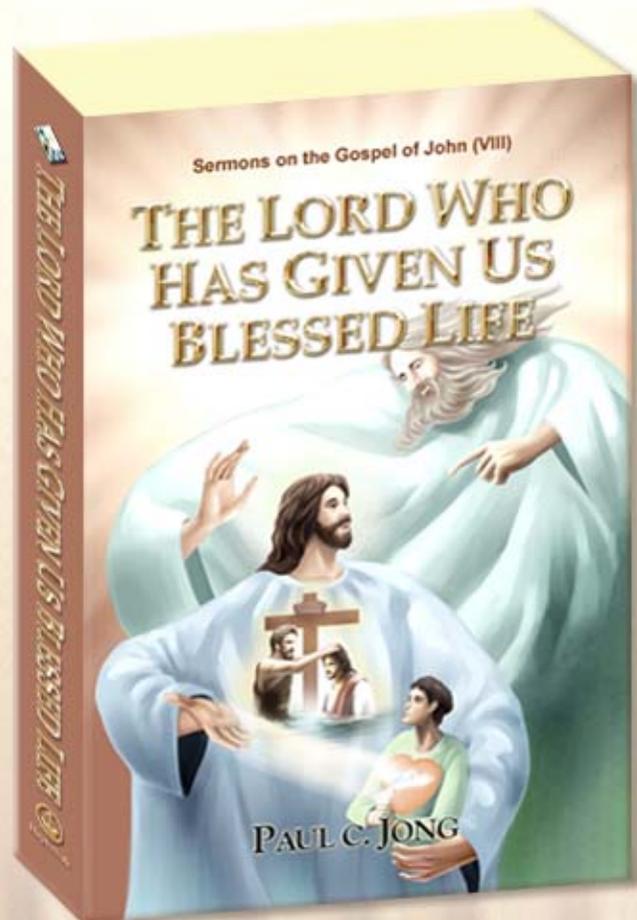




The New Life Mission



SERMONS ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN (VIII)

THE LORD WHO HAS GIVEN US BLESSED LIFE

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THE LORD WHO HAS GIVEN US BLESSED LIFE



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The Best Life in Christ Jesus

It would be nice if the gospel of the water and the Spirit was quickly preached to the whole world and the Kingdom of the Lord came to this earth. So, we always think of Jesus. We are tired of doing everything besides Jesus' work. The Lord is the best, and so is doing His work. Do you think so, too? My fellow believers, if you do the Lord's work when you are confused, you come to experience the Holy Spirit giving you a fullness of joy in your hearts. Your head aches when you think of complicated things of the world, but you have a fullness of joy when you do spiritual work. That's right.

It would be nice if the gospel of the water and the Spirit were quickly preached to the whole world and Jesus came soon, wouldn't it? I want to do a lot of God's work while I can because this world won't continue to be preserved.



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THE LORD WHO HAS GIVEN US BLESSED LIFE

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THE LORD WHO HAS GIVEN US BLESSED LIFE

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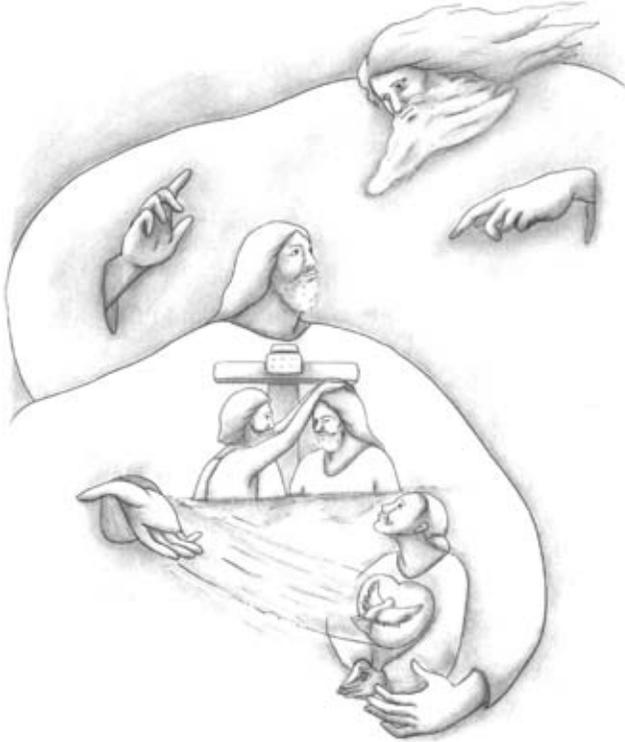


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Preface



My fellow believers let's be diligent in preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The Lord has allowed us to live the best lives. What is the Truth that allows our hearts to be at ease? The work that our Lord achieved after coming to this earth, that is, the Truth which He fulfilled by being baptized by John the Baptist and hanging on the Cross, allows our hearts to be at ease. And where can we obtain this spiritual wealth? We obtain it only in the Lord's righteousness. Where can we obtain strength while living in this world? We obtain it in the Lord's righteousness. Everything is in His Righteousness. The Lord has given us all things, including all our possessions and blessings. Our best things come from above—as it is written, *“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