Some youngsters even go through a surgical procedure to increase their height, by cutting their leg bones and inserting metal rods in between to extend the length of their legs. That's how vain this new generation is. They don't care about the side effects that such a risky surgery would bring later on; all that they care about is that it makes them look better here and now. I once saw some celebrities on a TV talk show discussing their dating habits. When asked how long they wait before kissing their date, some of the celebrities said a few hours, others half an hour, and one celebrity said less than five minutes. This is the kind of values that today's new generation has.

This sinful world is surely doomed. The Bible says that there will be wars and rumors of wars at the beginning of the age of sorrows. How long has it been since the atomic bombs fell on Hiroshima and



Nagasaki in Japan? How many people were killed or injured by those terrible bombs? With nuclear proliferation, there are now a number of countries that possess nuclear weapons, and these nuclear weapons are thousands of times more destructive than the atomic bombs that fell on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The old atomic bombs pale in comparison to today's thermonuclear weapons. Each nuclear state possesses nuclear weapons that are thousands of times more powerful. That's why so many people oppose the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

The new generation knows this. Today's young people know what a terrible world and what a hopeless age they are living in. Disasters loom everywhere, and no one can predict when and how they will strike. If cynicism seems to plague the new generation, it's because the young people of today have neither any hope nor any dream in this world. I am not talking about just temporary trends and fads that are visible. Rather, I'm pointing out that people's thoughts and faith have turned hopeless like today's

youth. The new generation cares about nothing but fleeting pleasures; their motto is "live today and die tomorrow," precisely because they have no hope. This hopelessness plagues the whole wide world.

But we the believers should never be like this new generation. Far from it, we ought to hold onto our traditional values even if we are mocked for being old-fashioned. While being old-fashioned may not be good for other things, when it comes to faith, it is actually good to be old-fashioned. Our faith must be based on the Word of God and founded on His instruction. This faith has been passed down to us from our forefathers of faith. This kind of faith may seem out of date, but it is the only correct faith that leads us to the Kingdom of Heaven. God is instructing us to go to the Kingdom of Heaven. He is telling us to go the land that He would show us. So, rather than setting our hearts on this earth, we must set them on the Kingdom of Heaven; and while living on this earth, we ought to follow the footsteps of the old generation rather than the new generation. In both



our lives of faith and our everyday walks, we ought to live like the old generation. The people of the old generation set their sight on the future. They lived for their future. They did not live for just the moment. We the believers must hope for the Kingdom of Heaven in our lives.

Last summer, while driving to Inje Discipleship Training Center from my house, I got stuck in a heavy traffic. The traffic was very heavy on my side as there were a lot of people heading to a nearby beach town for vacation, but in the opposite direction there were hardly any cars. So, while stuck in the traffic, I began to observe what kind of people were on vacation just to pass the time. They were all invariably young couples and families, and strangely, I did not see anyone that looked over 50 years of age. If the people were on a family vacation, you would expect to see at least some grandparents, but I didn't see any. The people that I saw were all very happy; when I stopped at a service center, I saw how everyone was so delighted to be on vacation.

Like this, the world is following the mindset of the new generation, but how long would this pursuit of immediate gratification last? I wonder what would take for today's people to be completely ruined. When Samaria ran out of food while being besieged by the Syrian army (2 Kings 6:24-25), the people there starved to death. Likewise, even though we are living in an age of remarkable scientific advancements, all that it takes for the whole world to be destroyed is a widespread crop failure from some natural disaster. I'm sure that if something like this ever happen, the new generation won't be able to sustain its lifestyle. It will be absolutely impossible. When there is no food, and food prices skyrocket, everything else, including science will be rendered obsolete. No matter how advanced science gets, no one can live without food. Some people might then think that genetic engineering would provide the solution. But there is a great deal of uncertainty and concern over the health implications of genetically modified crops and livestock. While such



breakthroughs in genetic science may seem to hold a lot of promises, they are likely to bring about all kinds of side effects on the human body. Every soul in this world is living either in the way of the old generation or the new generation, but the latter will be destroyed without fail. In contrast to the old generation of faith that has the God-shown land to go to, those of the new generation eat and drink mindlessly enjoying their fleeting moment, only to face destruction. There is no tomorrow for them.

We ought to have the faith of the old generation and look toward the future even while living in the present. We must live with a dream. If you instead live in the moment preoccupied with only what to eat and drink and what to buy, then you will have no future. Setting your sight on the future, you must live every day by faith and be diligent in your everyday life also. Step by step, you must move towards the land of Canaan by faith. This is what God is instructing us all.

God told Abraham to leave his country, his

family, and his father's house and go to a land that He would show him. Where is God directing us then? He is directing us to the land of Canaan. He is pointing us to the Kingdom of Heaven. God chose Abraham. But God did not tell Abraham that he could squander his life away without any hope as so many young people are doing nowadays; rather, God told Abraham to live faithfully and look towards the future. In the end, our final destination is the Kingdom of Heaven. Realizing clearly that we will eventually go to and live in the Kingdom of Heaven, we ought to grasp what God is commanding us, cherish it, and obey it. And in our everyday lives we must live by faith.

None other than the Kingdom of Heaven is where God is directing us. God wants us all to receive the remission of sins so that we would all enter the Kingdom of Heaven. We were born on this earth for this purpose to enter the Kingdom of God. Our lives on this earth are not all that there is. If this were the case, then I'd be the first to say that we



should just eat, drink, and enjoy ourselves until we perish. But we do have the Kingdom of Heaven waiting for us, and that is why we must preach the gospel in our lives while walking towards this land that God has told us to enter. I have every confidence that all of us who have received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit will go to the Kingdom of Heaven. If God is really in your heart, then I am absolutely certain that you will enter the Kingdom of God. If, in contrast, you have only a vague understanding of the gospel of the water and the Spirit; if you neither have accepted it into your heart nor believed in it sincerely; or if you reject the faith of the old generation preferring the vanity of the new generation instead, then only destruction will await you. All of us must live by the faith of the old generation inherited from our spiritual forefathers.

For us to preach this faith of ours and enter the Kingdom of Heaven, we must preach the gospel to all the lost souls in this world for the rest of our lives,

and the Church must move in this direction unwaveringly. So let us all be faithful and diligent in every aspect of our lives, from our workplaces to our gospel ministry; let us preach the gospel; let us put our hopes and dreams on the Kingdom of Heaven; let us never compromise with the world but defend our faith and keep ourselves godly always; and, being mindful of the future of our souls and bodies, let us live diligently by faith. ☒



SERMON

9



The Laborers of God

< Genesis 7:1-24 >

“Then the LORD said to Noah, ‘Come into the ark, you and all your household, because I have seen that you are righteous before Me in this generation. You shall take with you seven each of every clean animal, a male and his female; two each of animals that are unclean, a male and his female; also seven each of birds of the air, male and female, to keep the species alive on the face of all the earth. For after seven more days I will cause it to rain on the earth forty days and forty nights, and I will destroy from the face of the earth all living things that I have made.’ And Noah did according to all that the LORD commanded him. Noah was six hundred years old when the floodwaters were on the earth. So Noah, with his sons, his wife, and his sons’ wives, went into the ark because of the waters of the flood. Of

clean animals, of animals that are unclean, of birds, and of everything that creeps on the earth, two by two they went into the ark to Noah, male and female, as God had commanded Noah. And it came to pass after seven days that the waters of the flood were on the earth. In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. And the rain was on the earth forty days and forty nights. On the very same day Noah and Noah’s sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and Noah’s wife and the three wives of his sons with them, entered the ark—they and every beast after its kind, all cattle after their kind, every creeping thing that creeps on the earth after its kind, and every bird after its kind, every bird of every sort. And they went into the ark to Noah, two by two, of all flesh in which is the breath of life. So those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had

commanded him; and the LORD shut him in. Now the flood was on the earth forty days. The waters increased and lifted up the ark, and it rose high above the earth. The waters prevailed and greatly increased on the earth, and the ark moved about on the surface of the waters. And the waters prevailed exceedingly on the earth, and all the high hills under the whole heaven were covered. The waters prevailed fifteen cubits upward, and the mountains were covered. And all flesh died that moved on the earth: birds and cattle and beasts and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, and every man. All in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, all that was on the dry land, died. So He destroyed all living things which were on the face of the ground: both man and cattle, creeping thing and bird of the air. They were destroyed from the earth. Only Noah and those who were with him in the ark remained alive. And the waters prevailed on the earth one hundred and fifty days.”

It is written in Genesis 7:1-5: *“Then the LORD said to Noah, ‘Come into the ark, you and all your household, because I have seen that you are righteous before Me in this generation. You shall take with you seven each of every clean animal, a male and his female; two each of animals that are unclean, a male and his female; also seven each of birds of the air, male and female, to keep the species alive on the face of all the earth. For after seven more days I will cause it to rain on the earth forty days and forty nights, and I will destroy from the face of the earth all living things that I have made.’ And Noah did according to all that the LORD commanded him.”*

Here God told Noah to take into the ark two pairs of unclean animals, male and female, and seven pairs of clean animals, male and female as well. This is a very important passage. God was telling Noah to save every living species when He judged this world with water. So, all the species living on the face of this earth came into the ark without any exception.

Why did God say this? That God told Noah to take into the ark two pairs of unclean animals, male and female, means that He entrusted him with the work of saving every soul. Put differently, God had taken Noah as His laborer to fulfill His will. As you will soon come to understand, Noah worked with God to bring unclean and clean animals into the ark.

God Works with His Servants

God chose a partner, and this partner was none other than Noah. God then said to Noah, *“Come into the ark, you and all your household. You shall take with you seven each of every clean animal, a male and his female; two each of animals that are unclean, a male and his female; also seven each of birds of the air, male and female, to keep the species alive on the face of all the earth.”* It was through Noah that God carried out the work of judging this earth and saving its souls. We should all grasp here that it was through

Noah and together with him that God did His work.

As mentioned, God took Noah as His partner, but what kind of work must those who have become God’s partners carry out then? First, God told Noah to take into the ark seven pairs of clean animals and two pairs of unclean animals, male and female. In the Bible, the word “pair” implies working together. God was telling Noah that he had to work with Him when he brought in unclean animals into the ark. By working together with God, Noah had to cleanse and perfect the unclean and then bring them into the ark.

For each and every age, God raises His servants and manifests His will through them, entrusting them with His work. God worked through Noah in his days. It was Noah whom God had commanded to make the ark and to bring the animals in. In other word, God chose Noah as His servant and worked through him. It’s invariably through His servants that God fulfills His will.

My fellow believers, unless we work together with God, we cannot bring unclean animals into the

ark. Unless you unite with God as the servants ordained by Him, you cannot save any soul no matter how hard you try. You'll realize this once you actually start working.

To whom did God speak? He spoke to Noah, His chosen man. When we reflect on the Bible, we can realize that whenever human beings unite among themselves without giving any heed to God, God then scattered them all (Genesis 11:9). However, when we unite with the will of God, He fulfills His will through His servants. Noah brought into the ark two pairs of unclean animals, male and female. That God told Noah to take two pairs of animals into the ark implies that we should work together with God. For us to work with God, we must accept His heart in its entirety and unite with it. Unless we do this, how else would God be able to entrust us with His work that draws unclean animals into the ark and saves them?

We cannot work with God with our own thoughts. It's because Noah had forsaken his thoughts and united with God that God could choose him as His partner,

work with him, and entrust him with His work. God also wants us to unite with Him in His Church. It's through His servants that the Word of God comes to the Church. Therefore, those who unite with God's Church are His partners, and God is calling them to carry out His work. God needs those who would carry out His work together, united with His Church. But while some people unite with God's Church after being born again, others fail to do so.

On this earth, there are many unclean animals—that is, those who have not been born again. God's Church works to bring these unclean animals into the ark and it needs coworkers who will unite with God for this work of salvation, act together, and take God's work as their own. God raises as His partners those who believe in and follow His will, and it is through these people that God speaks and works.

God said to Noah, "*Come into the ark, you and all your household,*" and He also said to him, "*Take with you seven pairs of clean animals and two pairs of unclean animals, male and female.*" Those who

work with God work according to His Word, not according to their own desires. In other words, God's partners know His heart and work in union with His desire. How can God's servants know His heart? They can know His heart because God manifests it by speaking to His servants. God is alive. And He moves His servants' hearts, works with them, and provides for all their needs. Although God is alive, because He is Spirit, it's through human beings that He carries out the work of saving every soul. The Holy Spirit does not work by Himself. He speaks through the lips of the servants of God, and He invariably works through the Word of God.

God raised Noah as His servant to carry out His work and worked with him. Even though there was countless other people living in that age, God specifically chose Noah as His partner. In this present age also, although there are many people, God has raised us the believers in the gospel of the water and the Spirit as His partners. Having appointed His servants, God works through them. Your faith will

grow tremendously once you realize this. If you believe that God works through His servants; that the Word preached by them is God's Word; and that to work with your heart united with the hearts of these servants is to work with God, then this means that you have matured in your faith. I pray that you would all have such faith.

God worked through Noah, choosing him as His partner, bestowing His grace on him, and fulfilling His will through him. He gave His heart to Noah and spoke His will to him. And God told Noah to carry it out. God had bestowed His grace on Noah. He made Noah work, let His thoughts be known to him, and helped him accomplish His work. Satan, on the other hand, stood against Noah, but Noah was victorious because God worked with him.

If Noah did not have the necessary materials to build the ark and found it hard to complete the ark, then God would have prepared all those materials for him. However, if Noah did not carry out God's commandment even as all the materials were

prepared by Him, and the ark was not built, then this would be disobedience to the will of God. As I see how God had worked through Noah who was joyful to obey His Word, I see that now in this age also, God speaks His plan to His servants and fulfills His will through these servants in the exactly same way. I can appreciate that now as back then, God's heart remains the same.

Noah did everything according to the Word of God. Was he then ruined for this? No, of course not! No true servant of God has ever been ruined. God blesses all who are raised by Him to be His partners. Without these servants of God, it's difficult for anyone to meet God or to hear from Him directly. It's through God's servants that we can realize His will. Therefore, to honor God's servants and to unite with them is to honor and unite with God. God bestowed His grace on Noah. It's a blessing that you are able to carry out God's work in this age, have fellowship with Him, and hear His teachings through His servants. It's inside God's Church that His grace is found.

To Unite with God's Servants Is to Unite with God

God worked on animals only through Noah. He did not work directly on them. Like this, God manifests His will to His servants and works through them. In each age, God calls His partners and works with them. After the passing of Noah's generation, God called Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; after them He called Moses, Joshua, and the Judges; and then He called Samuel, and on to David afterwards. When Israel was divided into the northern and southern kingdoms, God called countless prophets, from Elijah to Elisa, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and so forth, and He spoke through them and worked with them.

God then called John the Baptist to prepare the way of the Lord, and finally, He sent Jesus Christ to this earth. It is those who believe in and unite with His will whom the Lord calls to be His disciples. Infallibly, it is through His servants that God works.

Therefore, to disobey the will of the servants of God is to disobey God Himself. How could you know God's will all by yourself? It's when you know the hearts of the servants of God that you can realize His will. If you look for the will of the servants of God and follow it with full appreciation, then none other than this is to follow the will of God and the life that follows the will of God is the most blessed life for us.

God spoke to Noah in detailed and concrete terms how he should build the ark, saying to him, *"The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, its width fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits. You shall make a window for the ark, and you shall finish it to a cubit from above; and set the door of the ark in its side"* (Genesis 6:15-16). Likewise, God also instructs His servants today how they should build their arks in detail. This means that God speaks to His servants in concrete terms how they should establish and lead the Church. When we listen to and understand this Word of God, and we unite our hearts with this Word, we can be led by God and follow Him.

To know and unite with the hearts of the servants of God is none other than working together with God. God's fellow workers are those who unite themselves with His servants. If anyone does not unite with God's servants, then this person cannot be raised as God's partner. It's nothing more than sheer arrogance for anyone to judge and think all on his own.

I am determined to lead our gathering as the true Church that shares with all the people of the world the grace that we have received from God. Thus far we have received tremendous grace from God, and our Church must share this grace of God with the whole world. It's my sincerest desire that God would lead our Church to grow and share our spiritual wealth, faith, and every spiritual blessing that comes from God. We must unite ourselves with this will of God for His Church and work together. We must carry out such works by faith. Those who are ahead must become God's partners by faith. All those who had built the ark united with Noah were God's partners.

It's the unclean and the clean that we should bring into God's Church. Either those who are clearly sinless or those who are clearly sinners should come into the Church; there is no middle ground here. Of course, the unclean must be cleansed of their sins before entering God's Church; someone who is clearly a sinner must receive the remission of his or her sins through God's Church, be made completely righteous, and then come into the born-again Church of God. There are no wobblers or yo-yo's in God's Church; in God's Church, there is no one who is a sinner one minute and a righteous person the next. It's in such a Church, where both its leaders and saints have clearly been born again, that we can work with God.

When we turn to the genealogy of Adam as written in the Bible, we see that although Adam begot Cain and Abel, Cain killed Abel out of his wickedness, and so Seth continued on with Adam's genealogy. This genealogy is written in Genesis chapter five. Noah was at the end of the genealogy of

faith that began with Adam and continued onto Seth, Enosh, Cainan, Mahalalel, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah, and Lamech, who is the father of Noah, and it was in Noah's days that judgment came.

What God is showing us through the descendants of Adam is that He works through the descendants of faith—that is, through His partners. Even now, God is fulfilling His will only through His servants. Do you believe this, my fellow believers? In other words, God fulfills His will through His partners who follow only His will. God took Noah as His partner. So in Noah's days, God did not work except through Noah. God's appointed leaders work with detailed and specified plans. When it came to building the ark, Noah, too, had worked with such a detailed plan for everything. So while even those who work with God's servants do not always understand the purpose for their work, when the work is completed, they all come to realize why this work was done.

Even at this very moment, God is working

through His partners. When we preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit, everyone who believes in this gospel receives the remission of sins. Those who hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit either reject this gospel or accept it. And we must draw into the ark only those who accept the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The born-again are protected and fed in the ark. God does these things through His servants. Some people take only what is good for them from the words of the servants of God, and refuse to listen to what is disadvantageous to them. When some unhappy situation unfolds later on as a result of not being led by the servants, if they are asked why they refused to listen to the words of God's servants, they say, "When did they say such things to me?" They don't even remember when they heard such words of admonishment from the servants of God precisely because they had always ignored the servant's words and took them too lightly.

Those whose faith is immature do not have the proper perception of God's servants. They just try to

befriend God's servants in carnal terms, since it looks as though they have the power in the Church. However, the saints should try to learn spiritual lessons from God's servants. If you want to hear God's Word, you must hear the Word that comes out through the lips of His servants, for that is the very voice of God. Once you hear the concrete Word of God through His servants, you will be able to realize how God is leading you. Does God speak to you directly? No. It's to His servants that God speaks, and it's through His servants that God works.

Therefore, you must be able to recognize God's partners and unite your heart with them. You have to realize that it's a blessing to be able to recognize God's servants, and to follow them by uniting yourself with their faith and plans. At the time of Noah's flood, all those who co-operated with Noah became God's partners.

God works together with His partners. You must therefore first examine yourself to see whether or not you are really God's coworker. If you are indeed

-serving the gospel united with God’s Church, then you are God’s partner. Even now, God is still calling for His coworkers. He is calling for partners who would work with Him faithfully to fulfill His will.

It is God’s will to save all those destined to destruction in this world. Through His Church, God enables all these doomed people to escape from eternal condemnation. It is the will of God to save and protect everyone through His Church. Therefore, to fulfill this will of God, we must build the ark. We have to make the ark, put rooms in it, prepare food, and get everything ready inside. The ark here denotes God’s Church. It’s to His partners that God has entrusted this work. Even at this very moment, God is still calling for coworkers who will carry out His work diligently.

I ask you not to be happy at just having received the remission of your sins. Rather, you should examine yourself to answer these questions: “Have I really united with God? Have I united with His coworkers? Do I have this faith to unite myself with

God’s Church? Do I trust in God’s servants?” And when you are truly united with God, your heart will be even more joyous. If any soul comes to receive the remission of sins, we must teach these souls how they should live their lives from now on, and that they have been remitted from all their sins. Once born again, it is absolutely indispensable for everyone to know how they should live to lead an upright life. It’s very important to every Christian’s life to work together with God.

What good is it to just be born as a human being? If someone is fed with wolf milk and howls like a wolf, living and dying a beastly life devoid of humanity, then how can this person be described as a human being? However, if someone is born again, and comes to learn and find out the answers to the following questions, then that person is a truly happy person: “What is the will of God for me, and what does He want from me? What is God’s purpose for mankind? In what way does He want me to work? What is His ultimate plan?” I believe that while it is also important for lost

souls to be born again, it is even more important to nurture them once they are born again.

We need to ask ourselves how we should nurture and bring up these newly born-again saints. At the time of Noah's flood, only his family of eight was saved. Except for two pairs of unclean animals and seven pairs of clean animals, male and female, all the rest of the creatures were judged by water. And after 150 days, the water that had covered the world receded. Together with his family and all the animals that had come into the ark, Noah lived a new life in a world whose judgment had passed.

I admonish you to realize the fact that God carried out His work through Noah, and that God took those who worked with Noah as His partners. Even now, God is building Noah's ark. To this end, He is still looking for His partners.

The Church needs workers. Noah was a partner of God who had worked united with God. This unity with God is absolutely critical. Because God fulfills everything through His servants and shares His heart

with them, we must ask Him to let our hearts be united with Him. I hope and pray that all of you will obtain this kind of heart that is united with Gods, and to bring joy to Him as His partners. Remember that Noah was used as God's precious instrument because he had united himself with God. Just like countless animals were saved because Noah was used by God, when we unite with God in our lives, we can also save countless souls. When we abide in God, we can avoid judgment, and we can also live wonderful lives in a world where judgment has passed.

In the new world that opened after the end of the flood, what did Noah plant for the very first time? It was a vine. I admonish you to realize that once this present age is over, there will only remain true joy. That those who are working with God are able to rejoice even in their weariness is because they have the faith that God Himself is with them, and they have hope for the new world that they will all enter. That's why the Bible says, "*He who continually goes forth weeping, Bearing seed for sowing, Shall*

doubtless come again with rejoicing, Bringing his sheaves with him” (Psalm 126:6).

Is your heart always united with God? Have you united with God knowing His plans? I want all of you to unite yourselves with the will of God. Only then can you become God’s partners. God does not work with just anyone who does not unite with His will.

God accomplished every detail of His work by taking Noah as His partner. Even now, God is also speaking to you and manifesting His will to you. Some people unite themselves with this will, while others refuse to do so. But you must all work together with God and be united with Him once you are born again through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. For the born-again, uniting with God in their lives is a must, not a choice. We the born-again must know what is right, and live according to the will of God.

If we are unable to serve the gospel faithfully and blame this on the lack of resources in the Church, then I believe that this is because we have not united ourselves with God fully. Whether our number is

large or small, if we ourselves are really working together with God, then it’s impossible for us to find ourselves in a situation where we are unable to serve the gospel for the lack of resources or financial shortages. If there now isn’t enough financial resources for us to share the gospel all over the world to our hearts’ content, then it’s because we still have not united ourselves with God fully.

Are you God’s partner? Or are you just standing idle as a spectator looking on God’s work? I have no doubt whatsoever that you are God’s partner abiding in His Church. God worked through Noah and fulfilled His every will. I give all my thanks to God. I admonish you all to unite with God’s servants. I am sure that you know what the Truth is, and that you would unite with what is true and right. I hope and pray that you will all become God’s partners who praise the Lord for saving every one of you, who know His plans that would be fulfilled through you, who yearn for this will of God to be fulfilled, and who follow the Lord faithfully. ☒

SERMON

10



We Must Be Able to Discern the Work of the Spirit From That of the Flesh

< Genesis 7:1-24 >

“Then the LORD said to Noah, ‘Come into the ark, you and all your household, because I have seen that you are righteous before Me in this generation. You shall take with you seven each of every clean animal, a male and his female; two each of animals that are unclean, a male and his female; also seven each of birds of the air, male and female, to keep the species alive on the face of all the earth. For after seven more days I will cause it to rain on the earth forty days and forty nights, and I will destroy from the face of the earth all living things that I have made.’ And

Noah did according to all that the LORD commanded him. Noah was six hundred years old when the floodwaters were on the earth. So Noah, with his sons, his wife, and his sons’ wives, went into the ark because of the waters of the flood. Of clean animals, of animals that are unclean, of birds, and of everything that creeps on the earth, two by two they went into the ark to Noah, male and female, as God had commanded Noah. And it came to pass after seven days that the waters of the flood were on the earth. In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. And the rain was on the earth forty days and forty nights. On the very same day Noah and Noah’s sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and Noah’s wife and the three wives of his sons with them, entered the ark—they and every beast after its kind, all cattle after their kind, every creeping thing that creeps on the earth

after its kind, and every bird after its kind, every bird of every sort. And they went into the ark to Noah, two by two, of all flesh in which is the breath of life. So those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him; and the LORD shut him in. Now the flood was on the earth forty days. The waters increased and lifted up the ark, and it rose high above the earth. The waters prevailed and greatly increased on the earth, and the ark moved about on the surface of the waters. And the waters prevailed exceedingly on the earth, and all the high hills under the whole heaven were covered. The waters prevailed fifteen cubits upward, and the mountains were covered. And all flesh died that moved on the earth: birds and cattle and beasts and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, and every man. All in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, all that was on the dry land, died. So He destroyed all living things which were on the face of the ground: both man

and cattle, creeping thing and bird of the air. They were destroyed from the earth. Only Noah and those who were with him in the ark remained alive. And the waters prevailed on the earth one hundred and fifty days.”

Through Noah’s walk of faith shown in today’s Scripture passage, we need to examine here how we should lead our lives. Noah had built the ark for one hundred years, and the great flood came on the year when Noah completed the ark. Seven days before the coming of the flood, according to God’s Word, Noah called into the ark his family and every species of animals and of the birds in the sky. Of course, it was God who had compelled them to come into the ark, but Noah had made all the preparations by trusting in the Word of God. To put it simply, Noah had carried out the work of the Spirit.

Likewise, while living on this earth, we must also live for the Lord, and we must also carry out the

work of the Spirit. We must preach to everyone the gospel proclaiming that God has blotted out all the sins of every soul, and we must enable all to receive the remission of their sins. None other than this is the very work of the Spirit.

We must clearly separate the work of the Spirit from that of the flesh, or otherwise our souls may go astray. It is written, *“For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace” (Romans 8:5-6)*. Spiritual work is never compatible with the work of the flesh. However, because we still retain our flesh, we do both the work of the flesh and the work of the Spirit even though we have been born again. It’s not the case that we do just one type of work. Nevertheless, before God, we the born-again must seek after only one work. Once you and I have been saved, we must infallibly carry out the work of the Spirit. As it is written in the above Scripture passage, those who

desire to live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who yearn to live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. Although we have both the flesh and the spirit, we must be devoted only to the work of the Spirit. What kind of work must we carry out? We must carry out the work of the Spirit. This is serving God.

What then is the work of the Spirit? It is to save souls by preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The Lord Jesus said, *“God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:24)*. The work of the Spirit is none other than preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ who has blotted out all the sins of mankind. When we carry out the work of saving people’s souls by preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit to them, God’s blessings will also follow. Only those who have been born again by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit can set their minds on the work of the Spirit, discern it from the work of the flesh, and carry it out. That’s why God said that whatever animal that

has divided hooves—that is, cloven hooves—are clean animals (Leviticus 11:3). Just as clean animals have cloven hooves, we the born-again must clearly separate the work of the Spirit from that of the flesh, and carry out this spiritual work. Unless the righteous clearly separate what is spiritual from what is fleshly, they can do neither the work of the Spirit nor the work of the flesh. Even though it's possible for you and I to sometimes do the work of the flesh and the work of the Spirit on other times, we must still discern the work of the Spirit from the work of the flesh clearly and conscientiously. To live for the gospel that has saved us is God's work and the work of the Spirit. It's when we think about how we have been saved that we can carry out the work of the Spirit. Remember that it is the work of the Spirit to save souls. Engrave in your hearts one more time that it is the work of the Spirit to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to people and thereby enable their souls to receive the remission of their sins.

For the born-again, righteous believers in the

gospel of the water and the Spirit to carry out the work of the Spirit, they must know exactly what the spiritual work is and what the carnal work is. The righteous that have been born again through the gospel of the water and the Spirit have both the Spirit and the flesh. Unlike the unbelievers who have only the flesh, the born-again believers have the Holy Spirit in their hearts. So those who have been born again through the gospel of the water and the Spirit carry out both the work of the Spirit and the work of the flesh as well. This is precisely why the righteous must discern exactly what the work of the Spirit is and what the work of the flesh is, and seek after the work of the Spirit. If any righteous person does not know what the work of the Spirit is, or how to carry it out, but only seeks after the work of the flesh, then this person is leading a wretched and mistaken life. We must all realize that preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit is the work of the Spirit, and seek after this spiritual work.

When we meet someone, we pray, “Lord, please

save this soul.” In reality, God has already blotted out all the sins of this soul also. However, we must still preach the gospel to the person, so that he may now realize this fact and believe in it. We must thereby lead him to his salvation. Preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not something that just anyone can do. This work is something that can be done only by those who have been redeemed first by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and this is none other than the work of the Spirit. It is when we preach the gospel of Truth proclaiming that God has saved everyone from sin by blotting out the sins of all the people in this world, that souls can reach their salvation by hearing this Truth and believing in it with their hearts. Therefore, depending on what kind of work we do, people can either be saved or remain unable to be saved.

We have been saved through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. However, it’s critically important what kind of work we the saved people do. All of us must understand fully what kind of work we

must do to carry out the work of the Spirit. That’s because unless we know what the work of the Spirit is, we cannot carry it out. What is the work of the Spirit? It is to preach the gospel to people, believing, “These souls will be saved when we preach the gospel.”

Each one of us must also discern and carry out the work of the Spirit individually, but this is something that’s very difficult to do. In other words, it’s not so easy to carry out the work of the Spirit, which requires us to preach the gospel remembering that this is what God really wants from us. Although this work is not so easy, at the same time, however, it is also simple. If we go where the work of the flesh abounds, we are bound to do the work of the flesh, but if we go to where the work of the Spirit is carried out, we are bound to do the work of the Spirit. If we abide in God’s Church that carries out the work of the Spirit and share fellowship with the righteous, then we will automatically come to do the work of the Spirit. Yet despite this, we still sometimes do

something else entirely off the mark, instead of carrying out the work of the Spirit. We must therefore realize clearly what the work of the Spirit is and what the work of the flesh is. We are here to serve the work that God has already done. We must offer ourselves to the work of spreading the gospel, but the problem is that sometimes we don't realize this duty.

God told Noah to build the ark when he turned 500 years old, and Noah completed this ark at the age of 600. When the ark was ready, God said to Noah, "You and your family must now go into the ark. And you shall take with you seven pairs of clean animals and two pairs of unclean animals, male and female." Why did God command Noah to put in two pairs of unclean animals and seven pairs of clean animals? That's because while the clean animals had to be preserved completely and flourish once the flood was over, the unclean animals only had to remain in existence. In contrast, the clean animals had to thrive and be perfect. That's why God specified seven pairs

of male and female. As you may know well, the number seven in the Bible denotes God and perfection, while the number six implies man and imperfection. Look at what God has done for us, the work of our salvation. He has blotted out all our sins perfectly. God's Church, which preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit, is perfect in carrying out God's work. Just as Noah had carried out his spiritual work to perfection for a hundred years, we can do it also. For Noah to build the ark, and for us to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to people, both are the same spiritual work.

Even though we do both the work of the Spirit and the work of the flesh, we must be more devoted to the work of the Spirit. We all do the work of the flesh by nature, even without anyone telling us. Unclean animals can survive and multiply with just two pairs put in the ark. However, clean animals are weak, and so if only two pairs of male and female are put in, the species may not be preserved. That is why God told Noah to take into the ark seven pairs of

clean animals to preserve their perfection.

We must believe in this work that God has done for us perfectly, and with this faith we must carry out the work of the Spirit. In other words, even though we the born-again still retain our flesh, because we also have the Spirit with us, we must do God's work. That's why the Apostle Paul said that treasure was put in a clay vessel, as it is written, "*But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us*" (2 Corinthians 4:7). This means that even though the born-again are weak and insufficient in their flesh, they still have the Holy Spirit inside them. We must think of the work of the Spirit, ruminate on how God has saved us humans, and carry out His work. It is precisely for this mission that we have been called. We must all preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to people, and do the work of the Spirit that enables all those who believe in this Truth to reach their salvation.

What does it mean to do the work of the gospel? Doing the work of the gospel literally means carrying

out the work of the Spirit. It is not just some kind of lesson teaching us to be morally upright. When we preach to souls how God has perfectly saved the entire human race, and people are saved as a result, we have to then nurture them to stand even more firmly on the gospel and prevent false prophets from leading them to death again. None other than this is the work of the Spirit. In short, it is God's work to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit and defend this gospel. Hence, we must fight and defeat false prophets, defend the gospel from their deception, and no matter how large their number is, never compromise with them. Uniting ourselves with God's Church, we must always preach the gospel day and night, and whatever we do, we must do everything for the gospel.

Those who are ignorant of the gospel of the water and the Spirit just say that we should believe in Jesus and lead a godly life. However, the more one tries to lead a holy life, the more one discovers that they are incapable of this. It is when people live for

the gospel of the water and the Spirit that they can lead a holy life. All the ministers born again of water and the Spirit must always preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit whenever they preach. Preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit is only possible when the preacher keeps this gospel in his heart. In contrast, those who fail to keep the gospel of the water and the Spirit in their hearts can never preach this gospel in their sermons. They only preach to their followers about living a virtuous life, becoming rich by believing in Jesus, and getting healed from their illnesses by His name. But this is the very work of the flesh. Such false preachers may become wealthy in their flesh and be honored by the people of the world, but they are doing just a carnal work that has absolutely nothing to do with God's work. Even among the born-again, many have betrayed the gospel and gone astray, but we have defended the gospel despite suffering many losses and persecution for it. And that is why we are still preaching this gospel now.

A minister who is truly carrying out God's work is someone who preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Since preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit means defending the gospel by faith, even when such people of faith preach this gospel all the time in their sermons, they never get tired of it but still preach it forcefully. A sermon that proclaims the genuine gospel is the most spiritual sermon, and at the same time, it is also the most difficult sermon. If one fails to keep his heart's spirituality pure and rather follows his carnal desires, he can never preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit. For such people, the most difficult sermon to give is the true gospel sermon.

Throughout the whole wide world, there are only extremely few people preaching that Jesus has blotted out everyone's sins thoroughly with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. When we first began to spread this gospel of Truth all over the world through our literature ministry, our workers in charge of Internet ministry made an extensive use of

search engines to see if there were anyone serving the gospel of the water and the Spirit like us by any chance. But nowhere was anyone preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Even now, although there are many people preaching, “Because Jesus has blotted out all our sins, we have become righteous people without sin,” it is not the gospel of the water and the Spirit that they are preaching. They only preach that Jesus took away all our sins on the Cross, and since this is the extent of their knowledge, they are unable to preach anywhere beyond that. Even though they know the final answer—that one is made sinless if he believes in Jesus properly—they do not know the exact process through which Jesus has blotted out all their sins, but only His blood on the Cross. That is precisely why no one has ever received the remission of their sins by listening to their sermons. And that is why we, as those who have been truly born again, must preach and defend the gospel of the water and the Spirit even if our lives are put at risk.

This is the reason why our ministers give their full attention to the proclamation of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and all our brothers and sisters are also living for this gospel. And pooling our strength together, we are all spreading the gospel of the water and the Spirit throughout the whole wide world. We must let the true gospel be known to all those who are being deceived by false gospels.

But what about you? Are you able to discern the true gospel from false ones? Even when we searched through the whole Christian community all over the world, there was no one preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit like us. Every preacher only speaks of the blood of the Cross. But is anyone saved through the blood of the Cross alone? No, no one can reach salvation in that way. Even among famous theologians, there is no one saved. Nor were the founders of different theological schools saved. Only those who have been born again by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit are sinless, and only they can confess to God with a clear conscience

that they have no sin. Therefore, it is we, as those born-again through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, who must preach this gospel of Truth. We must serve the Lord uniting our hearts with our ministers.

When we preach the gospel, it's quite possible for some people not to accept it. There is no need to preach the gospel to them against their will. If they have difficulty understanding this gospel, all that we need to do is just explain the Word of God to them slowly step by step, first telling them about sin, and then about the Law and God's judgment, so that they would be able to see their fundamentally evil selves and accept this gospel. Once they clearly recognize that they are destined to hell, it's after this that we should preach the gospel. If they still stand against this gospel even after understanding its entire message, then you should simply stop preaching it to them. We should look for those who are willing to accept this gospel, lead them to reach their salvation, and nurture them carefully as we nurture our own children.

If we really do a good job at preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit to people in detail, then it's guaranteed to yield more people who believe in this gospel with the heart. Whoever believes in this gospel wholeheartedly, rather than accepting it just as a matter of knowledge, will surely be made sinless by the Holy Spirit. Anyone who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit with his heart has no sin. Just as powerful dynamite can wipe out an entire building with its explosion, if one would just hear and believe in the gospel Word of the water and the Spirit, he will be made perfectly sinless. That's why the Apostle Paul declared, *"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes"* (Romans 1:16). The word "power" here is "*dunamis*" in Greek, and it's from this word that the English word "dynamite" is derived. Put differently, this gospel of the water and the Spirit has a tremendous explosive power that can wipe out all the sins in anyone's heart once and for all. So, all that we have to do is just preach this

Truth. Because this gospel is the true gospel, if only one would hear and believe in it, their hearts will be made sinless.

However, by hearing the gospel Word just once, few can actually receive the remission of sins. Everyone has his own thoughts and biases, and so most people don't surrender to the Word of God so easily. Hence, we have to keep preaching the gospel repeatedly, and those who hear us must cast aside their own thoughts if they really want to be born again. They will also then eventually come to believe.

Within the next few years, God will spread the gospel of the water and the Spirit throughout the whole wide world. If the born-again carry out the work of the gospel as commanded by God, He will make sure that nothing stands in their way. It's only after the gospel of the water and the Spirit is fully preached to every corner in this world that natural disasters will unfold and war will be waged in a global scale. Even war can break out only under

God's permission. The Bible says, "*The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, Like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes*" (Proverbs 21:1). Even if a reservoir is full of water, its floodgate is opened by its operator only. Likewise, God alone rules over all the hearts of the kings of this world. When God stirs the heart of each nation's ruler to declare war, the whole world will be swept away by war, but before the gospel is fully spread, God will put fear in each ruler's heart and prevent him from waging war. In other words, no matter who rules over what nation, God rules over everyone's heart, and He rules over even the hearts of those who stand against the gospel; therefore, this world will never end unless God allows it. The Bible says that even a sparrow does not fall to the ground unless permitted by God (Matthew 10:29). Everything, in other words, happens only under God's permission.

Throughout the world, there are many coworkers who have received the remission of their sins through our literature ministry. They must stay

away from pastors or missionaries who have not been truly born again. And they must always gather together to have meetings and worship services with their fellow born-again people, and preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit every single day. They will then be able to defend their faith, and many souls will come to be saved.

God will raise leaders wherever His Church is founded. When those appointed to leadership in each branch church unite with the head church that was established first, then God will give them strength. Our coworkers must hold meetings, administer worship services, preach the Word, and bear witness whenever they have time. I admonish you to persevere through in patience, and carry out the work of the gospel waiting for the Day of the Lord. And never pass around collection plates during the worship service. If someone wants to give offerings, he should be allowed to give when and how much he wants to give. So instead of passing around collection plates, place an offertory box by the entrance of your

church, and have two people manage it. Do you realize that what I am saying is of God's Word? If this gospel of the water and the Spirit that I have been preaching is indeed the true gospel, then you must also trust in my words that are preached based on the Word of God. I am not saying here that all my arguments are unconditionally correct. Rather, when looked based on the Word of God, this gospel of the water and the Spirit is the Truth, and that is why it is only correct for all of us to serve the gospel. And what is propounded according to the Word of God inspired by the Holy Spirit is right. It's when people believe in the gospel Truth of the water and the Spirit that they can truly receive the remission of their sins. That is why I am telling you that you must believe in this gospel of the water and the Spirit.

You have both the Spirit and the flesh. Noah also had both the flesh and the Spirit. Just because someone is a man of God, this does not mean that he would always be doing the work of the Spirit. Every saint does both types of works because even a born-

again person still retains the flesh despite having received the Holy Spirit. Yet Noah still carried out the work of the Spirit.

What you must be careful, however, is that you should never disparage your leaders for doing the work of the flesh. Noah carried out the work of God wholeheartedly for a hundred years. And when he came out of the ark after the flood, he planted a vineyard in the new world. There then came a time when Noah got drunk on the wine made from the vine. Seeing this, Ham spoke ill of Noah's blemish of the flesh, and because of this, Ham was cursed.

It's possible for even God's servants to have carnal blemishes, and our brothers and sisters must not criticize them for this. The Bible writes that it was a great mistake for Ham to make an issue out of Noah's fleshly aspects. Even though Noah may have been insufficient in his flesh, he was still a man who had carried out God's work throughout his entire lifetime. In other words, no matter what anyone might say, Noah carried out the work of the Spirit.

He had built the ark and told everyone else to come into it. It's because people did not listen to Noah's words and refused to come into the ark that they were not saved; everyone who believed in Noah's words and came into the ark was able to be delivered from God's judgment. Noah was a man who had carried out the work of the Spirit.

When we examine Noah's walk carefully, we can find out clearly what kind of work God has entrusted to us. And we can also find out how we should carry out the work of the Spirit. Noah was also saved by God's grace. The Bible says that the water covered the earth for 150 days (Genesis 7:24). This means that the world was submerged under water for five months. Since the whole planet was covered under water for 150 days, no life form that required air to breathe could survive.

The same will happen in the end times. Everyone who does not believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit will be suffocated by his sins and eventually be cast into hell. Only those who come

into the ark will be saved. So in 1 Peter 3:21, it is written, “*There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism.*” In the Old Testament’s time, God had judged with water those who did not believe in His Word but saved those who believed in His Word. In the age of the New Testament, Jesus has saved us by being baptized and thus taking upon all our sins. That’s why the antitype that saves us is the baptism of Jesus. If you live thoughtlessly, you are bound to do only the work of the flesh. That’s why we must do the work of the Spirit out of our own volition.

Let’s consider here how rooms were made in the ark. God’s Church clearly and decisively divides the saved from the unsaved. God’s Church is a church that bestows mercy on everyone. For anyone to come into God’s Church wholly, he must first be saved by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Even though unclean animals had also come into the ark along with clean animals, they were not mixed together. Rooms were made and different animals were put in different rooms according to each

species, from cattle to rabbits and sheep, all put in different rooms and only with the same species. So even today, no matter who may come into God’s Church, anyone who is not saved cannot mix with the righteous, for they are still sinners. God divides the saved from the unsaved, putting the saved people with the other saved people, and the unsaved people with the other unsaved people.

Do you think that the Bible is taught in seminaries? No, that’s not actually the case. Our Mission School is probably the only place where the Bible is read, lectures are given based on the Scriptures, and different issues are clearly debated. Even Christian theologians did not get their degrees by researching and explaining what the Bible is actually saying. They received their doctoral degrees by writing dissertations on certain issues related to Christianity all according to their own thoughts. All these things came out of their own heads, not the Word of God.

As the Christian leaders of this age have not

been born again, they all interpret the Bible according to their own notions and desires. Let's take an example here. It's written in Malachi 3:10-11:

*“Bring all the tithes into the storehouse,
That there may be food in My house,
And try Me now in this,’
Says the LORD of hosts,
‘If I will not open for you the windows of heaven
And pour out for you such blessing
That there will not be room enough to receive it.
And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes,
So that he will not destroy the fruit of your
ground,
Nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the
field,’
Says the LORD of hosts.”*

The core message of this passage is that everything belongs to the Lord God. That's why God had made the people of Israel offer a tenth of their harvests to His Temple. God had appointed the tribe of Levi to priesthood, but there were eleven more

tribes apart from the Levites. Unless the eleven tribes offered the tithes of their harvest, the Levites, who were priests, could not keep their livelihood. That's because priests had no other job. So the Levites lived on the tithes offered by the other tribes. That's why offering a tenth of their harvest was serving God. And by this institution, all things worked together for good. God was saying, “Priests should have no other job, but carry out My work and serve Me fulltime. That's why you should offer a tenth of your harvests. While it is the priests who will live on this tenth, I will consider you to be serving Myself, and I will bless you.”

That is the original biblical meaning of the tithe, but now in this age, many Christians are abusing it. They are using it only literally. They say that if one offers a tenth of his income, he will become rich. They teach that everything will be okay if only one would offer a tenth of his income, even if they have not received the remission of their sins. This, however, is not actually true.

Those who carry out God's work do not just give a tenth of their income. Because their everything was given by God, those who have received the remission of their sins live entirely for God. Offering just a tenth is very small. God feeds all those who live for Him, clothes them, and meets all their needs. In other words, if you work entirely for God, He will fill all your needs in abundance. Since we have received everything from God, it's only a matter of course that we should serve Him wholeheartedly. And to those who truly serve the Lord with all their hearts, God will give them even more so that they may serve Him more. In other words, to those who serve Him more, God will give them even more.

My conscience is clear before God especially when it comes to the financial management of our mission organization. Spreading the gospel throughout the whole world requires a lot of financial resources. That's why I spend all the offerings dedicated to God to proclaim the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Our saints also know very well that all

their contributions are used for the gospel, and so they give offerings without any concern. We should never spend their offerings on just anything. Every offering must be spent on where it's absolutely needed.

No minister should ever pile up money for himself. Yet despite this, some ministers think that whatever money they make is theirs. That is not right. Every penny that comes into God's Church must be unconditionally spent to serve the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We can still prosper even when we offer our everything. If we live for the Lord, we will live in abundance, but if we do not live for the Lord, we will live in poverty.

God know all about our hearts and acts. Those who live for themselves will perish away. But God helps the spiritual people who carry out His work faithfully. The ministry workers in God's Church are fundamentally different from the pastors in worldly churches. Whatever they do, they are all distinct. In the days to come, we will spend even more financial

resources to save just one more soul, which is still more precious than everything under the heavens. Even though we are making so much investment throughout the world, God's Church is still filled with prosperity. That is how God's Church is supposed to be.

We must serve the gospel with all our hearts. All our bodies, hearts, and possessions must be offered to the Lord. This is our faith. We must have big vessels of faith. God says, "*Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen*" (*Hebrews 11:1*). Although the fruit that we seek by faith may not be seen with our eyes right now, we will be able to see it eventually. While we pray for this fruit when it is not seen, God will make it visible to our sight in His time. For the born-again, it is only right to carry out God's work. This is the proper life of the born-again, and it is when we thus carry out God's work that we can enjoy all His blessings. ☒

SERMON

11



Cast Aside Your Carnal Thoughts That Are Like a Mist

< Genesis 2:4-17 >

“This is the history of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, before any plant of the field was in the earth and before any herb of the field had grown. For the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the earth, and there was no man to till the ground; but a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground. And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. The LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed. And out of the

ground the LORD God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Now a river went out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it parted and became four riverheads. The name of the first is Pishon; it is the one which skirts the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold. And the gold of that land is good. Bdellium and the onyx stone are there. The name of the second river is Gihon; it is the one which goes around the whole land of Cush. The name of the third river is Hiddekel; it is the one which goes toward the east of Assyria. The fourth river is the Euphrates. Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to tend and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, ‘Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.’”

The Word Spoken to the Spiritually Blind

I believe that those of you who are carefully listening to this Word today are God's blessed people.

It is written in Genesis 2:4-6: *“This is the history of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, before any plant of the field was in the earth and before any herb of the field had grown. For the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the earth, and there was no man to till the ground; but a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground.”*

I have been a very pensive person ever since childhood. I tended to be a quiet child, and so I did not talk much, but in my head I was always thinking about something. Whether I was eating a meal or walking somewhere, I was so pensive that I sometimes forgot to greet the elderly in my neighborhood and was rebuked for being impolite.

As you might know yourself, in the old countryside, not greeting the elderly appropriately was a cause for chastisement. Frankly, few people in this world actually fulfill everything they have dreamed about. But as everyone is entitled to a little delusion of his own, everyone has a dream and imagines about the future. In this light, perhaps it's inevitably for people to live with certain delusions or imaginations. Anyways, my mind was preoccupied with many thoughts like this, running with all kinds of imaginations, sometimes about unattainable things, and in this way I was living in my own little cocoon.

My fellow believers, what awaits those who do not believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit even as they are ignorant of it? The judgment for their sins awaits them. This reminds me of an old Korean saying: “It's better to roll in manure in this world than to die and go to the next world.” I don't think this saying is entirely groundless. Even though it's tough to live in this world and everyone is born empty-handed and must leave empty-handed, but the

just and dreadful judgment of God awaits every sinner, and that's why life in this world is better than going to hell. Our ancestors did not know about the gospel of the water and the Spirit, but it seems as if they knew of it, even if only vaguely, and that fearful judgment and hell followed death.

Like this, most people seem to have some awareness that if there is sin in their hearts, they will be judged for these sins. Although they may not know the Word of God, they at least seem to be conscious of the fact that judgment awaits them. This is probably the reason why many people look for some divine being to be saved. And that is why there are so many false deities in this world which is worshipped by countless religions. Although God is one, human beings have made many false gods because of their hearts' sins. In other words, even though it is only the Triune God who brings the Truth and salvation to human beings, because they do not know this Savior God, they are trying to rely on something else on their own. That's why some people

bow before any boulder or tree that looks even slightly majestic, and place their faith in such inanimate objects.

Man is a genius when it comes to making worldly religions. People like to bow before anything that looks even slightly magnificent. That's because human beings are by nature weak, and this is why when they come across something that seems better than them, they are prone to think it's divine and to rely on it. Because they are fragile beings by nature, their hearts are always empty until they meet the perfect Lord. That's why those with a void or empty heart come to have worldly religions and rely on them, only to perish in vain in the end. They believe in one religion for several years, but when this does not satisfy them, they try another one.

The Bible says, "*He [God] has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end*" (Ecclesiastes 3:11). God has given everyone a yearning for eternity. In

other words, God made human beings yearn for Him in their lives. So no one can find true satisfaction until they meet the perfect God. This is why human beings have come up with worldly religions, sometimes even worshiping other human beings. Because God has thus given man a yearning for eternity, everyone is born with a dream. Having thus been born with a dream, man spends the rest of his life trying to fulfill this dream.

However, dreams are notoriously difficult to fulfill. Even when a dream is fulfilled, it leaves one feeling empty and void in the end. People then look for something else, for something bigger. It is man's destiny to live the rest of his life like this only to face death in the end. Of course, in this world there also are some people who have led a morally upright life and done many good things, but even these people are fearful before death. Why is this so? It is because they have not solved the problem of sin which is in their hearts. It's because they have not, as I mentioned a while ago, found the Truth and

discovered what is everlasting. Unfortunately, this present age is a hopeless one where most people have lost their dreams.

Human Beings Are in the Flesh That Is Made of Dust

Although the human heart yearns for eternity, the human body is made of dust. This is because God made man with dust. So, as people yearn for God and eternity in their hearts, everyone wants to live virtuously and tries to help others. When you ask children what they want to become when they grow up, they all say that they want to be good and virtuous. But when you look at their behavior, you see that it's far removed from such desires and hopes. They don't obey their mothers, they throw a fit when they can't get their way, and they beat up kids weaker than they are. It's not as though this is what their parents had taught them. Every parent teaches the

kids to be good, to study hard, and to become respectable people. They are taught the same things by their teachers in school. But even as these kids learn these things, bullying in school is a serious problem nowadays. Bullies beat up their classmates and take their lunch, money, and some of them have even died from school violence. What comes to your mind when you see these kids? I for one think that even though the human heart yearns for eternity, the human body is made of dust.

When you go outside early in the morning, you can sometimes see a bank of mist arising. What is the nature of this mist? It then disappears once the sun is up. When there is no sunlight this mist remains almost entirely intact, drastically reducing visibility. Man's body is like this mist.

God made man with dust and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. Thus, God made him a spiritual being. That is why, according to the image of God, all of us have in our hearts an aversion to commit sin and a desire to do good deeds and live an

upright life. In our hearts, we seek everything that is good. But what is the reality? The reality is that our bodies do the exact opposite of what our hearts desire, committing sin, taking delight in someone else's misfortune, and doing all kinds of evil deeds. For instance, when there is a car accident, the traffic becomes congested not just on that particular lane but also on the other lane. Why is it like that? It is because people on the opposite lane slow down to see the accident site. I have actually witnessed this quite often. But the human heart is so evil that people don't just see the crash, but they even feel disappointed if no one is seriously hurt and only the cars are wrecked. This is how human nature really is.

This is what today's Scripture passage is teaching us. This is the fundamental nature of mankind which is so evil, and which it is so clearly revealed in the Book of Genesis, showing us that we all human beings, having been made of dust, become sinners irrespective of our wills, all due to Adam falling into sin. In other words, man's heart has lost

the image of God. Originally, human beings were not made to commit sin and go to hell. Rather, God made man in His image to send him to Heaven and live with him there forever. The problem however, is that man fell into Satan's temptation.

Fundamentally speaking, man was made as a spiritual being from his very existence. Man has not been made a robot. Put differently, man does not move automatically at the command of God. Instead of making us like robots, God gave us all a free will so that we can get closer to Him willingly and to build a personal relationship with Him. Love is something that yearns to meet someone, and when one has not met the lover for a long time, the person misses his or her lover even more. However, the love the Bible talks about is not just saying it with words, "I love you." Rather, it is something that has a deep-rooted affection towards the object. Although God has done everything for us, He did not allow us to take this mutual love with Him too lightly. That is why God made man as an insufficient being from the

beginning. By making us human beings so insufficient that we can't help but commit sin, God made us humans mired in sin so that we would realize that we are bound to hell and must seek His help. God did all these things because He wanted to share His true love with us. That is why God gave up the life of His Son Jesus Christ, and with this sacrifice, God made His love known to everyone, personally saying to human beings, "I love you more than Myself." It's thanks to this that we are, by accepting this Truth through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, able to know the true love of God and share it with each other.

What would have happened if God had otherwise made us humans as mere robots, which could only be moved by touching a button? A robot knows no concept of disobedience. By the same token, if we were made like this, we could not have known that God loves us. If this were the case, then we would have moved like a machine whenever God made us work. If you go to an automated factory,

everything is done by robots. Robots do what they are programmed to do without making any mistake at all. But robots are needed just for work; if we were robots, it would be impossible for us to share love with God. Could you love God if you were just a robot? No, of course not! It was God's full intention to make His relationship with us humans personal, like the relationship between parents and children, between a husband and a wife. That is why God gave us free wills and permitted everything from the very beginning.

What about Satan then? Satan is an evil spirit that also received a free will from God, but with this free will he stood against God's authority and was thus driven out of Heaven. So, as the Devil could not prevail over God, he started to attack those whom God loves the most. In other words, although Satan was determined to continue to stand against God, he could not overcome Him, and that's why he chose another way to torment God's heart the most. This is attacking us human beings, God's most beloved

creatures. That is why Satan has been deceiving human beings with his sweet talks into committing sin and standing against God ever since. And he is still trying to drag them to hell along with him. This is the strategy the Devil has chosen to hurt God's heart. Is Satan not so wily and cruel?

This is the reason why we human beings have been struggling so much because of the Devil. Is God then standing idle because He cannot defeat the Devil? No, that's not the case. God has allowed Satan to work on this earth in order to see whether or not we humans really desire His precious love more than the physical pleasures of this world and the temptation of the Devil. God has given man a yearning for eternity. The question then is, whether human beings, who have all received this holy desire, actually yearn for eternity, or yearns for the perishable only to be judged and be cast into hell. It's to find this out that God has placed us on this earth, and He is saying that only those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit are saved from all

their sins.

Such teachings are recorded in today's Scripture passage. Human beings cannot know God on their own. It's because we are imprisoned in sin that we cannot know the righteousness of God even as we seek to find it out. In other words, the one who has power over the air, which is Satan, is blocking us from God, and this makes it impossible for us to know the righteousness of God on our own.

Human Beings Are Living with Mist-like Carnal Thoughts

Genesis 2:5-6 say, *“Before any plant of the field was in the earth and before any herb of the field had grown. For the LORD God had not caused it to rain on the earth, and there was no man to till the ground; but a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground.”* That there was only a mist watering the face of the ground means that the people

of faith had not yet appeared on the earth. Put differently, as there was no one on this earth proclaiming the salvation of Jesus Christ, there were no true children of God. The rain here refers to the grace of God that saturates the earth, or as it is known, the human heart. Therefore, as the grace of God had not yet descended into the hearts of people, the Word had not reached the earth to proclaim that Jesus had blotted out all their sins. Before Jesus Christ the Son of God came to this earth to sow the gospel seed of the water and the Spirit into people's hearts so that it could bear abundant fruit, nothing good could ever come out of the human heart.

What was it that came out from the earth until that time? Human beings had to look for the real Truth of salvation in a state where they had lost the image of God. In other words, they had to find something reliable even if it were just according to their own thoughts. So these foolish people began to worship inanimate objects as their gods, from the moon to the sun, the stars, the mountains, the rocks,

and so forth, all according to their own thoughts and what was in their sight. They also began to worship and to follow after man, as indicated by the reverence that Confucius and Buddha still command in many parts of the world. Like this, human beings worship sages and various majestic natural beings as their gods, and to this end they bow down before these images that they themselves have made. Although these people look foolish to those of us who have found the righteousness of God, they themselves do not think so. Far from it, they would be deeply offended if we ridiculed them. It just goes to show that there are all kinds of people.

As I have said before, many people worship some inanimate object as their god. Those who worship the sun, the moon, or the stars in the sky are equally foolish. Sun worshippers may think they are better than moon worshippers, but it's like arguing over which midget is taller. Even if a midget is tall, would he be taller than any person of normal height? No matter how intelligent the human race may be,

everyone is a weak human being. In God's sight, in other words, all human beings are no more than foolish sinners.

Because mankind's carnal thoughts are like a mist, people imagine everything according to their wishes in their lives. As I mentioned previously, a mist does not disappear until the sun comes up. Without the sunlight, the mist remains intact, and it hinders our visibility. Many Christians preach to others to believe in God while following their own mist-like carnal thoughts, but through this no one can meet Jesus Christ who has come by the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Indeed, even though some Christians have believed in Jesus all their lives, their salvation is clouded like this every day. Can anyone go to Heaven by believing in Jesus like this? I have asked many Christians, "You have been a Christian for so long until now; does this then mean that you will be able to go Heaven?" But some Christians reply, "How can I be sure of this? I won't find out until I am dead." Most Christians don't like to be

asked such a question because they are not sure of their salvation. This is because most Christians do not know the righteousness of God. These people cannot provide the right answer to such a question. They might be able to answer if they are asked how they can be blessed. Even kids in elementary school all know about such questions. Ask a little kid how you should live to be blessed. In all likelihood, the kid will say that you will be blessed if you do good deeds and help others.

What should we then teach in God's Church? We must teach Jesus and the pure gospel of the water and the Spirit that constitutes the righteousness of salvation. Because most Christian leaders do not know anything about the righteousness of Jesus, they instead teach the way of how to be blessed. If you seriously ask these pastors about the gospel of the water and the Spirit, some of them will even rebuke you for asking such a question to them. But if you find a true servant of God who knows and believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and you raise

this question to him, then he will give you a straightforward answer and teach you about this extremely important Truth. If one is a servant of God, should he not teach the righteousness of the Lord clearly? Yet because most Christians are filled with their own fleshly thoughts that are like a mist, they believe in Jesus as their Savior without knowing this true gospel. However, the truth is that no one can receive the real remission of sins until they find the true righteousness of Jesus. After all, a mist is removed only if there is sunlight.

Most Christians simply think that they are blessed just by believing in Jesus. These blessing-oriented Christians do actually believe in Jesus fervently. But their faith is not based on the Word of God. They are prone to believe in their own pastors' words blindly more than on the pure Word of God, so this is why they believe everything that their pastors tell them. Like this, many Christians believe in Jesus as their Savior blindly, without knowing the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Some Christians are also sure that if one believes in Jesus, they will receive three-fold blessings. And when they think their faith is lacking, they offer special prayers while fasting. But does true faith spring forth just because one does such things? No, of course not! At the minimum, one must know and believe that Jesus fulfilled the righteousness of God by being baptized by John the Baptist and was crucified. True salvation is reached only when we believe in Jesus Christ properly, the One who has saved us from the sins of this world. In fact, believing in Jesus Christ without knowing His righteousness is little more than fanaticism. Yet despite this, many Christians mistakenly believe according to their own fleshly thoughts that Jesus has saved them through His blood on the Cross alone.

All Mists Disappear When the Sun Shines

My fellow believers, we are saved from sin only

when we know and believe in the righteousness of God properly. If we learn about the righteousness of God and know it, and believe in Jesus Christ as our Savior, we will receive this abundant grace of salvation. The problem, however, is that most Christians are trying to understand the gospel of the water and the Spirit only according to their thoughts, even as this genuine gospel is too simple for anyone to misunderstand. Moreover, when some people listen to the Word of God, they think to themselves, “Why is that pastor saying such things? He is strange!” They find it hard to listen to the Word of God when it’s different from their thoughts, and this is why their minds become seized with confusion. Whenever you listen to God’s Word, the first thing you must do is to cast aside your carnal thoughts; if you otherwise notice that the Word is different from your own thoughts, then you cannot really understand God’s Word of righteousness even when you hear it. This is why those who are spiritually deaf cannot comprehend the Truth even when it is spoken

in their ears in a simple way.

However, when you throw away your fleshly thoughts, make yourself comfortable in your seat, carefully listen to the gospel Word of the water and the Spirit, and believe in this gospel, then the spiritual sunlight will shine upon your heart and this Word of Truth will be imprinted in your mind. All your mist-like fleshly thoughts will then disappear so rapidly that you will wonder if you really had them at all. Even the thickest fog disappears completely when the sun shines. Likewise, once you grasp the righteousness of Jesus Christ fully, all your confusion will be eliminated, and you will also receive the remission of sins by believing in the Truth. My fellow believers, all the righteousness of God is contained in His Word. The remission of our sins and the forever-unchanging Truth are all contained in this Word, and it is from this Word of God that everything we need in our lives of faith flows.

Unless what we believe in has truly come from Heaven, then whatever it is, it is no more than a false

teaching. What comes out of man's fleshly thoughts cannot prevail over the righteousness of God. I ask you to realize here that the real truth cannot come out of man no matter what, for man is fundamentally nothing more than dust. This means that even though we humans want to do good in our hearts, we have no capacity to actually do so.

Of course, it would be wonderful if we try to live virtuously at least in our minds. However, before anything else, we must first admit without fail that we are simply incapable of living virtuously. This is why today's Scripture passage says, "*The LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life,*" making it clear that man's body was made of dust. At the same time we should never forget the fact that we who are made in the image of God must yearn for the imperishable world, and we must have received the remission of sins and reach our salvation by believing in the righteousness of God. We should remember that we are able to obtain God's help and guidance in this

world only when we have reached our salvation by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Truly, it is not on account of our fleshly merits that we are made righteous, but it is made possible only when God gives us the grace of salvation that is in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. All spiritual gifts, in other words, come from Heaven. However, many people are unable to receive their true salvation because they are blocking God's gift of salvation with their many carnal thoughts.

A mirage, common in a desert setting is a phenomenon that occurs when light rays are refracted under the extreme desert heat. When a mirage appears, people see non-existent things. Likewise, when people search for something desperately in their fleshly minds, they see something out of their imagination. When one desires something fervently enough in the heart, then sometimes it appears like this in his or her dreams. This is why some Christians say, "I saw Jesus Christ in my dream. In this dream He told me that He so loved me." Such Christians say

that they obtained the assurance of their salvation in this way, but they need to realize that this is nothing more than their own fleshly emotions and delusions. It's all just a mirage.

In contrast, the faith that allows us to receive the remission of sins and go to Heaven through the righteousness of God cannot spring forth from any fleshly thoughts. Every thought that comes out of one's fleshly mind is completely in vain, just like a mist. It is appointed for everyone to be born once and die once, and the judgment of sin surely awaits everyone after death. Because the law of God is just, everyone must face the judgment of sin without fail according to this law. In our carnal thoughts it may seem as though we will go to Heaven if we live an upright life and hell if we lead an evil life, but when we think spiritually, everything comes to pass according to God's intention, and not to our fleshly thoughts. It's in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that our salvation is completely fulfilled. This is what you must grasp here.

Among our church members, there is a certain brother who is admirably good-hearted. When I preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit to him, he listened attentively and agreed that the Word of the gospel was right. But later he said that it was very hard for him to accept this gospel. So I asked him why, and he told me that he could not bear the thought of going to Heaven all by himself when so many people can't be saved and are destined to hell despite all their hard efforts. He said that he just felt too sorry for them to believe. So I spent a great deal of time sharing the Word of God with him to correct his misunderstanding. Even though he was a good-hearted man, he had a completely mistaken understanding of salvation. Even though he himself was sick, he was worried about others. Of course, he later accepted the gospel Truth of the water and the Spirit. But he still has a soft heart. Whenever I see him, I think to myself, "How hard it must be for him!" Even as he is in pain, he thinks of others who are in greater pain, and he feels guilty that his life is

too comfortable. I have lots of respect for people like him. Honestly speaking, however, such people are also vulnerable to feel self-righteous. So this brother must cast aside his carnal thoughts, recognize the righteousness of God, and devote his life to this righteousness of God.

My fellow believers, the salvation that's hidden in the righteousness of God is not attained through such good deeds of man. The reason why I've spoken about the mist quite a lot here is because these carnal thoughts that blind your soul's eyes and makes you fall in fleshly thoughts are just like this mist. An outhouse smells really bad during the summer time. When you first step inside, it makes you wince at the smell. But what happens once you sit there and do your business? You can't smell the stink anymore. In other words, if you get used to any bad smell, it does not smell as bad as at first.

Likewise, when one has been imprisoned in carnal thoughts perpetually, one forgets the fact that you are heading straight to hell even as you remain

undelivered from sin. This is why so many people reject the righteousness of God no matter how much it is preached to them, all because of their own fleshly thoughts. The Bible says, *“And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it” (John 1:5)*. Those who like darkness are happy to live crouched in darkness every day. And when they see vibrant people living in the sunlight of Truth, they dislike them for no reason. As the saying goes, birds of the same feather flock together. In other words, people hang around with those who are similar to them. Those who believe in Jesus as their Savior based on their fleshly thoughts want to hang around with those who share the same faith. Those who believe that they can go to Heaven unconditionally if they just believe in Jesus anyhow even though they don’t know the righteousness of God get together with similar kinds of people, and those who believe that they can go to Heaven if they believe in Jesus according to their own doctrines and do many good deeds are happy to get together with

those who share their own beliefs. In other words, those who are leading a religious life irrespective of the righteousness of God are happy to form their own groupings.

My fellow believers, just as the men who brought a paralytic to Jesus had to take out the roof in order to meet Him, for us to find the righteousness of Jesus; we must cast aside our carnal thoughts first and believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Only then will we be saved. If one is otherwise imprisoned in one’s own narrow fleshly thoughts, it becomes impossible to accept the righteousness of God. Such people do not even pay any attention to the Word of God. They absolutely refuse to listen to anyone else. These people insist on their own carnal thoughts until the very end, even if they end up in hell. There is a saying in Korea that’s quite pertinent to these kinds of people: “When one is ignorant, he is brave.” I do think that they are making this mistake because they do not know the righteousness of God. But once they know the justice of God, they should

be able to realize that there are people far more knowledgeable of the righteousness of God than them and are more than willing to teach them. Yet despite this, they think their own thoughts are the best. They think they are outstanding teachers when it comes to the truth. When I come across such people once in a while, I try to learn something from them, but when I take time to listen to them, I discover that there is nothing to learn. Even so, they think they are so prominent.

If you want to believe in the righteousness of God, you should not try to fit it into your own fleshly thoughts. Although it's admirable for you to fast and pray diligently, but before everything else, you must first admit the righteousness of God and receive the remission of sins. That's because you are not saved just because you have done many good deeds. We see frequently in the world that good intentions alone do not necessarily result in a good outcome. Let's say that a teacher was so frustrated by a troublemaking student that he disciplined him and made him run

around the track five times, but something went terribly wrong and the student died of a sudden heart attack. Would the teacher then escape punishment, just because his intention was good? No, he will be punished for sure.

Likewise, no matter how sincerely we may want to serve God, but if we serve Him without knowing His righteousness, then this would be wrong. Of course, it may be said that this is better than those who commit sin flagrantly without a care, but it makes no difference in God's sight, and, ultimately, those who do not do what God wants them to do—that is, those who do not accept His precious love—cannot please God. In short, such people cannot escape their judgment in the end.

In contrast, if one believes that Jesus bore all his sins once and for all by being baptized, then all his sins will be washed away no matter how worthless this person may be. Therefore, we cannot be saved if we don't realize that God has blotted out all our sins with His righteousness; but if we believe in this

gospel truth, only then are we saved and not before. It is by believing in the righteousness of God that we can receive the remission of sins and go to Heaven. Indeed, even if we have not done any good deeds, because our Lord personally took upon Himself all our sins through His baptism, and because He carried these sins of the world to the Cross and was condemned for them, we can receive the remission of sins and enter Heaven by believing in this work of salvation. Put differently, it is through our faith in the righteousness of God that we can obtain the remission of sins and open the gate of Heaven as well. This is the very grace of salvation that God has allowed us to receive through the faith that He gave us. The grace of God is what allows us to enter Heaven freely, just by fully believing in His righteousness.

Of course, many Christians do say that their salvation is attained freely. However, without knowing and believing in the righteousness of God, no one can be saved from sin. Although all that we

have done on our part is to just believe, the Lord has completed our salvation through His righteous work. To save us humans from all our sins, He was born on this earth, bore all our sins by being baptized, and was even crucified to shed His blood and suffer the pain of death. So, I ask you all to remember clearly that our salvation came about because there was a precious Lamb of sacrifice prepared by God for us, and this is the truth.

The problem sadly is that few actually believe in God's righteousness which is contained in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. This is why so many Christians are struggling so much with their lives of faith. What is the consequence of their faith then? They are placed under the judgment of sin. God does not just gloss over our failures as we humans sometimes do. God is just, and therefore He punishes every sinner according to His just Law. Since everyone in this world makes the same human mistakes; people may tolerate each other's flaws, but God does not do this.

Let's say that there are two criminals caught committing the same crime. If the judge is a man, he may say to one sinner, "Although you have committed a crime, you have tried to live an upright life. So I will have compassion and let you go home." To the other criminal, the judge may say, "I don't like you, and so you should be put in prison." If God were to do this, that is, if He were to send people to Heaven or hell arbitrarily without any just standard, would His judgment be just and right? Who would then recognize and surrender to the justice of God? If this were true, it would be impossible to say that God is just.

However, once God says anything, He fulfills it exactly as He said without fail. Just as the Bible abounds with God's Word of promises, so has He also fulfilled everything He said. Therefore, if we have any sin, then we cannot avoid but face the judgment of this sin. Even if you've been a Christian and attended church for 50 years, if you have sin, you will go to hell. The same is true even if you have

attended church for 100 years. The just law of God applies to everyone equally and fairly. All of us have broken the Law of God, and therefore all of us must be punished according to this Law.

Let's say that I got caught by a traffic officer for breaking the traffic law. Could I then say to this officer, "Look, I'm really a good man? I came across a lost person and I was just trying to take him to his home. Can't you just overlook my mistake?"? But such pleadings have nothing to do with the fact that I broke the law. If one breaks the traffic law, one has to pay that fine. Does it then matter that this person has done many good deeds? No, it has absolutely no relevance.

When we believe in Jesus as our Savior, we must do this with a clear understanding of what the righteousness of God really is. We are saved from sin only when our understanding of salvation is in accordance with the Word of God—that is, when we realize our sins and believe in the righteousness of God. If you have already decided to believe in Jesus

Christ as your Savior, you should first know the righteousness of God clearly and then believe in Him. God's righteousness is all contained in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Once you believe in the righteousness of God, the remaining days of your life will be led righteously and gloriously. I don't know how you have lived so far, but from now on, you are guaranteed to be righteous and happy. It's not my guarantee, but it is God Himself who is guaranteeing you this. That's why I believe that all of you who have come here today have received so much love from God, for you have met His servants and come to have the right understanding of the God of righteousness.

My fellow believers, our fleshly thoughts can also look quite beautiful, just like a mist can look beautiful. It is also admirable that we are trying to live virtuously. Living an upright life, doing good deeds, and helping others—all these are admirable things. You should indeed strive to live like this. But there is something that's more important than this.

Above all else, we must have the right knowledge of the righteousness of Jesus.

That we should live a virtuous life was drilled into us countless times while growing up. But even though everyone knows this, few actually live like this. We all have been taught moral lessons since our childhood to do what is right, to lead an ethical life. Is it because we don't know this that we commit sin in our lives? No, of course not! But what is even more important than this moral compass is knowing Jesus, realizing just how weak we human beings really are, and understanding and believing in the love of God and His righteousness. This is because we were all born as sinners. As I said before, our human bodies were made of dust. So sin keeps on arising from the bottom of our hearts even though we don't want this. Such sinful thoughts may not come up so much when you are busy, but what happens when you are idle? All kinds of evil and lewd thoughts come to your mind.

This shows us just how wicked man's carnal

thoughts are. Therefore, you should never trust in these thoughts during your life. Also relying on this world for your life is so much more foolish than relying on the righteousness of God. We must live by trusting in the Word of God rather than our own flesh and thoughts. Our human thoughts of the flesh are by nature extremely shift and fickle. This is why we must believe in the Word of God rather than our own fleshly thoughts. No matter what others say, we must confirm our salvation with the Word of God. Yet despite this, far from believing in the pure Word of God, too many Christians trust their own fleshly emotions and believe in man's words. You should never allow this to happen to you.

If you consider the sacrifice of Jesus in human terms, it's natural for you to feel sorry and cry for Him, thinking to yourself, "Why did Jesus shed His blood on the Cross? Is it because of me? Lord, please forgive me!" But in reality, who should actually feel sorry for whom? When Christians struggle to shed tears like this, they then tend to think of a sad movie

they saw before, and they use this to try to elicit tears just to keep up with what the people sitting next to them are doing. Some people actually force out tears like this when praying. What would the Lord think when He sees these people? The Bible describes how Jesus was forced to carry the Cross walking towards Golgotha, and many women following Him were crying grief-stricken. But Jesus told these women not to cry for Him, but cry for themselves and their children (Luke 23:28). This means that unless people realize the reason why Jesus died, they will suffer far greater pain than Him and be cast into the eternal lake of fire and brimstone.

So, why should anyone feel sorry for Jesus? It's because Jesus loved us so much that He willingly gave up His body in the Jordan River and on the Cross. That Jesus has saved us in this way is something that we should be grateful for. However, even though Jesus gave up His own body to liberate us from sin so that we would live freely, too many Christians just see Jesus' death and suffering, rather

than believing in the genuine gospel of the water and the Spirit. To believe in this way is simply wrong, because it is to believe in Jesus according to one's own fleshly thoughts.

No matter how beautiful a mist may appear, it cannot block the light of life. Human thoughts are nothing more than a mist, while the righteousness of God is the Truth. We must therefore believe in Jesus according to the Word of God. This is why I am preaching about Jesus continuously this week and about our human nature as well. My fellow believers, it is enough for us to believe in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. If you grasp the righteousness of Jesus Christ, you can become a philosopher, a poet, or anything that you want to be. You can also enjoy more than enough blessings even in this world. The Lord will give you everything in abundance, but only if you believe in His salvation and His Word. Is there any parent that does not love his own children? Our Lord also loved us so much that He gave up His body, even though we keep committing so many sins.

However, the problem is that both those who believe in the righteousness of Jesus and those who don't believe in it have dwelt in their mist-like carnal thoughts until now. If you know the righteousness of Jesus and believe in it, then this mist of the flesh disappears, but what happens if you drift away from Jesus? The thoughts of the flesh will begin to surface right away. This happens because we human beings are in the flesh, and therefore as long as we are living on this earth, this mist keeps on rising up if we drift away from Jesus and idle our times away apart from doing His spiritual work even if it's insignificant. As such, not even for a moment should we fall into the things of the flesh, but continue to come to God's Church, listen to His Word, and serve the righteousness of Jesus by faith. Only then will the mist disappear forever to bring happy days to us.

God did not create us so that we would commit sin, suffer in our lives, and end up in hell. Nor does God allow hardships to us for no reason. God made us to give us His treasures of Heaven and He allows

us to face trials in order for us to grasp these treasures. Pearls are made by mollusks. Pearls are very beautiful and precious, but these pearls don't just grow on their own. It's accompanied by a great deal of pain. Like this, for human beings to know the precious God and become His children, they must go through a lot of trials and tribulations on this earth. But you should realize here that such trials and tribulations are nothing compared to the glory that awaits us. Therefore, even though we may be facing some hardship on this earth, we should always remember the glory that will follow, and give thanks to God. I admonish you all to believe that God made us so that we could be put next to Him, and that He is the root of all blessings.

There Is a River of Life Originating from Eden

All rivers originated from the Garden of Eden. Water came into existence in Eden and rivers began

to flow in all directions from there. The Bible mentions these rivers by name: The first river is Pishon, the second is Gihon, the third is Hiddekel, and the fourth is Euphrates.

What this passage ultimately means is this: The reason why we are now able to listen to and believe in the Word of God that's more precious than pure gold is because of our predecessors of faith who believed in and kept the Word of God exactly as it is. In other words, this Word of God has been protected by those who truly worshipped God and wholeheartedly followed His righteousness by faith. It's because there were those who kept their faith instead of pursuing their private greed, wealth, and fame that even today, the authentic gospel continues to flow ceaselessly from Eden like living water. It's because of this that the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the precious Word of the Lord, has flowed to reach God's Church today. Its history is indeed long. This life-giving gospel that began from the days of Adam is an incessant river whose water is as clear as

crystal, and anyone who drinks this water can receive everlasting life. It's a tremendous blessing for everyone that this living water filled with joy still continues to flow on this earth even now. Although I am a man of many personal shortcomings, but regardless of such failures of mine, I still ask you to believe in the gospel Word of God that I am preaching to you now. Whoever believes in this gospel Word is a person who believes in God properly. Some people might then say, "Do I really have to believe like this? Why can't I just believe in whatever way I wish?" My suggestion to such people is for them to just make up their own religion. We should never be so complacent to think like this.

Even now, this blessed Word of God, the living water, still continues to flow in the world together with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Whoever drinks the living water can obtain everlasting life by knowing the righteousness of God and to believe in it. The problem, however, is that too many Christians have rejected this Word of the living water, thinking

to themselves, "Do I really have to believe in this way?" It's because of such believers that Christianity has been corrupted and changed into a religion that gratifies the dust-like desires of people's flesh rather than their souls' thirst. This kind of faith is not the right faith.

God's Church is a place where genuine saints are gathered together, those who believe in the Word of God, and they find His grace. God's grace cannot be found in any other place. God has made the Garden of Eden in His Church, and He has told us to defend it. That is why so many forefathers of faith and servants of God had endured so much persecution, suffering, and hardship to defend this true faith. Because faith in this precious Word of God is far more important than anything else in the world, we cannot forsake this faith, and even now, we are bearing witness of this faith and spreading it everywhere. We must believe in this precious Word and defend it by faith.

With the gospel of the water and the Spirit, our

Lord has blotted out not only all our sins but also all the sins of the entire human race once and for all. He did not divide our sins into two and then blot out just the other half, namely the past sins. No, He has blotted out each and every sin once and for all. After all, what's the point of dividing our sins into groups? If someone offers you something and says to you, "This thing costs \$100, but you only have to pay \$50," is this really a gift? A gift is something that's given freely; if any payment is required, it is no longer a gift but a sale. God's grace is bestowed freely in its entirety, or else it would not be a gift. I admonish you all to realize that the grace of the Lord is the gift of the righteousness of God, and this is the living water that flows from the Garden of Eden.

The Righteousness That God Has Given to Us

The righteousness of God that we believe in has blotted out all our sins once and for all. Is God

incapable of blotting out all our sins at once? No, of course not! God knows very well that we simply cannot avoid committing sin throughout our lifetime no matter how hard we try. That is why our Lord has given us the gift of salvation to settle our accounts of sin once and for all. Yet despite this, many Christians have fallen into their own fleshly thoughts that are like a mist, and even as they are drowning in these thoughts, they claim to be doing God's work.

If there is one thing that you must learn today, this is it. God placed on this earth the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. In doing this He enabled mankind to live by their free wills, and to believe in His righteousness by this free will. In other words, God has opened the way for us humans to receive the remission of sins and eternal life by believing in the righteousness of Jesus Christ His Son. But sadly despite this, there are many people missing on this road to Heaven by believing in Jesus according to their own mist-like thoughts of the flesh, and there is nothing more tragic than this.

True salvation is reached only by those who deny their own fleshly thoughts and believe that the salvation of the remission of sins is received from God alone, by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. God placed two types of righteousness on this earth: One is the righteousness of God that can only be reached by faith; and the other is the righteousness of man that is neither approved by God nor of any use to be saved. By giving a free will to us mankind, God intended to see whether or not we really would fear Him and obey His Word. When those who fear God hear His Word, they obey it and believe in it immediately; in contrast, those who don't fear God always come up with some kind of excuse not to believe in His Word. My fellow believers, when God planted the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil on this earth, His purpose was for us to choose Him out of our own free wills in order to have a personal relationship with Him. God taught us that it is in vain for anyone to try to reach salvation through his own thoughts

that are like a mist. Trying to reach salvation through one's own good deeds or righteous acts is nothing more than a flawed attempt resulting from one's disregard for God.

Who is the Devil? Lucifer in his original name, Satan was originally an archangel. He had no one else above him except God. But Satan was not satisfied even with this exalted status, and so he stood against God to become like Him, only to be brought all the way down to the earth. Referring to this revolt of Satan, the Word of God says this in the Bible,

*“How you are fallen from heaven,
O Lucifer, son of the morning!
How you are cut down to the ground,
You who weakened the nations!
For you have said in your heart:
‘I will ascend into heaven,
I will exalt my throne above the stars of God;
I will also sit on the mount of the congregation
On the farthest sides of the north;*

I will ascend above the heights of the clouds,

I will be like the Most High.'

Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol,

To the lowest depths of the Pit" (Isaiah 14:12-15).

My fellow believers, it's the Devil's dream to become like God. That's why he stood against God, but he was cast out from Heaven in the end. From then on, it's been the Devil's sole purpose in life to obstruct the work of God, and this is why Satan approaches the proud, who are full of their own mist-like thoughts, and teaches them that they don't need Jesus Christ, and that they can still find the way to Heaven through many religions of this world, a contemplative life, good deeds, or other fruit of the flesh. People are so gullible to such whispers of the Devil. It's because these words of Satan sound so sweet that human beings eat from his evil fruit and end up committing sin, just as Adam and Eve ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and was deceived by the Devil's scheme. Even now, there are so many people who are facing judgment for

having eaten this fruit of sin. The Devil's work is indeed tricky. His words sound so plausible when you hear them. This Devil teaches you that you can receive the remission of sins if you repent from your sins and beg God to forgive you everyday, by praying to Him, lamenting, "Lord, I've committed sin again today, but I'll live more virtuously tomorrow." It all seems quite plausible, doesn't it?

However, my fellow believers, your sins do not just disappear no matter how often you offer prayers of repentance. You can easily find out that no sin is blotted out in this way if you look deep into your heart. If you still think that your sins are blotted out in this way, you can be sure that this is nothing more than your own emotional feelings, one that results from the thoughts of the flesh that are like a mist. This is not how sins are blotted out. They are not blotted out just because you ask for forgiveness in tears. For one's sins to disappear, a price has to be paid without fail. Sin requires due judgment and it demands death for its appropriate punishment. Either

we ourselves must be condemned to death, or someone else must die in our place. And only with vicarious atonement can we be remitted from our sins by faith. This is why the people of Israel in the Old Testament were remitted from their sins by passing their sins to a sacrificial animal and killing this animal. This vicarious atonement was made by passing the Israelites' sins to the sacrificial animal and killing it in their place.

What is the laying on of hands then? The laying on of hands means passing one's sins. To put this in the context of the Israelites' sacrificial system, they were remitted from their sins by praying while laying their hands on the head of a sacrificial animal, killing it, putting some of its blood on the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and pouring the rest out on the ground. In this way, the Israelites were remitted from the sins that were written on the tablets of their hearts before God. Only with the laying on of hands could their sins be passed onto the sacrificial animal so that it could be blotted out; if the lamb was killed without

the laying on of hands, it only resulted into a killing in vain.

And this sacrificial lamb had to be an unblemished animal. It was useless to kill a sick or lame lamb, for God accepted no such offerings. The Israelites therefore had to lay their hands on an unblemished lamb and kill it, and only then did that sacrificial animal bear their sins to atone for those sins. This was the sacrifice of atonement in which a lamb died in one's place.

However, most Christians today fervently believe in the blood of the Cross alone, as they are ignorant of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. So they pray before the Cross, "Lord, thank You for dying in my place for my sins." But in their hearts sin still remains intact. Why is this? It's because far from having a personal relationship with Jesus, they have nothing to do with Him. Their sins remain intact because they do not know or care to know that Jesus bore all their sins once and for all when He was baptized in the Jordan River, that is, because they do

not believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

We should not believe in Jesus as our Savior according to our own fleshly thoughts. Rather, we should grasp and believe properly that when Jesus Christ the Son of God came to this earth, He took away all our sins by being baptized, and He died by shedding His blood on the Cross. It's in the Jordan River that Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist. Without the baptism that Jesus received from John the Baptist in this Jordan River, no one will be able to pass their sins to Jesus. We must grasp the significance of the fact that Jesus came as the Lamb of God, that He was baptized by John the Baptist, and that He died on the Cross in our place, and we must believe in all of these acts. Otherwise, even if we believe in Jesus, our faith would be mistaken. Without the laying on of hands that passed one's sins to the lamb of sacrifice, its death would be in vain. Likewise, Jesus' death would also be in vain had it not been for His baptism. It's exactly like this because Jesus bore all our sins through His baptism

that He could become our Savior.

If you think in your fleshly thoughts that you have sin even though Jesus was baptized and crucified to death, then you are making a fool out of yourself. When this happens, you will end up praying, "Lord, please forgive me of these sins." This would be the same as praying like this: "Jesus, You have failed to blot out all my sins. You don't have enough power. Come to this earth again and die for my sins again." Such people must listen to the gospel of the water and the Spirit attentively again and believe in it before they provoke the burning wrath of God and end up being cast into hell. True salvation can be reached only by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit; there is no other way.

If we were to ask our Lord to forgive our sins everyday, would He not actually feel betrayed by us? Even though the Lord already blotted out all our sins with His baptism and blood 2,000 years ago, if we are still unable to believe in this and doubt His righteousness, just how deeply disappointed would

our Lord be? Asking God to forgive one's sins in perpetuity is clear evidence of that you do not believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

I urge you to never ask God to forgive your sins like this. When you commit sin again tomorrow, you should rather say, "Lord, thank You for having taken away this sin also through the baptism that You received from John the Baptist. Had You not done this, I would have had no other choice but be cast into hell. But because You loved such a wretched person like me, You blotted out this sin as well through Your baptism and blood. So I thank You, Lord. I am so very grateful." All that we have to is give prayers of thanksgiving to You, the God of righteousness. Like this, I admonish you all to thank God for remitting away all your sins and to live by faith. ☒

SERMON

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CONTENTS



Circumcision as God's Covenant

< Genesis 17:1-15 >

“When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, ‘I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless. And I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly.’ Then Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying: ‘As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations. No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations,

for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you. Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.’ And God said to Abraham: ‘As for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. This is My covenant which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: Every male child among you shall be circumcised; and you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you. He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised, every male child in your generations, he who is born in your house or bought with money from any foreigner who is not your descendant. He who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money must be circumcised, and My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the

uncircumcised male child, who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant.’ Then God said to Abraham, ‘As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name.’

Be Spiritually Circumcised

In Genesis 17, God is teaching us all about circumcision. The definition of the word, ‘circumcision’ in the dictionary means ‘removal of the prepuce of a male.’ To be specific, it is the surgical removal of the foreskin of the penis. God said that not only the Israelites but everyone in this world should be circumcised. He added that those who are circumcised will belong to God, but those who are not will be cut off from His people.

When Abraham, the father of faith turned 99, God appeared to him and said, “I am Almighty God.”

Just as He said, God is really almighty and all-powerful. The reason I am telling you this is that God made Abraham righteous when he obeyed and believed in His Word wholly. Let’s take a look at Genesis 15. When God appeared to Abraham, he said, “The heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus,” and God replied, “This one shall not be your heir, but the one who will come from your own body shall be your heir.” Then He brought him outside and said, “*Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them.*” And He said to him, “*So shall your descendants be.*” And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness (Genesis 15:5-6).

What does this all mean? Abraham believed in the Word of God, and God acknowledged this as righteousness and made him a righteous man. God made Abraham a righteous man and His very own child through His Word. After God made Abraham righteous, He ordered that every male child among his household be circumcised without fail. He did

this because the Lord God mentioned the importance of circumcision and the implications of it.

Why Is Spiritual Circumcision So Important?

Let's look into God's Word in detail to find out why He considered circumcision so very important. God said to Abraham, "Walk before me and be blameless." God wanted him to be whole in everything.

God also tells us to be blameless. He demands that we become whole in our faith. If we don't have faith, we can never become whole, even though the Lord tells us to. However, whoever believes in God properly is whole. Even though we are insufficient human beings, we are whole because of our faith in God. When we reflect ourselves on this command of God to be blameless, we realize that we are blameless in God and we can walk blamelessly before Him. Our minds, of course, are unstable and

insufficient in every way, but we can be blameless when we believe in God. You and I can become blameless and walk blamelessly by this faith in God. We are not such beings who cannot but stay unstable and insufficient forever.

God is teaching us about circumcision through Abraham, and I believe that this instruction is for you and me who are listening to His Word here today. God told Abraham to be blameless. This means He wants us to be blameless also. Then let's find out why God said so.

In Genesis 17:2 God said, "*I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly.*" God said He would make a covenant with Abraham and make him multiply. This covenant means God's Word of promise. After making covenant "*Between Me and you,*" God would multiply Abraham as well through his descendants through His promise. This promise holds true to all people who have the same faith that Abraham had.

What then was this covenant? This covenant

was the circumcision. In other words, God's promise was based on circumcision. When God made this promise, He said, "If you are circumcised, you will become My people, and I will be your God. If your descendants are circumcised, they will be My people as well, and then I will give the land of Canaan to you."

If this is so brothers and sisters, should we also not be circumcised? Is it okay not to be circumcised? What does this command from God precisely mean? Should you be circumcised? Yes, absolutely! It is absolutely crucial for us to be circumcised. Therefore, we all should be circumcised. Circumcision is not a matter of choice but it is mandatory. God told everyone including Abraham that He would make a covenant with him and multiply them exceedingly. He said we should be circumcised for the promise to be fulfilled.

Brothers and sisters, can you imagine how God can multiply us? God is the source of all blessings. He clearly promised this with His very own Word. God is confirming this promise through today's

Scripture. He is doing this through the covenant of circumcision. God appeared to Abraham, who received the remission of sins by believing in God's Word. And He said to Abraham, "I am God of you and your descendants. I will give you this land of Canaan. I will raise kings among your descendants." What did He say we should do to have this promise come true for us? That is right. He told us that we should be circumcised to show Him that we in fact obey and believe in Him.

If We Were to Be Spiritually Circumcised, We Would Become Righteous and Prosperous

As I mentioned earlier, circumcision means the removal of foreskin. Abraham became righteous by obeying and believing in the Word of God, "I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky." God reappeared to Abraham and said, "I will make a covenant between you and Me and I will

multiply you exceedingly. Be circumcised. This is the covenant between you and Me.” What does this mean? God is reaffirming this commandment here that Abraham becomes blameless through the Word of promise, namely, by circumcision. The Word of promise was the promise through circumcision.

Abraham was then circumcised after he received this promise. Then what is God's promise to us? His promise is this, “I will be your God if you do likewise by cutting off your sins. I am Almighty God. I will make you blameless.” The fact that Abraham was circumcised shows us that he became a blameless and righteous man by believing in this Word of God's promise. As a matter of fact, Abraham became a noble man after he believed and was circumcised according to God's promise. How does God fulfill His promise to us today? He says, “I will cut off your sins completely. I will be your God by taking all your sins away as I promised. I am perfect. I am Almighty God. So I can remove all your sins completely. I can make you holy, so that you

will inherit the land of Canaan, which is Heaven.” This is the Word of God's promise as a sign of circumcision.

God said circumcision is not a matter of choice, but it is a command that we must be circumcised. It is because the ultimate sign of God's promise is in circumcision. Just as we cut off our most sensitive body part, God promised us to cut off our sins. God said to Abraham, “*I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly.*” This means God will cut off all our sins thoroughly and give the blessing of the remission of sins to all who obey and believe in His Word.

Through Circumcision of the Heart, Sins Will Be Cut off Completely

Brothers and sisters, why are we talking about ‘circumcision’? It is because it is the sign of God's promise. God gave us the Word of promise. He said

clearly that He would remove all our sins. Those who are not circumcised cannot be saved. It is same for those who do not obey and believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit cannot enter the Kingdom of God.

God always makes promises with His Word. In the book of Genesis, God made this promise,

*“And I will put enmity
Between you and the woman,
And between your seed and her Seed;
He shall bruise your head,
And you shall bruise His heel” (Genesis 3:15).*

God always keeps His promises. How was the above promise fulfilled? He sent Jesus Christ, the seed of a woman, and made this Jesus take all our sins away, be crucified by getting His heel bruised. In other words, His promise was that God Himself would be punished so that He could remove all the sins of His people, which Satan had infused with; and His promise was fulfilled completely. God confirmed His promise with His Word that He would give the Kingdom of God to those who believe in His Word, and the fact is

that He had accomplished these promises.

Brothers and sisters, God promised us that He would make us sinless and take us to Heaven. And He told us to cut off the ‘foreskin’ as a sign of His promise. He then told us to be circumcised in our hearts (Deuteronomy 10:16, 30:6, Romans 2:29, Acts 7:51). God made a promise with His Word that He would remove all our sins, and He kept this promise for us who believe in this promise. His promise was unilateral and His removal of our sins was also unilateral. God is the Creator God, who made the heavens and the earth with His Word. In the same way, He created us and made us His children with His Word.

God said, *“I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly.”* Brothers and sisters, would you say ‘Amen’ to this Word? Yes, God promised this to us. He made such a clear promise with Abraham that He would actually make this covenant realized and multiply him exceedingly. Everyone in this world should confess, “I believe God will do this even to me. I believe in

You.” I am sure God will multiply the descendants of the righteous people whose sins have been cut off by being circumcised. I am sure that He will multiply the righteous people, whose sins have been cut off, as many as the stars in the sky.

We Have Become Righteous by Believing in His Promise

God made the promise with Abraham that He will become his God and told him to be circumcised as a sign of the fulfillment of this promise. I believe God is telling us the very same thing. Your souls also should be circumcised by trusting in this promise. We have become God's children by believing in His promise. Because of His Word of promise we have become God's righteous children. God made such a clear promise. And according to His promise of salvation, we have received the remission of sins and become His children.

Some people consider the circumcision as optional, but the Bible clearly says, “*Circumcision is that of the heart*” (Romans 2:29). In the book of Genesis, God warned Abraham if he or his descendants did not get circumcised, they would be cut off from Him. He emphasized the importance of circumcision in such a clear and concise way. What do you think this means? It means this is not optional. Whoever wants to be God's people and go to Heaven must without fail receive the remission of sins in his or her heart. Only those whose sins have been cleanly cut off through circumcision can enter Heaven. It is a lie that you can still be blessed and go to Heaven just because you believe in Jesus even though you are harboring sins in your heart. The circumcision of the heart is mandatory. Whoever wants to go to Heaven must have the sins of their hearts cut off through circumcision of the heart. God is telling us that we should receive the remission of sins by believing in His promise.

Heaven Belongs to Those Who Are Circumcised

To whom did God say the Kingdom of Heaven belongs? He said it belongs to those who are circumcised of the heart. Those who are not circumcised will never be citizens in the Kingdom of Heaven. In other words, sinners can never enter Heaven no matter what. This is what God said to our father of faith, Abraham. Brothers and sisters are we then going to Heaven or not? Since we are all circumcised in our hearts and received the remission of sins, we are without doubt going to Heaven. This is guaranteed. Isn't this true? God clearly said that those who believe in His Word of promise and become circumcised would become His people. God said to Abraham, "I will make an everlasting covenant between Me and you and your descendants, and I will be God to you and your descendants." Likewise, when we are circumcised of the hearts, we will become God's people and enter the Kingdom of God like Abraham.

The Circumcision of the Heart Is So Extremely Important

We should be circumcised in our hearts. In other words, we should receive the remission of sins. Even among Christians there are people who ask, "Where does it say that? Where is such dichotomous logic that divides sinners from the righteous? Is it not okay to just believe in Jesus the way we wish to? Why do you say as if your faith is the only genuine one?" If God did not tell Abraham to be circumcised in Genesis 17 then they could be right. It would be like this if God told Abraham that circumcision is optional. But what did God say? He said they must be circumcised. He warned them they would be cut off from the people of God if they did not get circumcised.

God said to Abraham, "*I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless.*" What does this mean? He is saying that you and I can become blameless through His promise. Through this promise

of Him removing our sins, we can become whole. As a matter of fact, God did cleanse us from all our sins with His Word. God performed this circumcision of our hearts. Brothers and sisters, please bear this in your mind. Those of you who have not been circumcised in your hearts, will fall away from the journey of faith and end up in hell. The end result of not being circumcised is going to hell. It is, of course, unnecessary to ask if people have been circumcised when we preach the gospel. Someone might then retaliate, saying "What is circumcision?" You might then reply, "If you have not yet been circumcised, this means that you still are a sinner. Here in Genesis 17:14 it says, *'And the uncircumcised male child, who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant.'*" If you go down this road then you will go into endless disputes. You cannot preach the gospel by stirring up such useless controversies. Circumcision of the heart denotes the remission of sins by believing in God's Word of salvation, that is,

the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Brothers and sisters, how did we become blameless? We became blameless through our faith in God's Word of promise. Therefore, it cannot be canceled. God made a promise with us humans, and we have become perfectly blameless by being circumcised in our hearts, which is irreversible. Many Christians in this world say that there is no righteous person on the earth by quoting Romans 3:10, but this is not true. Just as God promised Adam and Eve that He would save them; He said the same thing to the descendants of Abraham and to all the people in this world that He would remove all their sins. If we believe in this promise, we all are made into the righteous. Abraham became a just man when he said, "Amen!" to God's promise, "I will multiply your descendants as many as the stars in the sky." Abraham became a righteous man by believing in this Word of promise.

God promised Abraham, "I will multiply your descendants as many as starts in the sky." When

Abraham believed in this Word wholeheartedly, God accounted it to him for righteousness and gave the blessing of the remission of all his sins. How about us then? He promised us that He would make our crimson sin as white as wool. Did we not believe in this promise? Yes, we did. God's promise has been fulfilled through Jesus Christ, and we have received the remission of sins by believing in Jesus Christ.

What then does circumcision mean? Our circumcision is like believing in the Word of His promise. In such a way, we have become the righteous by receiving the remission of sins through our faith in the Word of promise, that is, circumcision of the heart. Have you ever felt as if your faith became unstable and imperfect while you are leading a life of faith? If you felt that way, you don't have to do so anymore. We just double-checked that we are in fact righteous people who have received the remission of sins, through the Word God said to Abraham. To have proper faith in Jesus, we should know Abraham and understand

what God said to him, and how he became a righteous man. In Genesis 17, God promised Abraham that He would multiply him and many righteous people would arise from him. And when he believed this Word of promise, God made him a righteous man and the father of faith.

“Lord God, We Believe in Your Promise”

Human thoughts are all dirty. However, we become the righteous when we believe in Jesus Christ and His Word. We become righteous by believing in Him. We become God's children and enter the Kingdom of Heaven by believing in this promise, “I will be your God.” God promised that He would multiply us exceedingly. I believe God will do this. So I profess like this, “Dear God, I believe in You. I believe in Your promise.”

Have we all the saints from all our affiliated Churches of The New Life Mission throughout the

country become blameless through God's covenant or not? Yes, we have. Has this come true by a Christian doctrine we have made up? No, this has never been done by something we made up. It has been accomplished by the promise God made with Abraham. It has also been accomplished by the promise God had made with Adam and Eve. We have become the righteous through the promise God made with Abraham and with Moses. Just as God promised, we the true believers have become righteous. We have become blameless. Even though we are small in number now, we will multiply exceedingly in the near future. Brothers and sisters, we are perfect beings. We are blameless in God's sight. God made the promise and He has fulfilled it for us; so we cannot remain sinful, for we have received the remission of sins by believing in that promise. We are perfectly blameless. And our faith in His Word is whole.

God told Abraham that He would make him the father of many nations. "I make a covenant with you

and you will be the father of many nations." Brothers and sisters, who is the Master of the universe? It is God the Almighty. Just as God promised Abraham that He would make him the father of many nations, we the born-again saints who have received the remission of sins have also become the masters of this world. God's people have become the masters of this world. I want you to become the masters of the world by believing in this Word. So, stop being a slave to this world. When you become the master to this world, everything on earth will submit to you. When we become the masters of this world by believing in God's promise, we will be able to reign over whatsoever is in this world. Who was the master of the ancient world? It was Abraham. And today it is we who are born again by believing in God's Word. We are the masters of this present world. God declared, "I will make a covenant between you and Me, and you will be the father of many nations."

As you all know well, Abraham is the father of faith. Wherever he went, people submitted to him

and obeyed him. He reigned over all the people in his known world. When we trust in God wholeheartedly we also can do the same. Let us put our faith in this. If we don't have this faith, we will end up living as a slave to this world. So let's pray, "Dear God, we trust in You. We believe that You enabled us to reign over this world. We believe that You made us the masters of this world. Give us such a brave and strong faith."

We Are the Descendants of Abraham

All the Bible verses related to Abraham are about faith. Let's read verses 7 through 8 in today's Scripture reading. It says, "*And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you. Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger; all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I*

will be their God."

God said that He would establish His covenant between Himself and Abraham and his descendants to be God to them forever. This covenant was established based on circumcision. In other words, God made this promise when we received the remission of sins by believing in His Word. God said He would be God to the descendants of Abraham through circumcision. You and I are the descendants of Abraham. The Creator God who made this covenant with us and became our God. The Almighty God became God to us, we who have received the remission of sins in our hearts. He is not God to just anyone, but He is the God to only those who have received the remission of sins. Do you believe this truth that God is the God of those who have received the remission of sins? Do you believe that God is your own God? God is our God. God is not God to those who have not received the remission of sins or have not had their hearts circumcised from sin. He is God to you and me, we who have been circumcised

based on His Word of promise. Because of this pure faith, I believe that God has become our God, our Shepherd who will lead us to the right paths and who will take very good care of us.

God promised Abraham, "I will establish my covenant with you and I will multiply you exceedingly." Abraham became a righteous man by believing in that covenant and begot Isaac. The name 'Isaac' means 'he laughs.' Laughter wells up from someone who receives the remission of sins into his heart by accepting God as his God. It makes him laugh from the depth of his heart.

God promised Abraham, "I will establish an everlasting covenant with you that I will be your God and your descendants." The descendants in this context refer to us. I believe that God has become our God. I believe you and I have become the righteous through this very Word of God. I believe God has become God to us, we who have received the remission of all our sins. I thank God for this. God is surely our God. He is not God to sinners but only to

the saints who believe in Him properly. He is God to those who have received the remission of sins by believing in the Truth.

We Who Are the Circumcised and the Masters of This World Have Gained Great Assurance

It is so great and joyous that God has become our God and He makes us whole. It is the blessing through Jesus that we have this confidence, this boldness and assurance in our heart. I did not have such strong conviction of heart in the past, but ever since I believed in Jesus and His Word of promise properly, everything became so clear. I used to be very indecisive and I was often taken advantage of by street vendors. With this doubtful heart, I used to buy a lot of unnecessary things. It was the same in my life of faith. I was unable to put my faith properly in one thing, and whenever I did, I found myself being

fooled. But I don't get fooled anymore. It is because I have a strong faith in God's Word and I firmly believe that I am the master of this world.

Brothers and sisters, when you have faith in the Word of God like this, you also will never be fooled. How precise is God's Word then? It says, "I will establish my covenant between Me and you and your descendants and become God to you and your descendants after you." By believing in this Word of promise, Abraham received the remission of sins and became righteous. Then he proved his faith by being circumcised.

The same thing happened to me. I received the remission of sins and became circumcised through God's Word. I have the sign of this faith like that of Abraham's. The sins in my heart were cut off cleanly and handed over to Jesus Christ when He was baptized, and He carried them all away. Now I have the mark in my heart that shows the removal of all my sins. This mark is engraved with the righteousness of God. Right on that spot where my

sins were cut off, God's righteousness was engraved, proving that I have become a blameless child of God through the baptism and the blood of Jesus Christ.

I hope you believe wholeheartedly that God is our God. God said this not only to Abraham but also to us all. God said in verse 8, "*Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.*" This Scripture passage is also for you and me. Just as He promised here, God also gave us all the land of Canaan, that is, the Kingdom of Heaven as an everlasting possession. The land of Canaan in the Bible symbolizes Heaven, the place flowing with milk and honey. We see every man of faith in the Bible had entered into the land of Canaan. What does this mean? This implies that people who believe in the Lord and His Word properly, received the remission of sins, will all go to Heaven. God created Heaven that way, and allowed only those who are circumcised in their hearts to enter this Heaven. And God promised that He would

be God to everyone who has the very same faith as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, just as He was to them. I believe that God of blessings, who became God to Abraham, has become our God. I thank God for giving me this faith.

“And God said to Abraham: ‘As for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. This is My covenant which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: Every male child among you shall be circumcised; and you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you. He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised, every male child in your generations, he who is born in your house or bought with money from any foreigner who is not your descendants. He who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money must be circumcised, and My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant’” (Genesis 17:9-13).

The above passage means that only those who are circumcised are truly the righteous. God told Abraham here that he and his descendants must keep the covenant. Who then are these descendants of Abraham? People say that we humans are the descendants of Adam. That is right. All people are the descendants of Adam. In other words, we are the descendants of one man. But God commanded that all males should be circumcised. This circumcision is the covenant of God. It is the covenant of God for us to cut off the sins from our hearts and to be born again as the righteous. All humans are born as the descendants of Adam, that is, born sinners. Therefore, they need to be circumcised to become the descendants of Abraham. We cannot become God's children by blood. This cannot be achieved by flesh nor by human will. Even a servant of God must be circumcised. God said every male child should be circumcised, and so should anyone who is bought with money.

God told every male to be circumcised. He

commanded them to keep the covenant. Since God said this, all human beings should be circumcised without fail. Without being circumcised, no one can become God's people. God told Abraham that his descendants should be circumcised as well. "You must be circumcised, even you and all your descendants after you throughout their generations." This means only circumcision can lead everyone to the remission of sins. No matter who you are, you must be circumcised to become God's people. What would happen if you think to yourself, "My father has received the remission of sins, but is it necessary that I be circumcised? Should all sinners receive the remission of sins? Can't I just pass this circumcision by?" Please keep this in your mind: God declared that only those who have received the remission of sins can become His people. And whoever still has sin would be cut off from the Kingdom of Heaven. Therefore, we must be circumcised in heart before God. We can become God's people only if we received the remission of sins in the presence of God.

Do you understand that this circumcision and the Word of covenant are on the same page? Trust in this Truth. The circumcision and the remission of sins are the signs that God would save us.

When Abraham believed this promise from God, he became righteous, and then God told him to be circumcised as a sign. He tells his descendants to be circumcised like this as well. The promise God made with Abraham was as follows: "I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky. I will cleanse away their heavy and burdensome sins once and for all." And this is the promise given to everyone in the world. God wants us to be righteous like Abraham by believing that the Lord has circumcised our hearts. He removed all the sins from our hearts and cut them off completely. Do you believe this?

You should realize how important it is to be circumcised. God said, "You should be circumcised in your flesh of your foreskins. This shall be a sign of the covenant between you and Me." Dear fellow

believers, we must cut off our foreskins of our hearts and cut out the sins of our hearts without fail. And we should believe that Jesus Christ took all our sins away. We should cut out all our sins by such a faith. This is the sign of God's covenant. The sign of God's covenant that He would cleanse us from all our sins is circumcision. In other words, cutting off all our sins from our hearts is the sign of being God's people, and the sign of receiving the remission of sins.

Have You Become God's People Now?

Are the sins of your heart been cut off completely? Are they all cut out? God told us to be circumcised in the flesh of the foreskins. This means we should draw a definitely clear line of salvation in our hearts. Didn't Jesus Christ bear all our sins through His baptism, die on the Cross, and rise again from death just for us? Yes he did. Halleluiah! We need to confirm this faith. We need to believe that

Jesus Christ took all our sins away and say 'Hallelujah!' You shouldn't think, "Is it really the Truth that Jesus took all my sins away? No one else talks about this, but why does this Church always talk about it? Isn't this just the unique teaching of Pastor Paul Jong and Pastor Samuel Kim which cannot be found anywhere in any Christian community?" But remember what the Apostle Paul said in Romans 2 regarding this important matter, "*Circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter*" (Romans 2:29).

We have received the remission of sins by believing that our sins were handed over to Jesus at the time of His baptism. We became righteous by believing this from our hearts. This is the circumcision of the heart. Receiving the remission of sins is the sign of God's covenant. Receiving the remission of sins is the sign that we have become His children. I have received the remission of all my sins. How about you then? Have you also received the remission of all your sins? Do you have no sin in your hearts? I hope you

believe this wholeheartedly as the Truth rather than in some obscure Christian doctrines. Do not trust your wills but trust in God's Word.

God says, *“My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised male child, who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant”* (Genesis 17:13-14). Those men who are not circumcised will be cut off from God's people. Such people will no longer be found among the children of God. This is true. People, who claim to believe in God without being circumcised, or have received the remission of sins, will be cut off from God's people. Cutting them off from God's family is the natural result of this because they don't believe in and keep God's Word. Not believing in God's promise is the same as betraying God's promise.

God promised us that He would remove all our sins from us humans. Jesus Christ who is the true God came to this world just as He had promised. And

He solved the problem of our sin thoroughly in the Jordan River. Jesus Christ was circumcised for us in the Jordan River. Just as General Naaman was cleansed from his debilitating leprosy when he immersed his body seven times in the Jordan River, Jesus was baptized to take all our sins and cut them off from our souls. In other words, Jesus Christ cleansed us from all our sins and evils. Are you not going to believe this in spite of the fact that Jesus has already cleansed us of all our sins? God promised this and then fulfilled it, but why are you still reluctant to believe? You should not do that. If you reject this circumcision, you will be called the betrayers of God. And then God will consider you as Satan's followers.

You Are a Traitor to God When You Don't Believe in God's Word

God made a promise with His Word and kept all

His promises by coming to this earth and removing all the sins of the world. God then said that He would accept those who believe in this Truth as His people and that He would treat those who do not believe in it as His enemies. If you think to yourself, “God will treat me kindly, for I have been working so hard. I have pioneered five churches, so I guess He will surely look over all my wrongdoings.” If you have these thoughts then you are greatly mistaken. I know a lot of people who have pioneered more than 5 churches. But they did not plant those churches by preaching the Truth to the lost souls but only to boast about their merits to people. I tell you that being saved by God has nothing to do with our own work. You might think to yourself, “God will save me because, while I have been serving Him, I have been denying myself.” But these kinds of thoughts are akin to betraying God. If you don't believe in His Word properly even if you have met with Him, God will treat you as a betrayer.

I know someone who was running a huge prayer

house. He used to fast for forty days twice a year. He set a schedule to do this fasting twice every year and he drank only water during this fasting period. Differently put, he ate regularly for nine months and ten days, but refrained from eating for two months and twenty days. As for me, fasting for a day is very challenging, so whenever I see people like him, I feel amazed. There are, of course, people who fast just to show off. They do this without a dedicated heart but out of hypocrisy. However, the director of a certain prayer house, who was dying of cancer at that time, fasted and prayed from his heart. People who prayed with him at that prayer house told me that he was on pins and needles all night. They first thought that he was doing so because he was in so much pain, but they soon realized that he was in fact begging God for forgiveness all night as he crawled around the floor of that room. He used to be a very popular revivalist who used to create great sensations among blessing-seekers. But he died anxiously worrying about his own sins. Life of unbelievers is like this.

Why do you think he was so much in agony until the last moment before his death? It is because he had not received the remission of sins by betraying God's covenant. Do you think God will forgive you your sins when you fast and pray for a long time? God promised us His salvation and told us to receive the remission of sins by believing in His Word of promise just like that. But this man could not receive the remission of sins because he only relied on his fasting over two months of every year out of his own will. Not trusting in God's Word fully is a betrayal of God and His Word. Among many sins, the greatest sin is to not believe in God's Word, and this sin is none other than committing blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. Please keep this in your mind. All other sins can be forgiven, but those who are not circumcised, those who do not receive the remission of sins like this but claim they believe in Jesus Christ their way will surely go to hell.

You Should Know the Importance of Circumcision

You and I could become God's children because we have been circumcised. In other words, we have become the citizens of Heaven because we have received the remission of sins. The God of love gave us the Word of promise and the faith of believing in this promise so that we could be circumcised in the heart as the sign of this covenant. We became the authentic descendants of Abraham by God's grace. We have become God's people through the Word of His promise. This is so gratifying.

I want to make sure that what we all believe in is the Truth. Our faith is rock solid. We are His people, we who are circumcised according to His Word. During those times the Israelites treated those who were not circumcised as outcasts; they treated the Gentiles as mere beasts. But we have been spiritually circumcised by believing in God's covenant. We have this definite sign in our hearts

that we are saved by Jesus. In this way, you and I have become the blameless children of God.

Who are you? You are God's people who have been circumcised. You are God's people, separated from the common people of this world. We are going to hold Nathaniel Bible Camp this summer, and this is only for the college students who have been circumcised. Not all college students can join this meeting. Whoever wants to join must first be circumcised. If you don't become circumcised, you will be disobeying God's will, and then you will not receive any blessings from God.

You and I are the people who inherited the same faith as that of Abraham's. God's servants as the Apostle Peter and John had also inherited this very same faith. We are indeed circumcised; we are the consecrated saints before God; we have received the remission of sins; we are blameless in God's sight. God said, "*I am Almighty God. Walk before me and be blameless.*" God, who made this statement, blotted out all our sins as white as snow. And He

adopted us, the sinless saints, as His very own people. Brothers and sisters, you are not the common people of this world. Do you think that you are just the same as those Christian sinners out there, saying to yourself, "I am the same as those other Christians except that the denomination of my church is a little different?" No, this is not true. You and I are fundamentally different from other Christians in this world. We are the seeds of God. We are God's children. We are the seeds of the righteous. In other words, we are the seeds of Jesus Christ.

Take pride in the fact that you are God's circumcised people. Keep your uniqueness. When those who are not circumcised come to our Church and suggest working together with us, since both they and we are all brothers in God, we should say to them, "Are you kidding me?" This kind of thing is insulting to us when they treat us as the same kind. We have self-respect as people of God who are the circumcised. Do not go to just anyone to ask for prayer by the laying on of hands. Do not work with

every Jack and Jill, but keep your identity pure before God. We can't walk with those who are not circumcised. It does not make much sense if those of you who are circumcised invite those who are not circumcised, to walk together with you. Where is the reason for us to feel small before them? Rather, we should tell them with confidence that they should be circumcised so that they can be treated as our fellow believers. They are the wretched people who have not been circumcised.

Of course, they would say things like this, "What is the difference between you and me?"

Then we should say to them boldly, "We are different. God says in the Bible, 'Every uncircumcised male child shall be cut off from My people for he has broken My covenant.' Have you then been circumcised? Have you or have you not?"

If they reply, "How do you know this?"

Then ask them, "Do you still have sins at your heart?"

They will then say if they are honest, "I am

afraid so."

Then reply them,

"That is why I am telling you that you have not been circumcised. Read the Bible carefully. Find out how God's covenant is related to circumcision. Does the word, 'circumcision' not mean to cut off cleanly? Have you been circumcised in your heart like this?"

Then, they response, "Uh...."

We then ask again, "Do you have sins in your heart?"

They answer, "Yes."

We say, "Then you have not cut off your sins yet. You have not been circumcised yet."

They then reply, "Don't you also have sins?"

We say, "No, I don't."

They then rely, "Do you have no sin from the beginning?"

We say, "No, I also used to have sins, but God cut off all the sins from my heart when Jesus was baptized and then discarded them on the Cross."

I hope you all would live with such pride as

God's people. No matter where you go, witness to people that you have become God's children and do not act cheaply. God made a promise to us, saying, "I will establish my covenant with you and your descendants, and I will multiply you exceedingly." Our God is the God of covenant who always keeps His promises. He always accomplishes them. Since God has promised them, He will accomplish them.

Let's Live with Pride as the Circumcised

If nobody comes to us, then go into each campus and have a Bible study meeting there. And thank God by saying, "Thank you for circumcising us," and sing praises related to the circumcision of the heart. Thank God who circumcised us and share the bread of life, the Word of God. Pray to God based on His promise that says, "I will make a covenant between you and Me and multiply you," and wait patiently for Him. If you stand firm before God with

strong faith, then the promise that He would multiply us will indeed come true. There will be an increase in the number of people who want to be circumcised.

Dear beloved saints are we God's people or not? Are we the circumcised people or are we not? We are indeed the circumcised. We are different from the common people. I may look shabby, but I can say to everyone anything I wish to say. I don't mingle in with them not because I feel inadequate by them, but because I have this pride as a circumcised person. There is no one in the vicinity of Chuncheon City whom we can work together with. As you have received the remission of sins, it is the second greatest blessing from God for you to live with the righteous in His Church. God promised to give us the land of Canaan. God has given us the Kingdom of Heaven. Yes, God's Church is the Kingdom of Heaven. You might then retort, "How is this place the Kingdom of Heaven?" This is the Kingdom of Heaven. Heaven is a place where your hearts become whole and pure. When we are in such a heavenly place, God will

provide things we need in His due time.

You and I are all God's people who are the circumcised. God appeared to Abraham and said, "*I am Almighty God. Walk before me and be blameless.*" Do you believe this? "Yes, we do. We believe that You Lord became our God and removed all our sins just as You had promised. We believe that we have become whole. And we also believe that all Your promises will be accomplished; we believe You hear us when we pray; we believe You will multiply us. We believe we will receive abundant blessings on this earth. We believe You will take care of us, protect us and work on and in us. We believe that You have blessed us. We believe that You will bless us even more." We should be able to profess our faith like this before God.

I strongly believe that all the saints in this Church will be even more blessed and be happier. I believe this because God is your God and mine. As the Apostle Paul said, I also consider "*the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared*

with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18). I firmly believe that God will give the blessings of the dew of Heaven as well as the blessings of the fatness of the earth (Genesis 27:28) to us His circumcised children who follow His Word wholeheartedly. ☒

SERMON

13



Do Not Look Back As Lot's Wife Did

< Genesis 19:23-29 >

“The sun had risen upon the earth when Lot entered. Then the LORD rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the LORD out of the heavens. So He overthrew those cities, all the plain, all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground. But his wife looked back behind him, and she became a pillar of salt. And Abraham went early in the morning to the place where he had stood before the LORD. Then he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain; and he saw, and behold, the smoke of the land which went up like the smoke of a furnace. And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the

midst of the overthrow, when He overthrew the cities in which Lot had dwelt.”

In today's Scripture reading taken from Genesis chapter 19 we see God rained down fire and brimstone on the land of Sodom and destroyed it completely; a city where Abraham's nephew Lot had been living. As you know very well, God judged this world with water in the days of Noah. And now, in the days of Abraham, God judged the land of Sodom with fire. Abraham's nephew Lot was living in Sodom at this time, but because Sodom and another nearby city, Gomorrah, were so wicked, God had decided to judge them. When Lot heard about this imminent judgment from the two angles that were sent by God, Lot told his family members about it, but while his wife and two daughters believed him, his sons-in-law did not take his words seriously thinking he was only joking.

God Almighty had sent His angels to the land of

Sodom and Gomorrah to investigate it, and having verified just how wicked these cities were, God brought down brimstone and fire from the heavens and judged them. By raining down brimstone and fire on the land of Sodom and Gomorrah, God burnt all the inhabitants and all the animals and plants in those cities, destroying them all completely. This historical fact that God rained down fire on Sodom and Gomorrah is also supported by archeological evidence. Some archeologists investigating these possible sites discovered grain that seemed to be burnt at that time, after being buried underground for millennia. They interpreted this grain as evidence to indicate where Sodom and Gomorrah were actually located.

As supported by archeological evidence as well, God had indeed rained down fire on the land of Sodom and Gomorrah and overthrown it and burnt them all up. But before this happened, Abraham's nephew Lot were able to escape from Sodom along with his wife and daughters, fleeing to a small city

nearby called Zoar. The angels had warned them not to look back after leaving but head straight to safety. While Lot and his daughters heeded this warning and ran straight to safety, his wife instead, stopped and looked back and ended up turning into a pillar of salt. When the sun rose in the morning, Abraham looked towards the land of Sodom and Gomorrah and saw thick smoke coming up from it. The Bible says that it's because God loved Abraham that He saved Abraham's nephew Lot.

This Present Age May Also Face Such a Disaster

What lessons can we draw from today's Scripture reading? I am sure you yourself are well aware that this present age we are living in today is the age of sorrows. What kind of faith should we then have in such an age? This is precisely the question that God is addressing to us in today's Scripture.

Slowly but surely, this planet earth is facing more and more disasters, epidemics, famines, and wars. In South Korea, we saw unprecedented heat waves this summer. Such fatal heat waves were not confined to only South Korea, but they struck nearly every country all over the world with temperatures rising up above 40 degrees Celsius, destroying many lives. As if these heat waves were not enough, torrential rainfall was also quite common this summer, and not to speak of wild fires. Anyone can thus know that this present age is the age of sorrows without my saying so. The whole world is indeed plagued by one disaster upon another. People all over the world are suffering a great deal from natural disasters—some from forest fires, others from floods, and still others from earthquakes. But that's not all. Incurable viruses such as HIV and Ebola clearly prove that this present age is the age of sorrows. When we take an overall look at all these signs, we see clearly that we can neither ignore nor skirt over the fact that now is *“the beginning of sorrows”*

(Matthew 24:8).

What you and I should be asking ourselves here is this: How should we live in this present age of sorrows? Just as God had judged the land of Sodom and Gomorrah with brimstone and fire, so will this earth where we are dwelling now also be condemned for its sins. This world is facing God's imminent judgment, and for you and me to preach the righteousness of the Lord in such a world, we must have solid and unwavering faith in the Lord's Word of warning. The warning in today's Scripture reading is that we should never set our hearts on this world as Lot's wife did. It's written here that because Lot's wife looked back—that is, because she still had lingering attachments to this world—she ended up turning into a pillar of salt. We should never allow ourselves to become like Lot's wife, and this is the key lesson that God is teaching us in today's Scripture reading.

In the Bible, salt refers to the Word of God. The fact that Lot's wife turned into a pillar of salt for not

believing in the Word of God is a clear demonstration of what would happen to those who neither believe in nor follow this God-spoken Word. Put differently, this teaches us that everyone must follow the righteousness of God as commanded by Him. Even though God's messengers appeared before her very own eyes and warned her of what was to come, Lot's wife did not believe wholeheartedly in the Word of God that the angels had delivered. It's not necessarily the case that Lot's wife had absolutely no faith in God's Word. Rather, she did have some faith, but it was a weak faith. The problem was that her faith was not enough, and because of this she was plagued by many doubts. Because her faith in God's Word was not complete, she looked back towards Sodom and Gomorrah even though God had clearly told her to never look back, and as a result she ended up turning into a pillar of salt.

Why did God turn Lot's wife into a pillar of salt? As all of us know quite well, salt is easily dissolved. If you leave a lump of salt outside on a

rainy day, it will dissolve and disappear in no time. God turned Lot's wife into a pillar of salt to teach an important lesson to all of us living in these last days. It is to teach us that if we do not wholeheartedly believe in the Word of God, we will also be destroyed just like Lot's wife.

When the Age of Sorrows Passes, the Age of Tribulation Will Come

We know very well that this present age is the age of destruction. This earth has already entered into the age of sorrows. Once these sorrows unfold just a little more, the age of tribulation will arrive, and then the Antichrist will make his appearance. And once the age of tribulation arrives, it will spell the end of this world. In this light, the age of sorrows can be described as a precursor for the pending age of tribulations. This present age of sorrows is characterized by disastrous earthquakes, floods, rapid

climate changes, epidemics, wars, and the desolation of people's hearts. Amid all these sorrows, the Antichrist will finally appear and try to subdue by force, against their wills, both the believers in the righteousness of Jesus and unbelievers alike, and he will be intent on murdering them. The Word of God clearly says that the Antichrist will drag as many people as possible with him to hell. Even some saints will surrender themselves to the Antichrist and end up in hell.

It's written in today's Scripture passage that when the land of Sodom was destroyed, Lot's wife turned into a pillar of salt for not believing in the Word of God. What exactly does this mean? What is the Bible trying to teach us here? This account shows us that in this age of sorrows and with the age of tribulation just around the corner, all those who do not receive the remission of sins will be destroyed just like Lot's wife, for these people do not believe in the gospel truth of the righteousness of God, namely, the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Today's

Scripture reading teaches us clearly that those who cannot bring themselves to believe in this Word of the righteousness of God will not be able to receive the remission of sins, and as a result, they will never escape from their certain destruction.

All of us know very well that we should never allow ourselves to become like Lot's wife who refused to believe in the righteousness of God. It's true that some of us are having a hard time following the Lord out of a pure and willing heart; some of us may in fact feel they are being dragged along against their wills. Rather than submitting themselves to the righteousness of God willingly, such people are being pulled along by their predecessors of faith. But what would happen to them if they let their hands go from this life giving guidance? They would surely return very quickly to the world, only to perish in both body and spirit in the end. There actually will be people who will be destroyed despite believing in the Word of God sincerely.

Why would something like this ever happen?

It's because these people are still too attached to the things of the world, holding them dear to their hearts, even though God said that He will judge this world and everything in it with fire; and this is why they will all perish along with the things of the world. What then would happen to us spiritually if we were to love anything in this world more than God, whether it's a person, a family member, or material possessions? We would go completely astray. But God has opened a way for us to escape from destruction and be led into His Church. Knowing this now we ought to renew our hearts and follow the Lord faithfully by trusting in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We should keep in mind that even for those who know the righteousness of God, if their faith becomes weak due to the attractions of this world, and hanker after it, missing them so much that they pine for it will end up following it and the results will be that they will be destroyed in the end.

You and I must realize clearly that this world will be destroyed for sure. God Almighty Himself

said that the first heavens and the first earth of this world will all be destroyed. The Lord promised us that He will destroy the first heavens and the first earth and give us new heavens and a new earth. What does this promise mean? It means that God will give new heavens and a new earth to all of us who have received the remission of sins and bless us to live forever in the everlasting Kingdom of Heaven. This, my fellow believers, is not just an empty promise, but it is the truth. We must therefore remember this Word of promise, for the Truth spoken by the Creator of this world is the very Word that brings everlasting life to us.

Before the land of Sodom was destroyed, Abraham's nephew Lot had been visited by two angels. Let me spend some time here to elaborate this account. The layout of cities in the age of the Old Testament was very different from today's urban layout. In those days cities were walled like a fort, and entrance was possible only by the gate. So, to get into Sodom or Gomorrah, one had no choice but to

go through this gate. When the angels came to Sodom, they found none other than Abraham's nephew Lot sitting in the gate. They had come upon Lot sitting in the gate like this. When Lot saw the two angels, he rose to meet them and bowed before their feet. Lot then took them over to his house and treated them to a feast.

There were some other things that happened, but to cut to the chase what Lot heard from these angels was this: "Leave this land of Sodom and Gomorrah. God said that He will judge these cities. We have come to verify the wickedness of these cities, and we have seen that the cries against them are indeed justified. God will therefore judge Sodom and Gomorrah as He said He would. So you must flee as soon as possible. Tell all your family members. Take as many people as you can and leave this city at once." In a way, this was terrible news for Lot since the impending doom would destroy all his belongings, but in reality, it was actually a blessed news as Lot was given a chance to save himself and his family.

Lot's Wife, However, Became a Pillar of Salt

Who do you suppose came to Lot's mind right away when he heard this news? Of course, he thought of his own family members. So he ran to his wife, daughters, and sons-in-law and told them about God's Word that he had heard from the angels. But the Bible says that Lot's sons-in-law thought that he was joking. We can imagine the following conversation taking place between Lot's sons-in-law and their wives:

"Honey, your father has a good sense of humor. For an old guy, he is still very funny."

"Actually he is not joking at all! That's what my father really heard straight from the angels' mouths!"

"Sure, I'm sure that's what happened. You go ahead if you think he was serious. I'll stick around for a while and maybe catch up with you later. My legs are still good; if anything happens, I'll make my way to catch up with you. Don't worry about me. Just go ahead and follow your father."

This may not have been the exact conversation that went on, but it gives you a pretty good idea of how Lot's sons-in-law treated this warning. Since they all thought Lot was just joking, none of them did anything to flee from the impending doom.

As his sons-in-law did not budge until the end, Lot had no choice but to flee from the land of Sodom with only his wife, his daughters, and a few simple belongings. Even this took a lot of goading by the angels, as Lot kept on lingering into the dawn. The Lord then said to Lot through the angels, "I will judge the city as soon as you leave. But there is one thing that you must remember: You and your family must never look back."

Lot in fact, did believe that God would rain down fire on the land of Sodom and destroy it. But since God had told him not to look back, he had no way to confirm this. On the way to safety, Lot asked the angels to let him head to the small city nearby instead of the high mountains where he was told to go, saying that he was afraid of what might befall

him on those mountains. God then allowed this and let Lot flee to this settlement. On his way, Lot kept wondering about what was going on in the land of Sodom, but he was able to suppress his curiosity even if it took a great deal of effort. He also insisted on his family to never turn around to look back, saying that this is what God had commanded. Lot did everything he could to ensure that no one in his family would look back, since he knew that the Word of God brought to him by the angels would be fulfilled for sure. Lot's wife, however, did not listen to him. She might even have told her daughters to never look back since that's what her husband had told her, but she herself could not resist the urge and ended up looking back.

Perhaps Lot's wife thought to herself, "I'll just steal a quick glance so that I can tell Lot what's going on. I'm sure nothing is going to happen to me." But, as soon as she looked back, she turned into a pillar of salt. There was nothing Lot could do, because his wife had already turned into a pillar of salt, so he had

no choice but to leave her there and flee with his two daughters.

By the time they reached safety, the sun had already risen. Then brimstone and fire began to rain down from the heavens. When we try to make sense of this by reason, frankly it's quite difficult for us to grasp exactly how God brought down brimstone and fire. Did God prepare a giant bowl filled with brimstone? This is the extent of our human thought. When we read the Bible where it tells us that God rained down brimstone and fire, we wonder if God had prepared a gigantic blast furnace and poured down brimstone from it, as smelting is done to make steel. We might end up with all kinds of imaginations.

However, the Bible only says, "*Then the Lord rained brimstone and fire*" (*Genesis 19:24*). This is the Word of the Almighty God that requires no further thinking or questioning on our part. Just as the Bible says, God brought down brimstone and fire. And with this rain of brimstone and fire God burned

up all the houses and all the living things in the land of Sodom and Gomorrah, overthrowing these cities.

Cast Away All Your Lingering Attachments to This World, Knowing That Now Is the Beginning of Sorrows

Abraham, our forefather of faith, prayed to God for his nephew Lot. It's because the Lord God loved Abraham that He allowed Abraham's nephew and his family to flee. Let's take a look at how Abraham had interceded to God on behalf of Lot. Abraham said, "Lord, would you destroy the land of Sodom and Gomorrah if there were just fifty righteous there?"

"If there are indeed only fifty righteous, I will not destroy it," said God.

Abraham then said, "Would you spare it if there were five less than the fifty righteous, just forty-five?"

"Yes, I will spare it as you ask." In this way

Abraham kept on decreasing the number of the righteous and God kept on replying that He would not destroy the land of Sodom and Gomorrah for the sake of the righteous living there, until the number came all the way down to just ten.

What does this imply? It means that the land of Sodom and Gomorrah was destroyed because there were less than ten righteous people. Let's try counting them here. Abraham's nephew Lot was someone who had received the remission of sins, as he believed in God's Word of righteousness. Likewise, his wife had also received the remission of sins. Then there were Lot's two daughters. But even when they are all added together, the number still amounts to just four. When God first decided to burn and wipe out the land of Sodom and Gomorrah, He was going to destroy Abraham's nephew Lot along with these cities. But Abraham had interceded to God on behalf of his nephew. And the Bible records that God loved Abraham so deeply that He answered this prayer and spared Lot and his family. Indeed, just as

God listened to Abraham's prayer, I have every faith that God will also listen to us when we pray to Him.

We know that this present age is the beginning of sorrows. And if we were not to cast away our attachments to this world, we would surely end up being destroyed. We should never allow this to happen to any of us. All of us ought to believe that this world will be destroyed and judged by God for sure. God clearly said that He will judge this world with fire. If this is what the Almighty God said, then this is exactly what will happen without fail. When wickedness prevails on this earth as it did in the land of Sodom and Gomorrah, God will infallibly judge this world with fire. We all know that whoever does not believe in the Word of God will be destroyed at that time amid this judgment of God. You and I must therefore remember clearly just how imperative it is for us to believe in this Word promised by God exactly as it is. We must believe in the God-spoken Word of judgment with all our hearts to escape His condemnation. Rather than setting our minds on this

world, in other words, we ought to follow the Lord alone by faith, for this world is a world that will be destroyed by fire just as God's Word says.

Just as Jesus said that it's hard for the rich to enter the Kingdom of God, rather than being so attached to this world's material riches, and including our own greed, we ought to be satisfied with what God has given us and serve the Lord, trust in Him, and follow Him. You and I should prepare ourselves for the new world that the Lord will give us, not for this present world. It is to this new world prepared by the Lord Himself that we ought to flee by faith and live happily there forever.

If your faith is still young and you are spiritually immature, you have all the more reason to hold onto the gospel of the water and the Spirit and believe in this Word of God with all your heart. If God said that He would destroy this world, then this will come about exactly according to what God had said. So, if you are still fond of this world and as a result do not submit yourself to the Word of God like Lot's wife,

then you will be destroyed. The account of Lot's wife is compelling enough for us to never allow ourselves to be destroyed for faithlessness like her. Lot's wife was indeed a wretched woman both physically and spiritually, for not only was she destroyed, but her entire household was ruined because of her.

Take a look at what happened after Lot and his daughters fled from Sodom. If Lot's wife had not turned into a pillar of salt and escaped safely with her husband, then she, her husband Lot, and her two daughters could have led happy lives instead of seeing their whole family being destroyed. Perhaps Lot's family could have gone to Abraham, asked for his forgiveness, gotten Lot's daughters married, and been well-off again tending Abraham's livestock.

However, because Lot's wife looked back and turned into a pillar of salt, Lot and his two daughters ended up fleeing to a nearby little town instead of the mountains as the angels had indicated. Lot's daughters could not find any husbands there. That's because everyone in Sodom and Gomorrah and their

vicinity had been killed by God's judgment. So the daughters made their father drunk, slept with him, and bore children by him. One of the children became the father of the Moabites, and the other became the father of the tribe of Ammon. These tribes would later become the archenemies of the people of Israel in a constant conflict. As the descendants of the daughters of Lot stood against the people of Israel, they became the enemies of God's army. This all happened because of Lot's wife, because she did not believe in the Word of God and looked back.

We Must Believe in the Word of God and Keep It in Mind

Who knew that such consequences would follow? Who would have looked back if it was known that such results would follow? No one would have looked back. Yet Lot's wife ended up looking

back simply because she couldn't resist her curiosity. If you still find the world irresistibly curious and interesting, then take a look at what happened as a result of Lot's wife looking back. When it comes to what human beings are saying, it doesn't matter whether you listen to them or not. But you must listen to God's Word without fail. And you must believe in it and follow it without fail. You will live if you believe in the Word of God and follow it, but you will die if you don't believe in the Word of God and look back towards the world. Nothing can be clearer than this. How could you take the Word of the Almighty God lightly when it comes to the question of life and death? You should never take God's Word as a joke as Lot's sons-in-law did, nor should you ever take it lightly as Lot's wife did. The consequences of taking God's Word lightly are one's own death and everlasting destruction.

The account of Lot's wife is particularly important to the born-again. God is showing the born-again that if they look back towards the world

and pursue their own worldly greed in these end times, they will be destroyed without exception. It might not have been that bad if Lot's wife was alone to perish as a result of her unbelief in God's Word, but who else perished because of her? Her husband and daughters also ended up facing spiritual death. This is what the Bible is teaching us in today's Scripture passage. Rather than just skirting over it, all of us ought to take it deep into our hearts as a vital lesson. The account of Lot's wife is a cautionary tale. It is warning us that if we ignore the Word of God in these end times, then not only will we ourselves be destroyed, but all our families will also be destroyed.

All of us must grasp this lesson well. You and I have received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, but what would happen if we fall into the world, giving up our faith in the Word of God to no longer follow it? Would it be just we who would perish, or would we also end up destroying our own families? Would we not in fact be destroying countless people on this earth? It's

imperative for us to give some serious thought to these important questions.

As human beings, we tend to think in simple terms. We are prone to think, "If I am dead, then that's the end of everything. Nothing else matters." However, my fellow believers, every human being is interconnected with each other in one way or another. This is why we have the notion of family, society, and the human race. All human beings are interconnected with one another. Everything does not end when you perish spiritually. Your spiritual death inevitably has a profoundly negative effect on other saints and also exerts a bad influence on those who still have not received the remission of sins. Once I realized this, I resolved myself to cast away all my lingering attachments to this world and follow the Lord wholeheartedly.

The Gospel of the Water and the Spirit Is Not Something That You Should Keep in Secrecy Just in Your Heart

Sometimes I wonder what might have happened if I had taken a different direction when I first realized the Word of God and came to understand the gospel Truth of the water and the Spirit. What would have happened if I had conceitedly and selfishly kept the gospel of the water and the Spirit just to myself, even as I knew that this gospel was nowhere to be found in the whole wide world? What would have happened if I had never taught the gospel Truth of the water and the Spirit and instead preached that one could be sinless just by believing in Jesus' blood on the Cross alone, saying that anyone who believed in Jesus in whatever way had no sin? No doubt I would have earned the praise of many worldly Christians, elevated myself among them, and turned countless people into my prey. There were times when I struggled immensely to carry on with my life of faith

and serve the gospel of the water and the Spirit. There were dark days when I felt like saying to myself, "I should just give up now. I've done enough already. I'm not the only man on this earth; let someone else do what I've been doing so hard. Either way, I just want it to be over. I should just take a long break and present myself to the Lord when He comes." When I think about what might have happened if I had stopped preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit all over the world and refused to serve it anymore. These thoughts still sends shivers down my spine.

This question of whether to serve the gospel of the water and the Spirit or not had personal consequences for me, but I also had to think about others. I asked myself, "If I seal my lips and don't preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit, wouldn't I end up killing all the countless souls that God has entrusted to me?" I realized, in other words, that my refusal to serve the gospel of the water and the Spirit would not only lead to my own death, but

also the death of countless people in this world.

That is why I decided to preach this gospel to as many souls as possible no matter how hard and difficult it was. Even though I was weak and powerless, I still resolved myself to hold my position and fulfill the role that I was given as God wanted me to. The same is true for you as well. What would happen if you were to give up your faith now, stop preaching God's true gospel that's in your heart, and instead preach a false gospel claiming that anyone can become sinless and righteous just by believing in the blood of the Cross alone? What would happen, in other words, if you were to completely give up your life of faith just because it's hard? Remember what happened as a result of the unbelief of Lot's wife: Not only did she become God's enemy, but her husband Lot and her daughters also became God's enemies. They were all cursed to garner God's enmity. They were destroyed, in other words. Like this, your destruction and mine are not just ours alone, but it also means the destruction of our own

families. It also implies the destruction of those who would have otherwise heard the gospel of the water and the Spirit from us and received the remission of sins. All of us must remember this always.

As we follow the Word of the righteousness of the Lord, we must think about the spiritual consequences of our actions. We should be able to think ahead and foresee what would happen depending on whether or not we preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Above all, we must believe wholeheartedly that God has clearly and unambiguously entrusted us with the work of saving sinners, and live out our faith accordingly. In short, all of us ought to grasp clearly the vital lesson that's taught by the account of Lot's wife who turned into a pillar of salt.

What attachments did Lot's wife have to this world that she would look back? At most, all that she had was a house and some properties, mostly flocks and herds since cattle-raising was the primary livelihood in those days. What value did these things

have that Lot's wife would exchange her own life for them? What about you then? Do you still love this world even though God said that He would destroy it with fire? Do you still have many lingering attachments to this world that you are willing to exchange not only your own life for them but also let your spouse and children be destroyed?

My fellow believers, God has clearly told us that once He judges this world with fire, He will make the new heavens and the new earth for us. God has promised us that He will bless us to reign in the Millennial Kingdom for a thousand years. The first heavens and the first earth of this world are so intolerably filthy and wicked that God cannot bear with it anymore. That's why God said that He would burn them all down wiping it out to oblivion. The Almighty God Himself said that He would do this without fail.

We have received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, God's Word of righteousness. It is then only a matter

of course that we should also believe that God will destroy this world for sure, for this is what the Creator of this world and the Lord of salvation said. Whatever God said, all of us must believe in it completely and exactly as He said. Even though in our finite minds we may not understand everything God said, each and every God-spoken Word will be fulfilled exactly as it is.

Soon you will hear more news of war breaking out. You will see with your own eyes from news coverage missiles raining down and bombs exploding. The age of war will soon arrive at this earth. The day is coming when nations will rise against nations, states against states. As amply proven by historical records, there is no compromise in a war fought between ardent nationalists. There can be no compromise. Such a total war inevitably calls for the total destruction of one of the two warring sides. Even though everyone wants peace, there can be no absolute and permanent peace in this world.

The Events of This World Will Unfold as Scripted by God

This present age in which we are living is the age of sorrows. Soon, when the events that I described earlier in my sermon unfold, the age of tribulation will come. Then the Antichrist will appear and force everyone to receive the mark of his name, destroying all who refuse to receive this mark with reckless abandon. And the truly born-again will be clearly distinguished from everyone else. Regardless of whether we are martyred or not, after the persecution, our Lord will return to this earth and then destroy this world. He will then give us new heavens and a new earth. This is the promise contained in the true Word of God.

God's script for these events that will unfold in the age of tribulation has already been completed. When we read this script from the Bible, we can all see clearly that this present age has entered the age of sorrows, having passed through the age of creation,

the age of the Law, and the age of grace. There are only two ages left: The age of tribulation and the age of the everlasting Kingdom of Heaven.

In which age do we find ourselves right now? We are now in the age of sorrows. It is neither the age of creation in which Adam and Eve had lived, nor the age of the Law that God initiated through Moses, nor the age of the Early Church just after Jesus' ascension. Having passed through the age of grace, we are now living in the age of sorrows marked by the unveiling of unprecedented disasters. Given the fact the Almighty God Himself said that He would destroy this world, who could ever prevent it? Are you then still attached to this world that's inexorably doomed to destruction? I sure hope you are not one of these kinds of people. I pray with all my heart that you have no lingering attachments to this world. Remember this: Whoever does not receive the remission of sins soon will all be destroyed.

What should we the righteous do when we come

across people who refuse to accept the gospel of the water and the Spirit when it's preached to them? We should not just skirt over this refusal so easily, thinking that it's not that important. We should let them know clearly that they will be cast into hell unless they accept this gospel of the water and the Spirit. Most people have no clue about their impending doom right up to the last minute. To draw an analogy, think about a pig that's scheduled to be slaughtered in the afternoon. In the morning as the pig wakes up it has no idea that its life is coming to an end, to be sold and dragged to the slaughterhouse, and so it goes on doing whatever pigs do, eating the morning feed and slopping around in the mud being carefree, oblivious to the fact that by the end of the day, it would have been slaughtered and cut into pieces.

Of course, when the pig sees the owner coming into the pen and trying to catch it, it can sense by instinct that something is wrong. The owner still has the same face, but the pig can feel in the air that

something is amiss, so it runs wild trying to evade the owner. The way to catch the pig is by baiting it with its favorite food, perhaps with some boiled beans. So the owner drops a trail of beans to entice the pig. Once the pig sees and smells the beans, it completely forgets about what was going on just moments ago and happily follows the trail of beans until it's caught and roped by the owner. It's then taken to a truck to be transported to the butchery, where it is put to death and its meat cut into pieces to be sold in the marketplace. Right up to the very moment of its doom, the pig has no idea what is about to happen. It's just happy to follow the trail of beans, slurping on them obliviously, clueless that this trail of beans would lead to its gruesome end. Like this pig, so do countless people remain oblivious to their destruction even though it is right around the corner.

Every Human Being Is in Honor before God

In Psalm 49, it's written that although human beings are in honor, those who do not know their honor are like the beasts that perish. As God said, every human being is in honor. Human beings were originally created in the likeness of the image of God. Yet despite the fact that human beings are in the likeness of the image of God, most of them do not know their own honor. Far from realizing that they can actually receive the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit brought by Jesus Christ, reign forever with God, and live for eternity with divine majesty, they are just interested in their own greed just like the beasts that perish. Indeed, countless people today are solely interested in the things of the flesh like the beasts that perish. You and I know very well that we should never allow ourselves to turn into such people who are preoccupied only with the flesh. None of us should look towards the things of this earth alone,

only to end up perishing like the beasts. Instead, each and every one of us ought to realize our honor and think about our present circumstances with our minds set on the future, the next world to come. In other words, we ought to think about how we should be living now in light of the future, and with this in mind deal with our present circumstances wisely.

Moreover, we should never think of just ourselves. Instead, we ought to also think about what impact our actions might have on our own families, lest they are harmed because of us. This concern for our own family members should extend to others as well, being carefully mindful of what would happen to them as a result of our actions. In short, our lives should be guided by altruism and a genuine concern for everyone else. We ought to be helpful to others. It's very important for all of us to learn this life lesson from the Word of God.

What is the purpose for our lives on this earth? It is to serve the Lord. The Bible clearly teaches us that whatever we do, whether we eat or drink, we

must do all things to the glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31). This means that even when it comes to the food we eat, we need to be careful with our diet in order to serve the gospel of the Lord. This is not to just ensure our own individual health and prosperity, but for the prosperity of all. Indeed, all of us are obligated to live for the glory of God, to bring the remission of sins to everyone else. It's not just for ourselves that we obey the Lord's Word and follow Him by faith, but it is for our family members, for those around us, and for everyone all over the world.

Remember What God Said to Us

Our majestic God does not speak to us by appearing directly before us. How does He then speak to us? He speaks to us through His written Word. It is through the Word that God speaks to you and me.

The Lord God destroyed the land of Sodom and

Gomorrah completely by raining down brimstone and fire on it. The Word of God alone is enough to end all doubts and all questions. God has commanded us to listen attentively to the Word He speaks through His Church and the Holy Spirit. God speaks to His servants and His people alike through His Church. We believe that God's Word is found in His Church.

Some of you may think that since Lot's wife was turned into a pillar of salt, she actually turned into something quite useful. Given how widely useful salt is for various purposes such as cooking and preservation, you may think that Lot's wife turning into a pillar of salt implies that she had become something beneficial. But that's not what it means. Far from it, this account means that those who look back towards the world and cannot leave it behind will perish in the spiritual realm, and because of these people, not only will their own family members but countless other people will also be destroyed. All of us ought to engrave this lesson into our hearts. Learning from the lesson that our mistaken action

can lead to not only our own self-destruction but the destruction of those around us whom we hold near and dear, we must live by faith.

As we carry on with our lives, you and I must have a clear, unshakable understanding that now is the time of sorrows. I have already told you all about what would happen in the future. I have also explained to you how the events of this world would unfold and what would happen to the world economy. Since I've already explained them fully, I have little more to say. I never preach the Word from the pulpit just according to my own thoughts. Right here and right now, God rules over my heart through the Holy Spirit so that I would not utter my own words. So I can't just speak whatever happens to be on my mind.

In these days when the end is not far away, you and I alike must defend our faith and obey the Word of God, never looking back at the things of the world. So let us all preach the gospel of the Lord to as many people as possible in our lives, and when the Lord

returns, let us all set ourselves free from this present world of insecurity and pain to enter the new heavens and the new earth that God has created for us. We will then live there happily and joyously for a thousand years and beyond, for eternity. Realizing that there is a place more wonderful than this world, let us all live by faith. God has clearly told us that He will bring all these blessings to us.

Lord Jesus, come soon! ☒

SERMON

14



The People of True Faith Are Different from the Rest

< Genesis 21:8-12 >

“So the child grew and was weaned. And Abraham made a great feast on the same day that Isaac was weaned. And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, scoffing. Therefore she said to Abraham, ‘Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, namely with Isaac.’ And the matter was very displeasing in Abraham’s sight because of his son. But God said to Abraham, ‘Do not let it be displeasing in your sight because of the lad or because of your bondwoman. Whatever Sarah has said to you, listen to her voice; for in Isaac your seed shall be called.’”

The Son of Hagar Scoffed Isaac

It is very important for you to understand here that it was not the son of Sarah, Abraham’s legitimate wife, who scoffed first. It’s written, *“Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, scoffing.”* As the above passage shows, Ishmael the son of Abraham, who was born from Hagar the bondwoman, first scoffed at Isaac the son of Sarah. At that time, Ishmael was around 13 years old. And Isaac had just been weaned. It says here that Abraham held a great feast after Isaac was weaned.

When do we hold a feast for our children? In Korea, a feast is held on the hundredth day from the birth of a child, and then again on its first birthday. The feast held by Abraham was probably similar in nature. So while a great feast was being held for baby Isaac, Sarah saw Ishmael, the son of her bondwoman, hitting and kicking her own son Isaac. This was completely unacceptable to Sarah. Sarah therefore

said to Abraham, *“Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, namely with Isaac.”* This means that even though Ishmael was also Abraham’s son, he could not, as the son of Hagar the bondwoman, inherit Abraham’s wealth like his legitimate son Isaac. Ishmael the son of Hagar could not live with Abraham’s family regardless of how filial he was and how hard he tried to live in harmony with everyone else. He had to be driven out. God absolutely did not want this son of Abraham born from a bondwoman to dwell in his house.

What do you think was the reason for this? God had clearly promised Abraham, “He who is born from Sarah will be your son. And through him I will make your descendants as many as the stars in the sky.” God said that through Isaac He would give the inheritance of the land of Canaan, that is, the inheritance of Heaven. God promised that the blessings given to Abraham would also be given to the one born from Abraham. This meant that only the

one who was born from Sarah, Abraham’s legitimate wife, would be able to receive God’s blessings. It was Isaac, not Ishmael, who was born from Sarah. This Isaac was born through the Word of God. The child who was born in time according to God’s Word of promise was none other than Isaac.

Inheritance Is Received by Those Who Are Made Righteous by the Word of God

My fellow believers, living among us the true Christians are those who like Ishmael, have not been born again. This means that some Christians have been born again by believing in the Word of God, while others think that they have been born again by human efforts and emotions rather than the pure Word of God, and therefore these Christians still remain sinners. Indeed, among Christians there clearly are those who claim to have been born again by the flesh, and then there are God’s children who

have been born again by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. What do you think is the relationship between these two types of Christians? Those who have not been truly born again—that is, those are born through fleshly human relationships—can never be united with those who have been born again through the gospel Word of the water and the Spirit that holds the righteousness of God, no matter how hard they try. Moreover, they can never be heirs to the inheritance of God which is reserved for those who have been born again by the Word of God.

On this earth where we are living, the born-again Christians who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit are indeed far in the minority. But they are the ones whose hearts have received the Holy Spirit by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the Word of God. What other types of Christians are there besides these true ones? These are those who, born by the fleshly means of man rather than by the Word of God, do not know the gospel of the water and the Spirit and instead claim

that salvation is reached just by believing in Jesus in whatever way one wishes.

The child born by God's Word of promise is Isaac. Of course, Ishmael was also Abraham's son, but because he was not born by God's Word of promise, he was not qualified to be heir to Abraham's inheritance and wealth. This is akin to those Christians who, because they do not believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, have not received the remission of sins, and therefore cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. As we know, Abraham's wife Sarah was a barren woman. So God had promised Sarah with His Word that He would give her a son, and God indeed gave her a son. But what did Abraham do? Even though God had promised Abraham that He would give him a son, he grew impatient and could not wait for this promise to unfold, and so he begot a child through human means.

Although both Isaac and Ishmael were Abraham's sons, Ishmael became a threat to the

harmony of this family. These two sons were like water and oil in character. Isaac was someone who inherited Abraham's faith according to the Word of God, whereas Ishmael was a son begotten through fleshly means, and therefore they fought constantly, and later his descendants became the enemies of Israel. This was the relationship between the people of God and those who were not His people. Isaac was a child of God, for he was born by the Word of the Almighty God rather than by human means. My fellow believers, all of us who truly believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit are those who, like Isaac, have been born again by this righteous Word of God.

However, there are many people in this world who profess to believe in Jesus according to their own wills, while remaining ignorant of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The faith of those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is completely different from the faith of those who do not believe in this genuine gospel. They are very different from each other, just as Isaac and Ishmael

were different from each another. This distinction was found in the past, and it is also found among today's Christians. The same distinction is made in this present age. In this age also, there are clearly the people of God who have been born again by believing in the true Word of God. Such people who have been born again in this world by believing in the gospel Word of the water and the Spirit are approved by God as Isaac was approved. But God will never approve the faith of those who have not been born again by this genuine gospel and instead profess to believe in Jesus Christ as their Savior based on their own human emotions, fleshly thoughts, or wills.

Those Who Believe in the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit Cannot Dwell with Those Who Have Not Been Spiritually Born Again

Let's think about this spiritually. Here is a righteous saint who was a sinner but has been born again by believing in the gospel Word of the water and the Spirit that constitutes the righteousness of God. On the other hand, there is a nominal Christian who is still a sinner and believes in some Christian doctrines rather than the complete Word of God, thinking that the remission of sins can be attained just by believing in Jesus as the Savior. How could these two people ever work together? These two people can never work together, nor is it possible for them to receive the same rewards, just as Isaac and Ishmael could not live together and receive the same inheritance.

What does the Bible say about this? Sarah requested Abraham, "Cast out this bondwoman and

her son." It was absolutely impossible for Isaac and Ishmael to live together. Ishmael had to be cast out of the house of Abraham without fail. Why then, my fellow believers, is it impossible for us the born-again to live with those who have not been born again by the Word of God? Is it because these people are bad-tempered? No. The believers in the gospel of the water and the Spirit actually try hard to live with these people. They try hard to accommodate them, and they make a lot of compromises. However, unless these sinners receive the remission of sins through the gospel Word of the water and the Spirit, it is impossible for us be united with them. How could we call them God's saints just like us, when in fact they have sin in their hearts? How could we say that these people have been born again when they have actually not been born again, for they do not believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the Word of God?

Christian sinners in this world always make the following protest to the believers in the gospel of the

water and the Spirit: “Now that I’ve listened to you, everything you have said is right. But you should still approve our faith also. Why don’t you approve our faith then?” They refuse to approve our faith unless we approve theirs. That’s why they stand against us. They say, “Have we not approved your faith in the gospel of the water and the Spirit? You should then also approve our faith and our gospel.” But we can’t ever do this.

My fellow believers, as those who have been born again by the Word of God, we are approved by everyone who is honest before God. Once other Christians grasp our faith in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, they approve us everywhere in Christian communities, saying, “The gospel of the water and the Spirit you believe in is right. Your faith is right!” However, we do not approve the faith of those who are too stubborn to accept this genuine gospel, and it is for this reason that they persecute us.

A certain pastor once said to me, “I’d like to work with you, so please come to my church and

preach to our church members.” So I told him, “If I preach the Word of God at your church, everyone will be offended. Once I preach the Word of God to your church members, they won’t be able to lead their lives of faith as comfortably as before. Their hearts will be troubled and their faces will turn red in anger. Even though they are smiling now, this is what will happen once I preach the Word to them. If you are okay with this, ask permission from the head of your synod. I’ll preach once you get his permission.”

I said these things because their faith was completely different from mine. Although we are insufficient in our flesh, we are the ones who have been born again by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the righteous Word of God. We are fundamentally different from those who just profess to believe in Jesus as their Savior. We are of those who, by believing in God’s Word of promise, were born from Abraham’s legitimate wife Sarah.

Have You Become Abraham's Descendant by Believing in the Righteous Word of God?

God said to Abraham, “I will give this land of Canaan to your descendants, but on one condition: Everyone descending from you must be circumcised.” Accordingly, all the descendants of Abraham were circumcised. Circumcision is the evidence showing that one is a descendant of Abraham. Isaac was thus circumcised when he was eight days old.

Then my fellow believers have your hearts received spiritual circumcision through the gospel of the water and the Spirit? Do your hearts have the sign showing that you are believers in the gospel of the water and the Spirit? Do you really have the belief that Jesus Christ bore all the sins of the world by being baptized by John? Have you been born again by the Word of God? It is the faith in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that constitutes such a sign in your heart. None other than this is spiritual

circumcision. In the Book of Romans, Paul said, “*Circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter*” (Romans 2:29).

Have you been born again by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit? If so, then you are the ones who have been born again by believing in the Word of God. You are the children born of the Word of God. It is we who have been born as God's children through the gospel Word of the water and the Spirit. Have all of us been born again through the righteous Word of God? If so, then you and I are believers in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We are the heirs who will inherit the Kingdom of God, Heaven. We are the ones who will inherit the Kingdom of God even if we don't want to.

The clear standard that discerns those who have become God's children from those who have not is whether or not one has placed his faith in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the Word of God. If you do not believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and therefore you have not fully united

yourself with Jesus Christ, then you are testifying yourself that you are not a believer in this genuine gospel. If Christians in this world were to realize that anyone can be born again by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the Word of God, then they also will be able to have fellowship with God, for they will become His true children. But should someone be not able to have fellowship with God on account of his sins, then it's because this person has not been born again through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the Word of God.

You've probably met your relatives over this past holiday. Among your relatives, there must have been some Christians as well. On outside appearance, these Christians and you are in fact very similar. Just as they pray to Jesus, so do you also pray to Jesus. Just as they praise Jesus, you praise Jesus also. You also make your offerings just as they do. At least on outside appearances, there is nothing that sets them apart from you.

However, there is one clear difference, and it is

that while these people were born from Hagar, those of you who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit were born from Sarah. Other than this, there is no distinction when looking from outside. Isaac and Ishmael both had the same father, Abraham, and God was also their God. But who was the mother? From whom were they born? Isaac and Ishmael were completely different based on this fact that Isaac was born from Sarah and Ishmael was born from Hagar. The question is whether we have been born again by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the Word of God, or by believing in some man-made Christian doctrines.

What Must We Believe in to Receive the Remission of Sins into Our Hearts?

Recently I came across a certain pastor's sermon tape. This pastor is a very famous revivalist in Korea, someone who has been preaching the gospel for ages.

However, what do you suppose this pastor said when his congregation asked him how one could become God's child? His answer went as following: "Do you believe that the God who made the heavens and the earth is your Father? If you do, then each one of you is God's child. To believe like this is the evidence that you have become God's child."

My fellow believers, we the believers in the gospel of the water and the Spirit can never say such things. It is written, "*You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!*" (*James 2:19*) What does this passage mean? Even demons believe that God the Almighty exists and they also fear God. Even witches in the world say that they believe in God. I mean, believing in God's existence itself is not a sufficient condition for becoming God's children. Yet such an absurd thing is what one of Korea's most renowned revivalists was saying.

In contrast, we ask and answer the following questions: "Do you recognize that you are a sinner

based on the Word of God? Have you received the remission of sins through the Word of God, by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit? Have you received the gift of the Holy Spirit through your faith in this genuine gospel of the water and the Spirit? Have you become God's child by your faith in this authentic gospel?" If all your sins are washed clean correctly with the Word of God, then you will not only become His child but also receive the gift of the Spirit of God along the way.

Indeed, if you receive the remission of sins into your heart through the Word of God, you will naturally receive the Holy Spirit and become a child of God. You will then inherit the Kingdom of Heaven automatically. If you believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit while on this earth, you will become one of God's people and you will be deservedly blessed by Him. You will be a follower of God the Almighty, you will be protected by Him, and you will receive His blessings. All these things are the blessings that come only by the Word of God.

When we say these things, we may garner the hatred of today's Christians. In reality, we should pity them. When your family members or some people mock you, what do they say? They say in a condescending tone, "Why are you so peculiar when we all believe in the same Jesus? Why don't you approve us? Are you saying that every gospel other than your own gospel is wrong?" However, my fellow believers, the faith that's placed in the Cross alone is different from the faith that's placed in the complete gospel of the water and the Spirit. They are clearly different from each other. Just as Isaac and Ishmael were different from each other, the faith of those who have been born again by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the Word of God, is clearly different from the faith of the rest.

Hagar in today's Scripture passage was a young woman. If she wanted to, she could have easily born many more children. She could have born a child every year. If she had twins, she would have given birth to even more children. In those days, it was not

unusual for a woman to give birth to a dozen children. Most women had seven or eight children, even if they lost some of them. But how was Sarah, Abraham's legitimate wife? After giving birth to Isaac, Sarah could not bear any more children.

What does this mean? Of course, one obvious reason is that Sarah was unable to bear anymore children in her physical state. But the very lesson we must grasp from this fact is that God wanted to multiply the descendants of the righteous on this earth through Isaac—that is, only through someone who believed in the Word of God correctly. Yet despite this will of God, worldly Christians say, "Whoever believes in Jesus as his Savior will go to Heaven unconditionally. You will be saved just by believing in Jesus. You will also become God's child. If you want to receive Jesus into your heart, repeat this prayer after me, 'Father, I am a sinner. But I believe in You, Father. Lord, please forgive my sins. Please come into my heart. I pray in Jesus' name, amen.' Halleluiah! With this prayer, you have now

received the Lord. You are now God's child.”

What is this, my fellow believers? Is this the kind of faith derived from the gospel Word of the water and the Spirit, the Word of God? No, it is nothing more than a faith fabricated by man made religious doctrines of Christianity; it is definitely not the true faith that comes from the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

One Cannot Become a Child of God through One's Own Human Effort

It's absolutely important for you to remember that you cannot become God's sinless child through your own human acts or by relying on any existing Christian doctrines. This is the difference that sets us apart from the rest, for we believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit as our salvation, while others believe in something else. Even though we have many shortcomings, we the believers in the gospel of

the water and the Spirit are God's children and we will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. All parents, whether of the flesh or spirit, forgive their children with love no matter what mistakes they make. Abraham loved his son Isaac deeply as he was the apple of his eye. Any wrongdoing that a child commits is all forgiven by his parents. The same is true for us. If we really are God's children born by believing in His righteousness, then Jesus Christ our Savior has taken away all our blemishes.

My fellow believers, do you realize this fact and believe in it? Think about it. How would Ishmael, born from Hagar, have been treated? Although Abraham would not have mistreated him, Sarah would have said, “You worthless bastard. You are a son of a bondwoman! Why were you born?” Every time Ishmael lashed out at Isaac or made a mistake, he would have been scorched like this. Why do you suppose this would be the case? That's because Ishmael was born from an illegitimate relationship. He was born because his mother, a bondwoman, slept

with her master even though she should not have done so, all because of Abraham's impatience which resorted to human means. As an illegitimate son, it was a fait accompli that Ishmael would never be unable to be heir to Abraham with Isaac.

How do you feel in your heart when your family members ignore you, or when they say to you in their attempt to understand you as follows?—"My son, you and I believe in the same Jesus, so let's be in harmony. Let's try to get along." Your mind might become confused. And you might try to understand your family members, thinking, "Yes, my parents also believe in Jesus just as I believe in Jesus. We can all get along then. It was a mistake for me to reject them just because they don't believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that I believe in so fervently."

However, my fellow believers, you must remember that we can never be assimilated in with them. We simply cannot share anything in common with them. We believe that we ourselves have been born again by believing in the Word of God that has

come by the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and we must wait for them in patience so that they will also one day be able to be born again through the righteous Word of God. This is what we should be doing. We know that we should not do what those who have not been born again through the Word of God ask us to do. My foster mother has been running a prayer house for a long time. When I first left her prayer house, she told me earnestly, "If you come and live with me, you will be healed from dyspepsia in no time." She still wants me to live with her. She still wants me to preach the Word at her prayer house together with her. She still promises to transfer the ownership of the prayer house to me if only I would return to her, but I can't do this. That's because my faith is different from my mother's faith.

The same goes for your family members as well. Your family members do not wish to fight with you either, and they want to believe in Jesus their way and work together with you. But their goals are different from ours. We are working to save souls

from sin through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, whereas they are working to turn people into religious practitioners. So there is a clear difference between their faith and ours. Their labour—that is, trying to turn people into mere religious practitioners—cannot bear any spiritual fruit no matter what. In contrast, what we are doing is the spiritual work of salvation, delivering people from sin by preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit to them. Unless you realize this, your heart will suffer a great deal of pain.

What do the people of the world say about us the believers in the gospel of the water and the Spirit? When we say that we have become righteous people by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the legalistic believers accuse us of being heretics even though we are all Christians. Don't they say to us that they are different from us? This actually makes me very happy. After all, did you not struggle all this time trying to be the same as them? So I say to them, "You are right. You spoke very

well. You and I are very different. What would have happened if we were the same? I would also be heading to hell just like you. So how fortunate is it that I am different from you?"

Indeed, because we think that we are different from them; our hearts are strengthened and encouraged. That is how you should also think. We must remember that we are different from the religious people of this world, and we must live by trusting in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Only then can we find strength in our hearts and follow the righteousness of the Lord faithfully. When we try to become the same as the people of the world, we will then as true Christians lose the strength of our faith. We are different from them in every aspect. Our faith is different, just as our way of life on this earth is also different.

My fellow believers, just as you are God's children and different from the rest, Isaac was also different from Ishmael the son of Hagar. In every aspect, from his faith and all the blessings he received, Isaac was different. Our lives are also

different from the lives of the people of the world. Recognizing this by faith, we must abide in the Lord and live by faith in all things just as God wants us to.

When Isaac got married, what did he do? He brought his bride from the household of his uncle, a relative of Abraham, rather than from another tribe. He brought Rebekah from the house of Laban.

You and I must believe in God and His Word. If you really believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, salvation will come into your heart. If you really believe in the righteousness of God and the gospel of the water and the Spirit as given by the Lord, then you have the Holy Spirit in your heart. And the Holy Spirit dwelling in your heart will rule over your life. Hence, rather than being self-complacent now that we have received the remission of sins, we should continue to believe in God and His Word of righteousness. I hope and pray that you will all abide by this one true faith.

We are now living in God amid His blessings. I admonish you to abide in the righteousness of God and live by faith. And to live like this, you must have the unwavering belief that you are different from the

people of the world. You and I are of those born through the Word of God. Is this true or not? Of course it is. We have been born again by believing in God's Word of righteousness. Let us then live with courage as Sarah's legitimate children. Let us protect our status. Let us remember that we are Abraham's children born from his legitimate wife. Of course, while our bodies were born through our parents, our souls have been born again through the Word of God.

So let us all live the rest of our lives with pride, remembering that we were born of the Word of God. Let's not lower ourselves by seeking the company of the illegitimate children of the flesh like Ishmael. Let's live with confidence, saying boldly to them, "You go on your own way; I will go on my own." If in your mind you still cannot clearly discern the born-again from those who have not been born again, then I ask you to make this distinction clearly right now, and be proud of yourself as God's child born of His Word, a child born from Sarah. And I admonish you to act in a way that's worthy of being a child born of the Word, to believe in God, and to attain His happiness in your life. ☒

SERMON

15



CONTENTS



God Blesses Those Who Obey and Believe in The Word of God

< Genesis 22:1-18 >

“Now it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham, and said to him, ‘Abraham!’ And he said, ‘Here I am.’ Then He said, ‘Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.’ So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he split the wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. Then on the third day Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place afar off. And Abraham said to his young men, ‘Stay

here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you.’ So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and the two of them went together. But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, ‘My father!’ And he said, ‘Here I am, my son.’ Then he said, ‘Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?’ And Abraham said, ‘My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering.’ So the two of them went together. Then they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. But the Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, ‘Abraham, Abraham!’ So he said, ‘Here I am.’ And He said, ‘Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that

you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.’ Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son. And Abraham called the name of the place, The-LORD-Will-Provide; as it is said to this day, ‘In the Mount of the LORD it shall be provided.’ Then the Angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, and said: ‘By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son—blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.’”

Do You Truly Think of God First and Foremost?

God called Abraham and said to him, *“Take now your son, your only son Isaac and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you.”* Through this account we see that God did not want to receive his son as a burnt offering, but rather God wanted to test to see if Abraham really believed in Him and was willing to follow Him first and foremost.

What did Abraham do regarding the Word of God? He obeyed it and followed this Word just as it was told to him. Now that God was sure of Abraham’s faith, He then spoke to him. Let us all take a look at the Word in the Book of Genesis chapter 22, verses 16 and 17. God blessed him, saying, *“By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son—blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will*

multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies” (Genesis 22:16-17). It tells us here that God bestowed the blessing like this upon Abraham who believed in and followed Him first and foremost. This is the main content of today’s Scripture passage. “Because you have not withheld your son, your only son—blessing I will bless you.” God continued to bless him, saying, *“In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice” (Genesis 22:18).* God promised to give him, as well as to his descendants, the blessing because Abraham had obeyed the Word of Jehovah God. We can say that precisely this is the central theme of today’s Scripture passage from the Book of Genesis chapter 22.

When God told Abraham to offer up his son as a burnt offering in order to test him, Abraham complied and obeyed that Word of God just as it is. Abraham fully obeyed what God had told him to do. Seeing Abraham’s faith, God made a blessed promise

to him saying that He will multiply his seed and that through the one born from his flesh all the nations of the earth shall be blessed.

When reading this Word these thoughts flowed through my mind. Actually, we often face many hardships while we are spreading this gospel of the water and the Spirit. Like this, even though the situation we are in is truly hard and difficult and although things do not go as we hope to, I nevertheless have this faith for certain in my heart. I believe that God will be with our Church and keep all His workers and the saints if we just carry out the work of spreading the Lord’s gospel of the water and the Spirit faithfully all over the world. I truly think so, and I believe so to.

To test Abraham, God told him to offer his son as a burnt offering. Abraham then obeyed the Word of God. In other words, Abraham obeyed exactly what God had told him to do. And when God saw that, He gave him a great blessing, allowed his seed to multiply, and told him that he will receive the

blessing of all the nations of the earth who will be blessed through the seed from his body.

When I read this Scripture passage like this, what kinds of thoughts arises in my heart? I come to realize that there are hardships in the spreading of the gospel throughout the world. And the circumstances are difficult and hard. Despite all that, I believe that even though the visible circumstances may be hard and difficult, if we carry out the work of spreading the gospel of the water and the Spirit throughout the whole world, God will work together with His Church. I believe that God will be together with His servants and His saints, keep them, and give them all the blessings. Why do I believe this? It is because God said that He would fulfill His work through His Church. And because of this, my heart becomes brave. I believe all the work that we do now will clearly be blessed by God and will continue to prosper.

My relation with my foster mother turned bad all because of our different faiths. Simply said, my

mother was an elder of a large Presbyterian denomination here in Korea. Perhaps because of this, the invisible spiritual battle between us was really enormous. Even when we just greeted each other and shared some conversation, the unseen spiritual energy battle caused sparks to fly. It appears she refrains from treating my wife or others harshly, but towards just me, she is more than harsh. But even if we were a mother and son, I could not take a conciliatory attitude in this realm of faith. Because my foster mother refused to receive the gospel of the water and the Spirit into her heart, I could not accept her words either. My foster mother, who was like this, is right now suffering much because of diabetes. And so, I thought that since I have not done anything for her in accordance with filial duty up until now, I should send her a medical device we made. So I sent her one. Yesterday when I contacted her, she said that her body is feeling much better and she sleeps well because of this device.

Up until now, I have pondered upon why our

new business of health care products has not been going well. I thought, “Does God have something to say to me? Is He thinking that if it goes well enough to make me prosperous, I will then leave Him and live like Cain did?” But that cannot be. God knows my heart fully. I have died with Christ and was born again with Christ. Hence, how can I possess any other desire? The Lord knows all too well that He is the only Person inside my heart and that I am someone who follows after Christ alone. I think the Lord will not think of me like that.

I have also thought about what would be the secret key in succeeding in this undertaking before the Lord. I came to the conclusion that advertisement should go well for any business to succeed. Just as we could not believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit in the past for we did not know much about it, as for this undertaking, people are not aware of how good our products are for them due to the lack of advertising. And so, from now on, I would like to advertise much, and let people know about this new

undertaking. Although this undertaking may be a petty affair right now, I am sure that God will bless you and me through this undertaking so that we can serve the gospel even more.

Let us return to today’s Scripture passage. It tells us that when God, in order to test Abraham, told him, “Take you son Isaac to a place I shall tell you and offer him as a burnt offering,” to this Abraham obeyed God’s Word just as it is. Of course, he did not actually kill his son. God prevented him from doing this at the very moment of slaying his only son. And then He gave this Abraham who had passed His test, the blessing. What must we know through this Word? Abraham was able to receive the blessing of God because he obeyed the Word of God just as it is. Having passed God’s test of faith, Abraham received the blessings both in his body and in his spirit; he received the blessings of bearing many descendants of faith as well. Who came out among the descendants of Abraham? It was none other than Jesus Christ who saved us completely. By believing

in this Jesus Christ who was born from the lineage of Abraham, all the nations of this world can receive the great blessing of the remission of sins and lead a life like that of Abraham and become God's children.

Do You Also Believe in and Follow God's Word of Righteousness?

Abraham received the blessing from God and became the father of faith precisely because he followed the Word of God just as it is. What about our faith then? What kind of lives are our brothers and sisters, ministers and workers here in Korea and overseas leading? It is the same for us as well. I have every confidence that if we together were to spread the gospel of the water and the Spirit just as it is throughout the entire world, God will surely be bestowing the same kind of blessings as Abraham's upon you and me. Why do you think this is so? We will be receiving such blessings, in spirit and in flesh,

because we have obeyed by faith the Word of God just as it is, just like Abraham had. Dear fellow believers, please engrave this in your heart. If we have received the blessings from God just like Abraham had, it is because we have upheld the will of God and carried out the work of spreading the gospel of the water and the Spirit faithfully. Therefore, we must think about "How can we obey the Word of God thoroughly?" and then carry out His work only by faith, having ousted all cloudy worries and doubts from our hearts.

The important thing for us isn't the way things are flowing, nor is it our current difficult situation. It is rather, "What is God saying to us?" This is more important, and this is what becomes the basis of our faith. As for me, I have the faith of believing in the righteousness of God and the Word of God. If today's Word of God clearly shows us that the Lord blessed Abraham according to his faith, then we also can surely receive the very same blessing from God, and I also have this faith in God's Word. It isn't

something that we can receive by trying to receive it forcibly. “What kind of gospel is the gospel we are preaching? Isn’t it the gospel of the water and the Spirit that we believe in and are preaching by truly upholding the will of God? Is the spreading of this the gospel work of man or the work of God?” When we question ourselves like this, if we can be convinced that the spreading of this the gospel is the work of God, then we can have faith that God will surely bless our work. We then can strengthen our faith as follows: “When due time comes, God will grant blessings upon every work we do in due season. We will receive the blessing. Every one of us—our brothers and sisters, ministers and workers, both in Korea and in the entire world—and even unsaved souls throughout the entire world will receive from God the spiritual blessing of salvation as well as physical blessings. I truly give thanks to go God for having given you and me such faith. We will thus put all our efforts into the mission work with this faith.

Two Lessons in Today’s Scripture Passage

In today’s Scripture passage, God tells you and me two truths.

The first is that you and I can also receive God’s blessing by obeying and following the Word of God, just as Abraham had done. This blessing of God includes not only spiritual blessing but physical blessings as well. It is because fleshly blessings will follow naturally when we possess this faith of believing in the righteousness of God.

Now, what is the second truth? God tested Abraham’s faith here, and through this account, God is trying to show you and me His will. Then, what is His will revealed in this account?

God appeared before Abraham and said, “Take your only son Isaac and go to the land of Moriah, which I shall tell you, and offer him as a burnt offering.” Abraham, obeying this command, woke up early the next morning, saddled his donkey, took two of his young men and his only son Isaac with him;

and prepared this offering by splitting the wood for the burnt offering. And it is said that on the third day, Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the land of Moriah afar off. Abraham now arrives at the place, and he starts to offer this sacrifice to God by taking his son as the sacrificial offering according to God's Word.

Abraham took two of his servants with him on his way to Mount Moriah, and when they arrived at the foot of this mountain, he told them, "You two stay here." Then, he took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and the two of them went up together. And when they arrived, he built an altar with stones. As soon as he finished, he bound his son's arms behind him, tide them up as well including his legs to make him immobile on the altar. And then, without even saying, "Dear son, I am sorry," he took the knife and was ready to kill his son.

In that very moment, the Angel of God appeared and spoke to him. He said, "Abraham, Abraham! Do not lay your hand on the lad for I have seen that you

have not withheld your son, your only son from Me. And I have seen that you fear God. And I understand. So, do not lay your hand on him." Afterwards, when Abraham looked back, he saw a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. And so, he took his son off the altar, caught and killed the ram, and offered this ram as a sacrifice to God as a burnt offering.

Dear fellow believers, think about this deeply. Abraham was a man of tremendous faith. What do you think you and I would have done? We might never have been able to understand that command of God by telling us to kill our son and offer him to God, but instead, we might have made a big commotion. But, how about Abraham? Knowing that it was the Word of God, Abraham, in order to obey it, woke up early the morning and left for the road to offer his son to God without any hesitation, taking his young men, his son, and the wood for the burnt offering with him.

Of course, after hearing that Word from God, he must have agonized over it as a human being. What

parent is there that would not agonize over the command ordering to kill his or her son? Moreover, he was a son Abraham had begotten barely after the age of 100. Hence, we can say that this act by Abraham is indeed something truly great. Truly, He is worthy of God setting him up as the father of faith and to receive all the blessings from God. Even if I were God, I would have given abundant blessing to this Abraham.

Isaac Also Had Great Faith

The faith of this Abraham was indeed great, but the faith of his son, Isaac, was also great. When his father tied him up and tried to kill him, Isaac must have been eleven or twelve years old. Think about this. At that age, if your father had tried to tie you up and kill you, wouldn't you have said, "How can there be a father like you in this world? How can you possibly do this? Am I yours?" But what does the

Bible say here about what Isaac did? He did not even say a word, none whatsoever. Are you thinking, "It is written like that because it is the Bible"? It is never like that in reality.

The name 'Isaac' means 'he laughs.' The spiritual characteristic of Isaac is obedience. Actually, we can laugh and be happy when we obey God and our spiritual father and mother, that is, our Church and its leader. How did this Isaac receive the blessing from God? He received the blessing like this through obedience.

Then, how did Abraham become the father of faith? He became so by the faith of believing in the Word of God. In short, the names, 'Abraham' and 'Isaac,' have become synonyms for 'faith' and 'obedience.' Here, when we take a look at what Abraham and his son Isaac achieved—Abraham truly believed in the Word spoken by God and Isaac also obeyed this Word—we cannot but approve them as the fathers of our faith. Truly, these two men are worthy of receiving your respect and mine.

In obeying the command spoken by God, he did not even consult with his wife. “Offer your only son to Me as a burnt offering.” What would have happened if Abraham had told his wife right after having heard this Word? Abraham might have suffered death by his wife instantly. Saying, “I want my child to live. You foolish old bastard! I don’t need someone like you now. If you are going to kill my son kill me. instead,” that angry wife might have killed Abraham instead. Mothers’ hearts are like that. Child-loving hearts of mothers of the flesh are stronger than that of fathers. Of course, father’s loves are strong also, but maternal affection is a bit stronger and deeper. I don’t know if it was for this reason, but whatever the case, Abraham did not consult with his wife, Sarah about this matter. There are no records of whether or not Sarah ever found out about this happening; I think that she might not have found out about it to the end. Perhaps Abraham at the time might have said this to Sarah. “My dear wife, I am going to go and sacrifice some burnt offering

today. God told me to go to a specific place and sacrifice a burnt offering, and I am going there with Isaac. Take care of the house, and keep the servants well, all right?” “But why are you taking our son?” “I think God is telling me to teach our son how to offer sacrifices. Whatever the case, I will take him along with me since He has told me to bring him along.” For he might have said only this much, would it not be obvious that his wife Sarah made preparations for that burnt offering? I think if Sarah had only known about the truth beforehand, she would never have prepared it for him.

Dear fellow believers, Abraham also did not discuss this matter with the young men he took along with him. Abraham took two servants with him, but when they came close to Mount Moriah, he told them, “You stay here. Do not follow me, but just stay here. It is easier for me if you do not follow me. Besides, if you come, God will not accept the sacrificial offering. So, please stay here.” Like this, Abraham did not talk to anyone, and by himself, took

his son up to the mountain.

Such faith of Abraham is something truly great. I think that there isn't a person on this earth whose faith is as good as that of this Abraham. Of course, there have been many servants and workers of God who in likeness followed God, but whatever the case, it is certain that Abraham was worthy of receiving the respect of all people. Truly this Abraham is indeed worthy of the title, 'Father of faith.' And in the end, God, who had recognized this faith of Abraham, protected Isaac so that his father Abraham would not kill him for the sacrifice.

Dear fellow believers, you may question what is so great about offering just his son to God. If you reckon, this is nothing at all. Did you know that in Christian history, there have been many missionaries who have sacrificed their sons and daughters in the mission fields to achieve their objectives? However, the important thing here is precisely this: Could you really approve of the Word of God which orders you to offer your only son and obey it by believing it in your heart?

Could you obey God by faith of fearing Him?

In the Book of Hebrews chapter 11, the following is written regarding this matter. "*By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, 'In Isaac your seed shall be called,' concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense*" (Hebrews 11:17-19). It is written that Abraham really believed that God would raise his son up again. Abraham believed that if he were to do as instructed by God, that God would raise his son up again, for the Lord God has said that all the nations of the earth shall be blessed through that son Isaac of his and promised that He would multiply his descendants as the stars of the heaven through this child Isaac who was born from his body.

People of Faith Work as Instructed by God

Whatever the case, Abraham's faith is something tremendous. A true person of faith is not someone who carries out the Word of God right away involuntarily without giving it much thought just because God had spoken. Rather, a true person of faith is someone who first digests that Word by faith, accepts it by faith, and then obeys it by faith. As it is written, "*For whatever is not from faith is sin*" (*Romans 14:23*), if we do not carry out something by faith, then everything we do will be wrong. What I am saying is that it isn't right for you to do things arbitrarily without faith just because God told you to do so. Instead, it would be a grave mistake, and it could become a sin before God.

Abraham obeyed the Word of God by faith. By faith, he offered his only son to God. Of course Abraham's faith is indeed great, but in today's Scripture passage, there is one more truth that is more important. Just as Abraham offered Isaac to

God as an offering, so God the Father put forth His only begotten Son Jesus Christ as a sacrificial offering for you and me. He did this to save us from all our sins. Having seen Abraham carrying this command out, the Angel of the Lord God stopped him by saying, "*Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.*" Yes indeed, through Abraham's act shown in today's Scripture reading, God is showing us that He as God the Father has truly saved us like this by having given us His only begotten Son Jesus Christ. Here, God is clearly showing us His will.

Isaac was not a baby then; rather he was already a teenager. But nevertheless, he obeyed what his father told him without a word. What is the exact meaning of this? It means that Jesus Christ, whom God had sent to you and I came down to this earth, obeyed the will of God the Father just as it is. He indeed did this for us. Coming to this earth in human flesh, Jesus Christ obeyed God the Father by firstly

doing the work of taking on the sins of humankind by being baptized by John the Baptist at the age of thirty. And with respect to the work of being crucified at age of thirty three, dying, and then being resurrected from the dead; this Jesus Christ obeyed the Word of God the Father being silent like a lamb before a shearer. In this way, through Jesus Christ who had obeyed the Word of God the Father, you and I have received our salvation.

God So Loved Us in This Way

God the Father sent His Son Jesus Christ down to this earth. In order to blot out all our sins, God the Father sent to this earth His only begotten Son.

In today's Scripture passage we see Isaac; the son of Abraham refers to Jesus Christ. Isaac obeyed the will of his father Abraham. He obeyed the words of his father Abraham because he knew that his father believed in and revered God perfectly and that it was

right. What is this telling us? To save humankind from all its sins and the judgment for those sins, God the Father planned to send His Son Jesus Christ down to this earth. That Jesus took on all our sins by being baptized by John the Baptist, and by being crucified, shedding His blood, vicariously dying, and being resurrected from the dead, He saved you and me once and for all. Through all these works, God the Father was intent on giving His only begotten Son so that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life, for He so loved the world. To give us everlasting life by blotting out all our sins, Jesus Christ, who had done all these works, was born on this earth in obedience to the will of His Father. By obeying, Jesus vicariously took on all the sins by receiving the baptism, and by obeying He gave away His body on the Cross, was crucified, and was resurrected from the dead. Thus, He saved all those completely who believe in this genuine gospel. Yes, this is true. Jesus Christ saved you and me perfectly by being resurrected from the dead. This shows us

that God the Father so loved us through His Son and that He has indeed saved us. God the Father, who loves us so very much, fulfilled this impossible work through Jesus Christ who was born in a human body. He did this in order to genuinely save you and me.

Even the primitive men long ago used to offer a living person to their gods. However, God's work of salvation was never a mimic of this kind of cruel act. Through the work of His salvation, God wanted to show us how much He loved us. As seen here, Jehovah God already prepared a ram for Abraham which horns were caught in a thicket. What does this mean? It means that there was a sacrificial offering already prepared in advance to save you and me from all our sins. And this propitiation was none other than Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God the Father. Through that sacrificial offering named Jesus Christ, God saved you and me perfectly. Today's Scripture passage from Genesis chapter 22 is the Word of God which is filled with this truth.

God Bestows the Blessing upon Those Who Obey the Will of God

Dear fellow believers, I believe that through this Scripture passage God is speaking to you and me, as well as to the servants and the saints of God in all the branch Churches in our country, to all of our co-workers abroad, and to all the souls throughout the entire world. We must realize that God spoke this Word to show us clearly that He gives blessings to those who really believe in and obey His will.

God told you and me to spread the gospel of the Lord throughout the entire world. In practice, spreading the gospel of the water and the Spirit in this age and time is such that we cannot do it perfectly through our physical endeavors. So God the Father has allowed us to spread the gospel of the Lord through our literature and Internet ministry. And if we are to diligently carry out this work, God will surely be bestowing His blessings upon you and me, just as He had blessed Abraham. Of course, we have

as yet not possessed the perfect faith like that of Abraham. But even though we are not perfect and are lacking and at times we often moan and groan, but if we obey the Word of the Lord and uphold His will, this will in turn lead us to spread the gospel all over the world. I believe God will bless us, as well as all the works that our Church does, and furthermore, I believe that He will bestow His blessings upon the servants of God and His saints here in Korea and throughout the entire world. Yes, I am sure He will do this. We can receive these blessings from God without fail. It is God who blesses us. It is God who does this. And in this way, we will be blessed both spiritually and physically while living on this earth. What God speaks to us today is precisely this.

What standard must we apply to our lives when we believe in God and follow His will? We should always be asking ourselves, “Is this something God will be happy with? If it is something God finds joy in, then will He bless someone who does this work, or will He not? Will He bless that person? God

blessed Abraham when he obeyed His will 100%.” If we have reached such a conclusion, then all we have to do is to carry out that work which God is pleased with. Then, just as God had done to Abraham, He will thus bless you and me as well. When we follow after God we must never have shallow or frivolous thoughts. Whatever work we face, we must think deeply. With far-sighted eyes, we must look far ahead and carry out His work by thinking, “Will God bless this work?” If we can conclude that He will bless it, then all we have to do is to carry it out as it is.

Dear fellow believers, there are many difficulties and insufficiencies in us as we serve the Lord. However, even amid this lacking, we must think deeply about, “Would God bless us if we follow the Lord, believe in His gospel and serve Him? Or would He not?” We have such a standard in our hearts. Then we can start receiving the blessings from God. There is nothing else. There is no reason to add on things when we obey His will by faith.

Our Hearts Must Clearly Be Established Uprightly before God

We who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit have things of the flesh as well as things of the Spirit. Because we have both these things mixed together, we can never become complete or perfect. It is because there is something always deficient in the things of the flesh.

But what would happen if we were to follow God with spiritual faith, believe in the Word of God, and really stand firm before Him by faith in our spirits? We would become people of genuine faith just like Abraham. Therefore, we must set our hearts precisely like this: We must set our hearts by faith, not be swayed by circumstances, and chase after God. Indeed, it is important to set our hearts properly with clarity before the Lord.

Have you really tested your heart by asking yourself these important questions transparently before God? “Do I truly believe wholeheartedly that

God has saved me by the gospel of the water and the Spirit? After starting to believe, did I truly set my heart on the work of spreading this gospel of the water and the Spirit in my country Korea and throughout the entire world in union with God’s Church? Did I truly set my heart with a determination that I would live for this gospel regardless of what happens and what my situation turns out like?” When you are determined to do this, God will grant you the blessings from Heaven. Just as God promised, “*In every place where I record My name I will come to you, and I will bless you*” (Exodus 20:24), God bestows His blessings upon us as we determine within ourselves to obey His will. If so, then God will surely bestow His blessing, and we will surely be receiving that blessing. Do you believe in this? It is absolutely true.

“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain” (John 12:24). This Word is truth. Jesus Christ came down as a grain of

true life to this earth, was born, took on all our sins by being baptized, vicariously died on the Cross, was resurrected from the dead, and has thus saved us believers from all our sins and judgments. Indeed, because Jesus Christ made such a sacrifice, it was possible for you and me to receive salvation. What does the above passage really mean? It means that when you and I sacrifice ourselves for the spreading of the righteousness of Jesus Christ after having received the remission of our sins, then many others can receive salvation also. If we do not do the work of spreading the gospel, it would end with just ourselves receiving salvation. Would this be right? Would it be right for just you to bear many spiritual fruits by sacrificing yourself? And would it be right for you to lead a life just for yourself? We have no choice in this heavenly matter. It has already been set. It is an established truth that we will receive God's blessings if we live by faith with a firm and proper and determined heart. If we go on living having by setting our hearts towards God by faith, we

can truly live in peace and abundance; but if we were to live our lives like an unstable ocean wave without having set our hearts properly, God will not be able to give us His blessings, even if He wants to. Thus, we must clearly set our hearts on that very objective of following after God.

I believe God has given you and me the faith by which we can perfectly believe in and follow His Word, just like Abraham. Let us once again arrange and set our hearts uprightly before God and live out our faith until the day He returns. He encourages us, saying, "God will surely find joy in the work that we do. And thus, He will bless us." Abraham received these blessings from God, and through him, many souls received the same blessings. Likewise, let us believe that God will grant us these great blessings, and I hope you will believe that God will bless you also. ✉

SERMON

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CONTENTS



God Desires to Accomplish His Will through the People of Faith Who Trust in the Servants of God

< Genesis 24:1-20 >

“Now Abraham was old, well advanced in age; and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things. So Abraham said to the oldest servant of his house, who ruled over all that he had, ‘Please, put your hand under my thigh, and I will make you swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and the God of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell; but you shall go to my country and to my family, and take a wife for my son Isaac.’ And the servant said to him, ‘Perhaps the woman will not be willing to follow me to this

land. Must I take your son back to the land from which you came?’ But Abraham said to him, ‘Beware that you do not take my son back there. The LORD God of heaven, who took me from my father’s house and from the land of my family, and who spoke to me and swore to me, saying, ‘To your descendants I give this land,’ He will send His angel before you, and you shall take a wife for my son from there. And if the woman is not willing to follow you, then you will be released from this oath; only do not take my son back there.’ So the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and swore to him concerning this matter. Then the servant took ten of his master’s camels and departed, for all his master’s goods were in his hand. And he arose and went to Mesopotamia, to the city of Nahor. And he made his camels kneel down outside the city by a well of water at evening time, the time when women go out to draw water. Then he said, ‘O LORD God of my master Abraham, please give

me success this day, and show kindness to my master Abraham. Behold, here I stand by the well of water, and the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water. Now let it be that the young woman to whom I say, ‘Please let down your pitcher that I may drink,’ and she says, ‘Drink, and I will also give your camels a drink’—let her be the one You have appointed for Your servant Isaac. And by this I will know that You have shown kindness to my master.’ And it happened, before he had finished speaking, that behold, Rebekah, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham’s brother, came out with her pitcher on her shoulder. Now the young woman was very beautiful to behold, a virgin; no man had known her. And she went down to the well, filled her pitcher, and came up. And the servant ran to meet her and said, ‘Please let me drink a little water from your pitcher.’ So she said, ‘Drink, my lord.’ Then she quickly let her pitcher down to her hand, and gave him a

drink. And when she had finished giving him a drink, she said, ‘I will draw water for your camels also, until they have finished drinking.’ Then she quickly emptied her pitcher into the trough, ran back to the well to draw water, and drew for all his camels.”

Today’s Scripture passage reads: “*Now Abraham was old, well advanced in age; and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things. So Abraham said to the oldest servant of his house, who ruled over all that he had, Please put your hand under my thigh, and I will make you swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and the God of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell; but you shall go to my country and to my family, and take a wife for my son Isaac.*”

When we look at this Scripture carefully we see Abraham trying to get his son Isaac married and

entrusted everything concerning this marriage to his old servant. Abraham had this trusted servant bring back for him the bride-to-be for his son. We see Abraham entrusting not only his son's marriage but the management of the possessions and wealth of his entire household to this servant. The reason for this was that Abraham knew that among the many servants he owned, this old servant was the most trustworthy and had the exact same faith he had.

What does this all mean to us? It means that God accomplishes His work through people who have the same faith as that of Abraham, our father of faith. He desires to accomplish His work through those who have this same faith as Abraham; this genuine faith was passed down intact through the people of faith like this old servant of Abraham. This also means that God establishes His Church through people such as these.

When Abraham wanted to have his son be married, he was not living in his home land but was far away abiding in the Land of Canaan. While living

there, he had begotten Isaac and he obtained much wealth. However, his son Isaac had now grown up and needed to be married but Abraham was now very old. And so, he called his most trustworthy old servant and asked this servant to swear on his death that he would fulfill his wish. In this Scripture reading, to put a hand under a thigh and to make an oath has such a meaning.

In this manner, Abraham had his old servant make an oath as he approached his death: *“You will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell; but you shall go to my country and to my family, and take a wife for my son Isaac.”* Abraham requested that his servant go to his home country and find a suitable wife for Isaac his son and bring her back.

God Desires to Accomplish His Will through People of Faith Who Trust in His Servant

God desires to fulfill His will on this earth through people of faith like Abraham. And so, the person that appears next is the old servant who had the same faith as that of Abraham. What kind of person was this old servant? He was someone who as Abraham's servant had been with his master his whole life and had believed and served in Abraham's God as his own God. And Abraham had entrusted the marriage of his son to this old servant of his. This represents the fact that God desires to establish His Church through such trustworthy people of faith. This is truly so. God desires to establish the Church of God through those who have the same faith as Abraham and through their faith in His righteousness.

And so here Abraham made his old servant swear an oath. He said, "Do not on no account take a daughter from the Canaanites for my son. You must

go to my family and there you must take a wife for my son Isaac." But then, the old servant asked Abraham a question. His question was, "What if I try to take a wife from my master's family but the woman that is chosen will not be willing to follow me to this land. Am I to take my master's son there?" In response Abraham said, "*Beware that you do not take my son back there.*" He said not to take his son back there even if his future wife said that she would not come.

What does this Scripture passage teach us? God is teaching us through this that you and I must not return to our past; not to return to Ur of the Chaldeans. It is written: "*But Abraham said to him, 'Beware that you do not take my son back there. The LORD God of heaven, who took me from my father's house and from the land of my family, and who spoke to me and swore to me, saying, 'To your descendants I give this land,' He will send His angel before you, and you shall take a wife for my son from there. And if the woman is not willing to follow you, then you*

will be released from this oath; only do not take my son back there.’ So the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and swore to him concerning this matter” (Genesis 24:6-9). Here, God clearly spoke that He would give the descendants of Abraham the Land of Canaan that Abraham was presently abiding in, and not his former home country, that is, Ur of the Chaldeans.

God desired to carry out His work through this old servant of Abraham. In other words, God desires to establish His Church through people who have the same faith as Abraham. There is one very important thing here that God had requested of Abraham and that is to “Go to your family and bring one of your relatives and marry your son off to her to have them continue on your lineage. But you should not ever go back to the former home country of your flesh.”

The old servant obeyed the words of Abraham and finally arrived at the city of Nahor. Nahor here, as it is mentioned in Genesis chapter 11, was the brother of Abraham. Let’s all take a look at Genesis

11:10. The genealogy is given here and it is as follows: *“This is the genealogy of Shem: Shem was one hundred years old, and begot Arphaxad two years after the flood. After he begot Arphaxad, Shem lived five hundred years, and begot sons and daughters. Arphaxad lived thirty-five years, and begot Salah. After he begot Salah, Arphaxad lived four hundred and three years, and begot sons and daughters. Salah lived thirty years, and begot Eber. After he begot Eber, Salah lived four hundred and three years, and begot sons and daughters. Eber lived thirty-four years, and begot Peleg. After he begot Peleg, Eber lived four hundred and thirty years, and begot sons and daughters. Peleg lived thirty years, and begot Reu. After he begot Reu, Peleg lived two hundred and nine years, and begot sons and daughters. Reu lived thirty-two years, and begot Serug. After he begot Serug, Reu lived two hundred and seven years, and begot sons and daughters. Serug lived thirty years, and begot Nahor. After he begot Nahor, Serug lived two hundred years,*

and begot sons and daughters. Nahor lived twenty-nine years, and begot Terah. After he begot Terah, Nahor lived one hundred and nineteen years, and begot sons and daughters. Now Terah lived seventy years, and begot Abram, Nahor, and Haran. This is the genealogy of Terah: Terah begot Abram, Nahor, and Haran. Haran begot Lot.”

The father of Abraham was Terah. Terah had three sons and they were Abraham, Nahor and Haran. And so, Nahor was the brother of Abraham and from the same family. God had spoken, “Bring back a daughter from your relatives, and have her be married to your son.”

Dear fellow believers, as you know, there are many passages in the Bible that we humans simply cannot fully understand. But today’s Scripture passage is one that can be sufficiently understood even from our human standpoint. Abraham obtained a daughter-in-law from the same family as himself, a descendant of Shem and the granddaughter of Nahor. This was the will of God. In this manner, God

considered it extremely important for His servants to continue on His perfect lineage of faith. For this reason, in order to obtain a daughter-in-law from his own family line, Abraham gave his old servant ten camels and every other precious thing and sent him off to Mesopotamia to arrive at the city of Nahor.

The passage reads: *“Then the servant took ten of his master’s camels and departed, for all his master’s goods were in his hand. And he arose and went to Mesopotamia, to the city of Nahor. And he made his camels kneel down outside the city by a well of water at evening time, the time when women go out to draw water. Then he said, ‘O LORD God of my master Abraham, please give me success this day, and show kindness to my master Abraham. Behold, here I stand by the well of water, and the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water. Now let it be that the young woman to whom I say, ‘Please let down your pitcher that I may drink,’ and she says, ‘Drink, and I will also give your camels a drink’—let her be the one You have appointed for Your servant*

Isaac. And by this I will know that You have shown kindness to my master” (Genesis 24:10-14).

The old servant of Abraham arrived there and prayed to God asking that he would be able to meet the woman who was to be the daughter-in-law of Abraham. And, if we continue on in the Scripture passage, we can see that this prayer was answered by God exactly as he had requested. It is written: *“And it happened, before he had finished speaking, that behold, Rebekah, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham’s brother, came out with her pitcher on her shoulder. Now the young woman was very beautiful to behold, a virgin; no man had known her. And she went down to the well, filled her pitcher, and came up. And the servant ran to meet her and said, ‘Please let me drink a little water from your pitcher.’ So she said, ‘Drink, my lord.’ Then she quickly let her pitcher down to her hand, and gave him a drink. And when she had finished giving him a drink, she said, ‘I will draw water for your camels also, until they have finished*

drinking.’ Then she quickly emptied her pitcher into the trough, ran back to the well to draw water, and drew for all his camels” (Genesis 24:15-20).

God Does Not Desire That the Righteous Be Intermingled with Others

After God judged the world through the Flood of Noah, He had His lineage passed down through the descendants of Shem, Ham and Japheth. And, He absolutely did not want any other family bloodlines to be intermingled into this line. God’s desire was to keep the lineage of this pure family intact that He had blessed. This is because God has His servants, those who truly believe in Him and do exactly as He commands, and they inherit the blessings of Abraham. He also establishes His Church through such servants of His. As we all know well, Abraham is the father of faith to all of us believers. And, the fact that Abraham commanded his old servant to

bring back a wife for his son Isaac means that God establishes His Church through His servants. What does this Scripture passage mean? It means that God establishes His Church and accomplishes His work through His servants and through those who serve Him faithfully. Put differently, God raises up His Church through those who first of all have the faith that believes in Him, like the servant of Abraham, and secondly, through those who obey His will which was revealed to them.

Dear fellow believers, do you know why Abraham in this Scripture passage sent his old servant to obtain his daughter-in-law? This old servant was a person who knew the intentions and will of his master Abraham well. He was a person who had the same faith as that of Abraham. Let's look at the Word. He obeyed the words of His master exactly as he was told, went to Abraham's home country, prayed before God and received an exact answer to his prayer. Rebecca, who was a descendant from the same family of Abraham, drew water and

had the old servant of Abraham drink and also gave water to the camels that he had brought along with him. What does this mean? It means that God plants His Church through people who have the same faith as Abraham, people who wholly understand what the will of God is and people who wholly serve and fear Him. God establishes His Church through such people.

After the Flood of Noah, God had Jesus Christ be born from the family lineage of Shem. In between this, Abraham was one of the descendants. After Abraham there was Isaac, after Isaac there was Jacob and after that Jesus Christ was born. It is written, "*The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham*" (Matthew 1:1). What does this mean? It means that through this lineage of faith the faith of Abraham continues on even until this present time.

How Does God Establish His Church?

God establishes His Church through people of faith who have the same faith as Abraham and through people who have a heart of a trusted servant towards Him. We must know that Rebecca who appears in today's Scripture reading was a person who feared God and wholly served Him. God desired that through Rebecca the lineage of Shem, that is, the lineage of Jesus Christ be continued on through. God fulfills His will through those who have faith, those who have a heart of a servant and those who have a heart to completely serve God. In other words, people who have a combination of these three aspects of faith.

Dear fellow believers, if Abraham did not send this old servant but instead sent a younger one whose faith was not whole or proper, what would have happened? Abraham at that time was someone who was close to his death. And, if Abraham would have sent a younger servant, that servant would have

probably thought, "Who cares what woman I bring back? He's going to die soon anyway and he hasn't followed me here." With thoughts like this, he may not have heeded to the words of Abraham fully and could have brought any woman back with him.

Abraham was a man of great wealth in his time so he had this trusted servant who was sent off to find his daughter-in-law to also take many precious things along with him. But, if the servant's faith was not whole, then he probably could have "purchased" just any woman with the many possessions on his way and brought her back with him. He could have easily deceived his master Abraham. But, Abraham called the most faithful old servant among his servants and had him swear an oath. Abraham put his servant's hand under his thigh and had him swear an oath on his death. The oath was: "Put your hand underneath my thigh. Swear that you will absolutely not choose a wife for my son, my daughter-in-law to be, from among the daughters of the Canaanites. You shouldn't do that even if I were to die." His all

important last will he left with this old servant.

Who is this old servant? He was a person who had always been with Abraham after Abraham had left his home country and he had also experienced and believed in the God of Abraham. And so, Abraham entrusted everything that he had, even to the selection of his daughter-in-law who would inherit his own lineage to this old servant who had the proper faith just like himself. This really means that Abraham had entrusted all of his possessions to this servant.

However, if Abraham would have entrusted this important task to a younger person what would have happened? This servant might not have returned until Abraham had passed away or might have used “human” methods to bring back just any woman that Abraham did not want. Today’s account of Abraham sending this old servant reveals well just how God works and how He carries out His will. God accomplishes His work and establishes His Church through people who understand His will well and

those who have the same faith as Abraham and uphold the will of their master completely.

God Grants Living Water to Flow to the World through His Church

Today’s Scripture passage where Abraham is trying to get his son Isaac and Rebecca married represents how God establishes His Churches. It is the same as for those of us who are within the Church of God being married by faith to our Bridegroom Jesus Christ. In the Bible, the Church is often portrayed as a well. Even now God makes spiritual living water to flow through His Church. And, from among His own people, God establishes His Church on this earth through those who have the same faith as Abraham, people who have a heart of a servant, people who fulfill His Word, people who follow obey and believe His Word, and people who completely serve Him. God permits the Church to be built through such

people as these. And, through His Church which is established in this manner, God grants that many people receive the remission of sins and also receive the blessings that Abraham had received.

Abraham was a man of great wealth in his time. People who believe in Jesus Christ like Abraham are very rich as well. They do not live in poverty in real life. This is because God allows all of His blessings to be poured out upon such people of faith. Through today's Scripture reading, we must come to know who God accomplishes His work through. God does His work through people who follow after His Word by faith in the same way as Abraham did. We must also know that it is not enough to know the Word of God, but we must know the fact that God accomplishes His work through people who actually obey His commands. Please take heed of this. God takes the person who wholly serves Him, has that person marry Jesus Christ spiritually and has this person do His work. God establishes His Church with such people!

God Entrusts His Work to His Faithful Servants Who Trust in the Righteousness of God

You and I who are in the Church of God must first have faith that believes in the Word of the righteousness of God. And secondly, we must wholly accept the Word of God in our hearts. Finally, we must completely obey the Word of God. Our Lord entrusts His work to these types of people. Look at Abraham who appears in the Bible. He faced truly a multitude of difficulties before settling down in Canaan, but each time he was faced with hardship, he had complete faith in God and obeyed Him thoroughly and so because of this, he was led by the Word of God. We must all be like this as well. If the Word of God says so, we must be people who say, "Yes, it is true." God accomplishes His work through people who say "yes," through those who follow His Word by faith and the people who truly obey His Word no matter what He has said.

People who have received the remission of sins can have the same faith as Abraham. But what about those people who have not received the remission of sins yet? At that time there were many servants in the household of Abraham. But what was the reason Abraham had this old servant carry out his will and not some other servant? It was because he could trust this person completely. Abraham knew that if he said something, this servant would fulfill his words exactly as instructed, and so he entrusted his son's marriage and everything else to this particular servant. Abraham definitely knew that this person would not squander away his wealth, so he entrusted all of his possessions to this servant.

A long time ago, in our country as well, there were masters, servants and children of the master, isn't that right? When we read novels of our country like "*Around the Time Buckwheat Flowers*," we can observe a similar setting and background as displayed the Bible. When we look at the customs and lifestyles of our ancestors, there are very great

similarities with the customs of the Israelite nation. A long time ago, if the master's son was too young the household would be entrusted to a servant for the time being. The master would then entrust a servant to oversee his wealth and possessions, and then when the son had grown up, everything would be returned to the son. Nevertheless, there are some servants that did not fulfill their master's request and seized all of the possessions for themselves. You can just imagine what would have happened if this was the case? There were many faithful servants that would manage their master's possessions according to the words of their master and then completely pass them on to the son, and then continue on loyally as servants under this son.

This old servant possessed a trustworthy faith such as was mentioned. We must clearly understand that through those who have the same faith as Abraham God continues on his blessed lineage of faith. There is a clear lineage of faith and blessings in God. And, this lineage is not passed down to just

anyone. There are many people today who say that they have received remission of sins and boast outwardly concerning this, but they are people who do not know exactly what it is to have the faith that Abraham had. They do not possess the faith that believes in the Word of God and the faith that follows after this Word. When Abraham had his servant swear an oath and commanded him to do an important task; if the old servant did not have faith that believed in the words of Abraham and did not have faith to obey these words, then the lineage of faith of God would have perished. The lineage would have been temporarily in the servant's hand but not wholly passed on as instructed and would have ended. He would have had faith but there would not be any descendants after him. Because he believed in the will of God but did not wholly carry it out. In other words, because the Word of God was not applied in his life, all of the blessings and the faith of Abraham in the gospel would not be passed down intact and would have been lost.

Who Does God Raise Up to Do His Work?

God accomplishes His work, continues on His lineage of faith and blesses those who wholly have faith in Him and those who obey His Word exactly as it is. In today's Scripture reading, God had this old servant bring back Rebecca from the same family as that of Abraham. What does this account teach us? It teaches us that when God brings people into His Church, He brings those who genuinely fear Him and serves Him. Here the servant of Abraham is praying to God. He prayed, *“O LORD God of my master Abraham, please give me success this day, and show kindness to my master Abraham. Behold, here I stand by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water. Now let it be that the young woman to whom I say, ‘Please let down your pitcher that I may drink,’ and she says, ‘Drink, and I will also give your camels a drink’—let her be the one You have appointed for Your servant Isaac. And by this I will know that You have shown*

kindness to my master.” He prayed silently to himself, “I will know that the woman who gives me water to drink and even to my camels will be the mate for my master’s son.” Abraham’s servant did not simply say this out of coincidence. He obeyed God and possessed the faith to serve the Lord in his heart and so he was able to say these words. Today’s Scripture reading is speaking to you and me about such things.

Let’s take a look at Rebecca. Rebecca had drawn water and was on her way home. But when the old servant said to her, “Woman, let me drink some water,” she said, “Yes, I will do that,” and she gave him water to drink as well as to the camels that the servant had brought along with him. The Scripture passage describes this event in detail: *“I will draw water for your camels also, until they have finished drinking.’ Then she quickly emptied her pitcher into the trough, ran back to the well to draw water, and drew for all his camels.”*

Dear fellow believers, what does this Scripture

passage mean? The Bible does not contain one single random meaningless verse. Each verse contains God’s truth and there is a deep meaning behind it. This Scripture passage means that God accomplishes His work through people like Rebecca.

Think about it. When a strange man suddenly asks a stange woman for some water, she could have just given him water and then be on her way. Was she some kind of philanthropist that she draws water again for the animals as well? There were probably ten animals that the old servant had brought along with him. Do you know how much water camels drink? Camels drink a large amount of water at one time when it is available and then they store it and slowly absorb it into their system. And so, when people are traveling in the desert and feel like they are about die of thirst, they pierce a camel somewhere and obtain water that way.

Dear fellow believers, take heed of this. God passes on the lineage of faith of Abraham through people like Rebecca who wholly serve Him, fear Him

and obey His every Word. If Isaac had not taken Rebecca as his wife but had taken a daughter of the Canaanites instead, what would have happened? This would have resulted in the line of Abraham not being passed down intact. A daughter of a Canaanite cannot pass on the lineage of faith of Abraham.

Think about this. How can a descendant of the daughter of the Canaanites completely fulfill and obey the Word of God? If Isaac told a woman who grew up in Canaan that, “My father said this and God said this, and God has spoken in this way,” would she be able to fully understand what he was saying? Since she was not someone who had faith, she would be stubborn and would not listen properly to the Word of God. Someone who receives the blessings of Abraham, in other words, a person who is to continue on the lineage of faith of Abraham, must possess the following three conditions: True faith that believes in God; obeying the Word of God wholeheartedly; and fully serving God. Among these three, service is very important. If one does not acknowledge one’s master

as one’s lord, then it is not possible to properly serve the master. If a servant does not recognize his master as his lord but rather regards the master as his servant, then can he truly serve his master? He may pretend to serve his master, but in the end he will not be possible to render true service. Even if there is faith that believes in God and obedience to His Word, if the service is lacking with a matching heart that tries to serve God then this is of no use. Abraham served God as his Master and so he was able to live according to the Word of God. Nevertheless, if his descendants did not continue to serve God, then the blessings which Abraham received could no longer be passed down to them.

I told Brother Seongjin Ryu yesterday, “Both you and I are people who serve God. If we are serving him, it’s all the same. If we get a higher position in the Church, does this change anything? We are all serving God in the same way. When we are providing something or some help for certain brothers and sisters, we are not helping them but we

are serving God so to speak. To be honest, when we do something for the brethren, we are serving God not just helping those brothers and sisters.” This is really true. I am simply serving the Lord. Of what use is it for me to bring a great revival in the Church of God? Am I going to be rich by gathering many people together? Serving lost souls is serving the Lord, and serving my brothers and sisters is also the same as serving the Lord. Whatever we do, everything is for the Lord. If I am doing something that is not truly serving the Lord, then there is no reason for me to serve in such a way. If I did not have a heart to serve the Lord, then I should lord myself over the saints and demand to receive lofty treatment. I could always leave God as Cain who had left God and built up his own city. And I could become a king of my little kingdom, saying, “Serve me because I am the boss in this city.” This is how one becomes a cult leader.

Dear fellow believers, there are many great and small cult leaders in this world. Really, those who are in the pastorate who have not received remission of

sins, strictly speaking, can be said to be cult leaders. They request their followers to donate a few thousand dollars to them and they demand to have a retirement pension. They are clearly cult leaders and they lord themselves over lost souls. If someone lacks a heart to wholly serve God, then it is possible for this to happen. So beware. It is important to have faith that believes in the Lord, but it is more important to have a heart that desires to serve the Lord wholeheartedly.

We Must without Fail Proclaim the Faith of Believing in the Righteousness of God

The end of the world is upon us. We must therefore tell lost souls how God establishes His own Church and how God has passed on the lineage of Abraham. How has God continued on with the lineage of the descendants of Shem?

You and I are the descendants of Shem. This is

so both physically and spiritually. God, beginning with Adam, passed on His blessed lineage of faith. But, this lineage came to an end at the time of Noah's flood. It thus ended here. After that, what happened? Noah had three sons. They were Shem, Ham and Japheth. And among them, God promised that He would give blessings to all nations through Shem. God promised that He would give His blessings through the descendants of Shem. And so Abraham, who is called the father of our faith, was born as a descendant of Shem. After that, Isaac is born of Abraham and Jacob from Isaac. Then much later Jesus Christ is born from this lineage. And, you and I are also from the spiritual descendants of Shem. The lineage of faith is continued on in this manner. But, in order to properly continue this lineage on, there are three things that are needed. There must be faith in God, obedience to His Word and service to Him. Nothing among these three is indispensable.

People who have truly received the remission of their sins through the Word of God must follow and obey

the Word of God. And then, they must definitely serve the Word of God. They must be people who only serve Jesus Christ. Only then can they succeed to God's lineage of faith and also abundantly receive and enjoy all the blessings that God has provided. And, they will be people who pass on such blessings to the next generation.

God Pours out His Blessings through People Who Serve Him like Rebecca Did

Dear fellow believers, do you know what I am speaking about? Why did the old servant obey the word of his master Abraham? Why did Abraham entrust this important task to this old servant? Why did Rebecca draw water and give it to the old servant and watered his camels as well? Why is God proclaiming this Word in detail to you and me like this? The reason is to explain to us that God pours out all of His promised blessings on people who have the same faith as Abraham, people who obey His

Word like the servant of Abraham and people who serve Him like Rebecca. If these three things are not met, we cannot receive the blessings from the Lord. God accomplishes His work and passes on His blessings through people like us who believe in Him, obey His Word and wholly serve Him.

Therefore, all of us must make sure to take heed of these three things. When we serve the Lord, God accomplishes His work through us and saves lost souls. However, what if we just believe in God but give up on or lay aside serving the Lord, what would happen? God's work would for certain not be accomplished. In the end, we would only be serving ourselves. This is sure to happen. And so, we must serve the Lord rather than anything else.

We Must Serve the Righteousness of the Lord with All of Our Faith

The Kingdom of Jesus Christ is your Kingdom,

Jesus Christ is your Master and He is your everything. He is God and at the same time He is the Son of God the Father; and He is our Master and our treasure.

Shall we briefly look at a story in the Book of Ruth? Ruth said to her mother-in-law Naomi, "*Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God,*" and she followed Naomi. Ruth was a widow and a Gentile woman at the time. Her husband was dead and therefore could not bear any children. Nevertheless, she later became "one of the grandmothers" in the physical lineage of Jesus Christ.

What is the reason that God gave Ruth this blessing? Ruth honored her mother-in-law and followed after her. She said, "Your God is my God, your country is my country and your people are my people." Because Ruth followed after her with much zeal, Naomi could not resist and allowed her to come with her. Naomi had another daughter-in-law named Orpah who also became a widow when her husband

died, but because Orpah did not honor her mother-in-law she did not follow her mother-in-law and went back to her country.

In Bethlehem, at the time, there was a powerful man by the name of Boaz. He was also single. So there must have been many women who were after him. However, he did not marry any of these women of his own country but married this Gentile woman named Ruth. Although Ruth was a Gentile woman, he must have heard what many people were saying about her that she honored her mother-in-law, feared God and faithfully believed in God and put into action what she believed in by faithfully serving her mother-in-law and God. After hearing these good things about Ruth, Boaz married her instead of looking for other women.

What does this account represent or mean? Because Ruth wholeheartedly served her mother-in-law and believed in the God of her mother-in-law as her own God, God's blessings were given to Ruth. The Bible, which is the Word of God, often speaks of the faith that

Ruth had. The Bible says, *“For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Romans 10:10)*. This is mentioned often. Nevertheless, the majority of Christians do not believe in the righteousness of God. And, although they may believe in the righteous Word of God, they do not serve the righteousness of the Lord.

Dear fellow believers, you and I must serve the righteousness of the Lord. This is truly very important. Take a look at the Bible. The Epistle of James says that faith without works is a death faith. There is a certain Christian community called the Brethren Church. They claim to have been passed down the faith of the Puritans. They say that Charles H. Spurgeon is the father of their faith. They claim to be of his lineage. They claim that only the Brethren Church on this earth continues on the lineage of Spurgeon. They blatantly state this through their literature ministry.

But do these people serve the Lord? No, they don't. Is their literature ministry something that

wholeheartedly serves the Lord? They flaunt themselves and act proudly by publishing a few books on their history, tradition and forefathers of their faith. Is this truly serving the Lord? In order to properly serve the Lord, they must first preach the genuine gospel of the water and the Spirit to the people of the whole wide world. This gospel of the Lord must be preached to all lost souls. And, they must make a financial pledge to plant Churches everywhere. Why must they plant only one Church in a district? Many more churches should be established all across the country.

Dear fellow believers, this is why we must serve the Lord wholeheartedly. We must not be like them, boasting in themselves, but must faithfully serve the Lord. If we are truly the descendants of Abraham, if we have the same faith as Abraham and if we are people who follow after the Word of God as Abraham did, then we must serve only the Lord as our Master and we must be workers who only serve the Lord with a heart of a servant and a slave. We

must be the people who do the work of the Lord and do not seek after our own interest. Serving the Lord is very important. Along with a heart to serve the Lord, we must have the faith of believing in the Word of the Lord in our hearts. And, we must be the people who carry out and obey the Word of God. You and I must truly serve the Lord only. When we serve the Lord, we can obey His Word and we can keep the faith which believes in His Word. And we can receive all the blessings and promises that God has given to us and which has been passed down to us.

If we truly believe in the righteousness of God in our hearts, then that faith will clearly express itself through our actions. Is this not true? Dear fellow saints, our Church is really going through some financial difficulty right now, but we must press forward even harder. We have made a lot of effort so far. We even made financial pledges several times to support revival meetings for lost souls. And, each time we had a revival meeting we have tried several things that we have never done before. Each time we

held a revival meeting lately we took an offering and ministered to souls, handed out tracts and did a lot to share the gospel. We never did such things before, but we are running out of money. And so, we must start again in faith.

There are people who truly serve the Lord with their hearts, not only with their hearts but with their actions. They have the faith that says, “Jesus is my only Master, and it is my life’s purpose to serve only the Lord and it is the right thing to do.” Such people will be able to serve God in truth and receive and enjoy the blessings that He provides. Our Churches all across this nation must all be like this. You and I have already inherited the blessings that God gave to Abraham. I earnestly pray that you come to fully understand this.

Hallelujah! ☒

SERMON

17



CONTENTS



Go to My Family And Take a Wife for My Son

< Genesis 24:1-4 >

“Now Abraham was old, well advanced in age; and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things. So Abraham said to the oldest servant of his house, who ruled over all that he had, ‘Please, put your hand under my thigh, and I will make you swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and the God of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell; but you shall go to my country and to my family, and take a wife for my son Isaac.’”

We Must Be Servants of God Who Know the Heart of God

Today’s Scripture passage deals with the story of how our forefather of faith Abraham had grown old and how he attempted to have his only son Isaac be married. And in this passage, Abraham instructs his servant who goes to find his future daughter-in-law, saying, *“You shall go to my country and to my family, and take a wife for my son Isaac.”* Yes, he told his oldest servant to go to his country and to his family to find a wife for his son. Then, why did Abraham say this and why did God have this event recorded in this way? You and I will examine this together from this point on.

Abraham instructed his faithful old servant to go and bring him a wife for his son. And he instructed him, *“You will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell; but you shall go to my country and to my family, and take a wife for my son Isaac.”* Dear fellow believers,

why do you think Abraham said this? Abraham's oldest servant mentioned here was a person who knew his master's heart very well. It is to the point that by only hearing Abraham's voice the servant was able to know what his master was thinking. Because he had lived in the household of Abraham for a long time, he was a servant that could read all of the thoughts of his master's heart. And so, Abraham sent none other than this old trusted servant of his back to his country to fetch his son a wife. What does this all mean? This means that the person who does the work of God must be a servant that knows God's heart well.

Through this Scripture passage, God is speaking to you and me. He is telling us that we must truly live out our lives before God by properly knowing His heart and thoughts. We must not be the kinds of people who run errands for God without knowing His heart's intentions, but we must be those who know God our Master's heart and fulfill His will. We must be the people who by our submission satisfy our Master to His heart's content.

Then what is it that God desires from those of us who are His servants? As it says here, "*You shall go to my country and find a bride-to-be for my son,*" in the same way, God wants us to establish His Churches on this earth. Dear fellow believers, God has spoken to us through Abraham about faith and the land of Canaan, namely Heaven. And so we must recognize that He is speaking to us through Isaac about His Church.

Yes, this is true indeed. Today's Scripture passage of how Abraham is trying to have his son Isaac get married represents the will of God that we must plant Churches for the Lord. Then why does Isaac symbolize the Church? When we examine the life of Isaac in the Bible thoroughly, we can see that he lived a life of digging wells. Isaac's son Jacob also continued to dig wells, and God is speaking to us through Isaac and Jacob regarding establishing churches. Isaac and Jacob dug wells wherever they dwelt. In the Bible, a well or a bride denotes the Church of God. Thus, today's passage, "Go to my

country and take a wife for my son” can be said to mean that we are to establish Churches for Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

However, in terms of God having Isaac get married, or in other words, the Church being established, what does God admonish us to keep in mind? He tells us not to go to another family to take a wife from there, but only to take a wife from Abraham’s family, meaning someone from the lineage of Abraham, that is, from among his own relatives. What does this all mean? To establish Churches for our Lord, in other words, in the marriage between God and His people, there must not be any intermarriage with those who are not truly born again.

God is speaking to you and me that we must establish His Churches for His Son Jesus Christ. But what did God put an emphasis on through Abraham in regards to this matter? Abraham said to his old servant, *“You shall go to my country and to my family, and take a wife for my son Isaac.”* What is

truly the work which pleases the Lord? First, it is establishing the Church of God. Having fully understood this, how then must we establish this Church of God? We must be married within the family of Abraham, and thus establish the Church of God. Through a marriage such as this, we can obtain a pure lineage and produce pure descendants for God.

The Book of Hebrews says that although there are many spirits, God the Father has chosen one Spirit, Jesus Christ to obtain His pure children. In other words, the Lord wants to obtain His pure descendants through marriage only with truly born again saints. Of course, children that are born in this manner are also sinners at first. This is because those who are born in the flesh cannot help but be sinners. However, children who are born from born again parents are certain to inherit the proper faith of their parents. This is dependent on whether both their mothers and fathers are true people of the faith or not. In today’s Scripture passage, the Lord is speaking to you and to me about the importance of

this pure marriage. Thus, we must bear in mind that even in marriage we must seek what is right for the sake of our Lord God.

The Church of God Exists for the People of God

Even for the Church of God, if we were to think about it, it exists for the people of our Lord. You and I need the Church of God and the Church of God is needed for the Kingdom of God. Why is this so? God is able to do His work through this Church and He can continue to bear His pure children through this Church. God desires to live in Heaven along with numerous of His own children. And, God is saying that these descendants are born through the Church, and in order to continue to bear that pure race or bloodline, a wife of Jesus Christ must be taken only and only from God's family.

Our Lord truly needs the members of the

Church of God. The Lord brings the person who is going to be His wife to Himself through His Church. He only brings those who are properly born again to Himself, and if a person is not born again yet, then He has that person become born again so that they can have a relationship with the Lord. Then, what must we who are already in the Church and serving the Lord do? We must continue to bring wholesome brides-to-be to our Lord. Today's Scripture passage is all about this.

Abraham was old and he wanted to have his son be married. Why did he not send a young servant instead of an old one to go fetch him a daughter-in-law? Think about this more deeply. Would a young servant not work more quickly and more efficiently? But there is a definite reason why Abraham entrusted this important task to his oldest servant. The reason was that this old servant knew his master's heart well.

This is the same for you and me. Those who have received the remission of sins before God and are following after the Lord within the Church like

this old servant, must gather and lead souls to the Church and proclaim the Word of God to these souls so that this Church will become a Church that the Lord needs. Dear fellow believers, why do we exist? Why do we need the Church after having been born again? The reason that we need the Church after being born again is so that we can live for Jesus Christ. We exist for Jesus Christ and the Church exists for Jesus Christ as well. Today's Scripture passage instructs us to work for the Son. And, we indeed are working in the Church for Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Why Must You Get Married to a Righteous Person?

Those who are born again by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must not be married to just anyone in this world. When we look at the Book of Ezra, it teaches us that intermarriage

with Gentiles would not allow a pure faith to be maintained. As this Book says, if a person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit marries an unbeliever then their offspring will not inherit the genuine faith of the one born again parent. This is the very reason Abraham gave instructions to fetch a suitable wife from his family for his son. This is the will of God. You and I must know this reason for spiritual marriage with Jesus Christ and the reason for the existence of His Church which is all for the sake of Jesus Christ. If you do not know that your marriage is for the sake of Jesus Christ but rather think that it is just for yourselves, you will then fall into serious problems. Our young people must especially take heed of this. The fact is that if you marry a Gentile man or woman, then your pure faith will not be passed down to your offspring.

God told us clearly, whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, to do it all for the glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31). But if we think that the Church of God exists for the sake of our desires of the flesh,

what will happen? The Church of God will then be influenced by the passions of humans rather than the will of God. And so, we must clearly know what the will of God is. The reason that God established the Church was for the sake of the Lord Jesus. God desires that whatever we do, we do it for Him. He desires that we do everything for Him rather than for ourselves, everything including marriage and our everyday lives after being born again.

Do Never Take a Wife from the Daughters of the Canaanites

God has made one important request to us, His Church. He clearly stated as revealed in today's Scripture passage, *“And I will make you swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and the God of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites.”* He has requested that we absolutely on no account to take a wife from the

daughters of the Canaanites for the sake of His name. Then what is the meaning of this passage? We exist for God, and the Church also exists for God. This means that if we are taught something from the people of this world, choose the flesh, and take possession of worldly things in order to minister to the Church, then that act will tear down the Kingdom of God and at the same time becomes harmful to us as well.

While we are at work or interact in society, there are times that we may become interested in the women or men of this world. The women of this world can appear to be very beautiful, and the men of this world can appear to be very attractive. But there is one thing very important before the Lord, and that is, we must know our Lord's heart. The Lord says that we should never take a wife from the daughters of the Canaanites. He is telling us not to interact with the women or men of this world or to unite our hearts with them. Marriage is a unification of two people, is it not? That you should not marry off your son to a

Canaanite woman means that we should not unite our hearts to the men and women of this world.

Dear fellow believers, today on an invitation I visited the Great Light Presbyterian Church because they are moving their chapel to another venue, but I soon realized once again that they are so different like water and oil in relation to us. But I went there with the sole purpose of sharing the true genuine gospel with them. I looked diligently to see if there were perhaps any sincere souls who were searching for God. I did notice a few souls among the ministry workers who would come back to the side of God. However, the hearts of the church members were all in the wrong place. You and I must never be like that. Even if we are to go out into the world and work and live in society, we must not give our hearts to the world. We must not unite our hearts with the people of this world. We must truly keep our hearts inside this Church for God and must do the things that please Him. This is the message that God is trying to speak to us about through Abraham.

Abraham, as revealed in today's Scripture reading, desired that those principles that God had set up for the nation of Israel, that is, for the Church of God, would not be broken by the rules and regulations of the Gentile nations. Our forefather of the faith, Abraham, after meeting God, knew that he and his descendants had to follow after the Word of God without fail and so he affirmatively said, "Do not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites." God spoke to Abraham in this manner: "You must not choose your daughter-in-law from the Canaanites. Your offspring Isaac which you obtained through My Word is a son of God, and therefore you must have him be married to your family and by him doing this you will pass down your faith to your descendants and continue on the lineage of faith."

To be honest, the family lineage of Abraham that is referred to here was really not a great or well-known family, but it was of the race of Aram and, not only that, they were not native Palestinians either. But despite this, they truly called upon the Lord God.

It seems as though there was a certain amount of faith in their hearts. God looked upon this faith of theirs and desired that His lineage of faith be continued on through them. And so, when we take a look at all the passages that speak of Abraham our forefather of the faith, we come to know that both the Church and we as individuals all exist for God and for our Lord. If we live without knowing this fact, we will simply be influenced by the world and our own circumstances.

While living out our lives, we must always think about what the will of God is, what God is pleased with, what a spiritual life is and what it means for our hearts to become whole. There is one thing that God desires of us and it is that our hearts should prosper. God does not particularly desire for our flesh to do well. This is because if our flesh does well our hearts can easily go astray.

What is the next thing that God desires of us? As God spoke to Abraham, we must strive to preserve our descendants in the faith and not become

assimilated with the peoples of this world. God is intimately involved with the affairs within the Church and He preserves the Church. God is keeping and preserving us so that we fellowship and marry within His family. If you do not know this will of God properly and take a Gentile woman, then you will for sure fall away from the Church of God.

God Desires That the Lineage of True Faith Continues On

The Church of God exists because of His will and God brings the righteous into the Church for His sake. If one does not follow after the will of God and takes a woman of the world for oneself or departs from the Church because of someone in the world, God will surely cut that branch off. Even though this person is born again, He will definitely cut this person off without remedy. God has told us unequivocally to go to His family and to marry a

woman. If we do not keep or guard our faith in the Word serious problems can arise. So, even if you are involved in workplace evangelism, your hearts must not be too united with the people at your work.

Those of you who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit are the people of God. The people of God must not unite their hearts with the peoples of this world. Although your body may be there, you are there chiefly to share the gospel and you are there for the sake of Jesus Christ and not just for yourselves. It is the same for you and me who are presently in the Church. The message is that we are all here for the Lord and not for ourselves. Yes, this is correct. Whatever we are thinking or doing—everything in the Church that we should be doing should not be for ourselves but for the Church and for the Lord.

Dear fellow believers, our hearts must not leave for the world outside. We must not try to take women of this world for our wives. If our hearts continue to take the things of the world and the things of the

flesh, then we become the people who do not know the heart of God. What is the heart of God like? What Abraham instructed his old servant to do was this: “I want my son as a true man of faith and a righteous person to succeed his family line.” As there was a sincere desire in Abrahams’ heart, our God desires that you and I guard this pure lineage of our faith.

We must live our lives knowing what the will of God is towards us. God has told us to live for our Lord, whether we eat or drink whatever we do to do everything for the Lord. But, if our hearts are inclined to the flesh and not to the Lord what will happen? What I am saying is we need to be aware of what will happen if we become accustomed to living a life of prosperity on this earth. This is the same as taking a wife from the daughters of the Canaanites.

We may not take a Gentile woman as a wife and there may not be any brothers or sisters who will do this, but actually, taking for oneself a Gentile spouse is not the end of the matter. If we desire for our hearts to be prosperous and do well on this earth in regards

to the flesh and if our social lives and church activities have the sole purpose of making ourselves more comfortable in the flesh, then all of these things are the same as taking Gentile women as our wives.

Dear fellow believers, keep in mind that our whole lives must be lived solely for Jesus Christ. We exist for His name's sake in order to expand His Kingdom. Do you understand this principle? After receiving the remission of sins, having a job and doing further studies should not be the focus in order to be well off on this earth. We should rather do everything for His name and expand His kingdom, for this is the reason why we exist now.

The Lives of the Righteous Are Entirely for Jesus Christ

We who are the born again believers do not exist to just live for ourselves. After we have been born again, we become the people who have been placed

on this earth temporarily for our Lord. You and I must clearly draw a clear definitive bold line in our hearts in regards to this. If this line is not in our hearts, in other words, if there is no clear standard in our hearts that we are to live for the Lord we will be prone to only look out for ourselves while living on this earth. Think about this seriously. What would happen if we followed after the desires of the flesh on this earth and amassed wealth and became rich? What will constantly be uppermost in our thoughts? Would it not be, "How much money this will become if I save up this money a little longer, and what I will do with this money?" Like this, we will continue to seek after ways to make our lives more comfortable in the flesh.

There are two inclinations of the heart of those of us the born-again Christians. One part of the heart desires to draw near to our Lord, and the other part seeks for the flesh to be comfortable. This Scripture passage is saying that a heart that follows after the comforts or conveniences of the flesh is the same as

taking a wife from the Canaanites. Therefore, you and I must be cutting off this inclination of the heart. We exist on this earth solely for the Lord. In today's Scripture passage, Abraham told his servant on no account must he take a Canaanite woman for his son. He said that if a Canaanite woman was chosen then his son would be ruined. He knew if this took place the honor or distinction of his son, the son that was obtained through the Word of God, would be ruined.

I have every confidence that if God allows it, this Church can grow spiritually to an infinite extent. However, what will happen if our hearts are only intent on the Church becoming physically larger and the membership increasing, that is, only on the things that we can see with our eyes? This type of a heart is one that is so ignorant of the intentions of the heart of God as is written in today's Scripture passage where He said to "bring him a daughter-in-law for his son from his own family." You and I must have a clear standard in our hearts. A standard that has clear set goals says, "I exist for God and our Church exists for

God as well. The purpose for our individual lives is to live for God and for Jesus Christ." I want to nail this point home today. Do you understand what I am saying?

Turn Your Heart Around So That You Can Live for the Lord

You and I must clearly set a goal in life which indicates that: "My life exists for God and for the expansion of the Lord's Kingdom." Our hearts may venture out to the world but our hearts must never be seized by the world, and we must always offer our hearts to the Lord. We must turn our hearts back towards our Lord, seek after the will of God which pleases Him, and work together with the Church to serve Him through our lives.

Dear fellow believers, who do our lives belong to? And who do we exist for? We exist for Jesus Christ. We must set this one goal absolutely clear.

Many Christians quit serving the Lord when they prosper in the world. This is because they have not clearly established their goals properly. When we look out on the world, are there not a lot of various mission organizations? At first they really appear to be acting according to God's will. But, take a look at them again carefully after some time has passed. You will not find one single thread among them that seeks after God's will. These people will then start revealing that they do not exist for the Lord, but for themselves or for some famous leaders.

You and I must seriously ponder over this matter. We exist only for the Lord God and for His Son and not for ourselves. By us planting Churches, purchasing land and doing works in the Church and running our Mission School are all done for the Son of God. But we are aware that if the Lord is not pleased with this then we must be willing to boldly cast it away, and if the Lord is pleased with it then we must courageously seize or take ownership of it. Like this, our hearts must definitely be standing right before the Lord.

Let's Incline Our Hearts to Spiritual Things

Are we going to desire the comforts of the flesh, or are we going to seek after what pleases God? Between these two inclinations of the heart, we must clearly incline our hearts towards having a spiritual heart. We must cast away the desires for our flesh that wants to be well off, and rather to lead a spiritual life so that our hearts and souls prosper in line with the desire to glorify God. We must not seek after the prosperity of our flesh. In other words, the Church of God must not purpose itself or pray in order to prosper in the flesh. Dear fellow believers, should we pray that God would make us rich on this earth no matter what? No. We should rather be praying that we would be blessed financially in such a way that we can completely serve the gospel with limited hindrances, so that we can live for His Kingdom. We should not be praying for the prosperity of our flesh in order that we can live comfortably on this earth.

Are we going to live our lives for God, and for

the proclamation of the gospel of the water and the Spirit? Or are we going to live for the gospel but also live for our flesh a bit as well? Are we going to live a double life so that we do well and are content in the flesh? We must clearly draw a bold definite line here. God told us to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto us. This means that if we press forward for the expansion of the Kingdom of God and for the works that please God rather than the comforts of our flesh, God will satisfactorily provide everything that we need. If we know that we exist for God and that we live to serve God, then we must not seek after the security of the flesh. We have both a spiritual heart and a fleshly one. Should we be seeking after the prosperity of our hearts or that of the flesh? Although we cannot see our hearts with our eyes, there are clearly things that allow our hearts to do well and to prosper. For our hearts to prosper we must have a proper heart which presses on with faith towards God.

Between following after the things of the flesh and the things of the heart, I believe that we should choose to follow after the things of the heart. I am saying that we must desire to have a proper heart before God and to live according to His will. Dear fellow believers, do you realize this? As we look at today's Scripture passage, the one thing that we must clearly understand is this: We must not live for the security of the flesh but we must live with an attitude of giving our hearts to God.

Do Not Attach Too Much Importance in Making a Living for the Flesh

When I look at those who have become born again by receiving the remission of sins recently and are attending our Church, almost all of them seem to worry about this world. They worry about "How will I make a living? What will I eat? How can my flesh live more comfortably? How can I lead a secure

life?” These types of worries always visit those who have just become born again. But when this happens, they must think deeply again regarding this. Such newly born again saints must think about the following things: “What is God’s will towards me? What is God’s will for saving me? What is the will of God for saving me and placing me in the Church?” Is it the will of God that they have this type of heart? To have these thoughts, “How can my flesh live comfortably and respectably on this earth?” is the thoughts of the flesh. What will happen to them if they continue on in this direction without casting away these desires of flesh? They will be like Ishmael who went away from God. They leave Abraham. They are driven away.

You and I must be absolutely clear and not press ahead with a heart that desires that our flesh do well or prospers. We must rather press forward having a heart that God is pleased with and do the work that is good for our souls and beneficial to the Son of God. And, we must provide genuine fellowship with those

who have recently received the remission of sins. When we look at the hearts of the saints in our Church, we can tell that the things of the flesh have entered into them. Especially those who have been born again recently, they have these desires to be well off in the flesh. They do not know what the older saints think and they do not recognize the meaning of the things that the predecessors of faith say, and therefore their hearts are attracted to the things that appear on the surface and the things of the flesh that they can see with their eyes. We must pray for these people and we must have genuine fellowship with them. Those of us who were saved prior to them must first do the works that God is pleased with and press on to be closer to our God. But beware of this: We must never and never strive for our flesh to be prosperous.

After we are truly born again, it is not important for us to devote ourselves to fasting or to asceticism. But it is more important for us to aim for the prosperity of our souls. We must have a proper heart

that is willing to live for the will of God. Our hearts must not be swayed by the desires to be well off in the flesh.

When we to read the next part of today's Scripture passage, we see Abraham's older servant bringing back his future daughter-in-law. Just as Abraham had instructed, this servant went to his master's family and brought back a wife for his son. This trusted servant could have brought any woman from any family and could have deceived Abraham, who was now getting on in years, but this old trusted servant did not do this.

Then who does this old servant of Abraham here represent? He represents you and me. This old servant represents us, we who are in the Church of God. Our Lord is teaching us here just how our hearts must be as we serve Him. As Abraham had instructed his old servant, "Do not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites," God is likewise instructing us, "You must not take a wife from the daughters of the Canaanites, and do not live your

lives on this earth for the flesh which decays away." Please be aware of this. If we indeed press forward for God by faith, then God will provide everything that we need for our physical bodies.

If Our Hearts Truly Strive for the Salvation of Other Souls, Then the Lord Will Surely Provide Sufficient Things Even for the Flesh

In the Gospel of Matthew the Lord said, "*But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you*" (Matthew 6:33). If we do not seek after the things of this world, if our hearts are intent on saving the souls of others rather than our flesh doing well, and if we press forward by faith and follow in the direction that pleases God, then God will provide everything in this world for us. But what will happen if we do not obey His Word and rather follow after this world? We will start losing all the precious

things of God. This is why God, in order to give us more of the things of this earth, including much joy and happiness, instructs us to first follow Him. For the sake of Jesus Christ and for our sakes we must follow after the will of God. If we obey the will of God that He has towards us, not only will our hearts and souls prosper but He will also provide contentment for our flesh as well. Dear fellow believers, do you believe this?

To do things for the Lord is really to do things for ourselves. Some of you are the members of our Mission Group for Workplace Evangelism. You are preaching the gospel in your work places. I ask that you really do everything for God and for Jesus Christ. Whether you are at Mission School, at work or in society, I ask that you live the rest of your lives entirely for Jesus Christ. You and I exist for Jesus Christ. It is not enough to just know this in our heads. It is to believe this in our hearts and to actually apply it to our lives, and to guard our precious hearts that God has given to us, and to live according to the will

of God by following after that heart. I pray that you take this important lesson to heart and live your lives accordingly. ☒



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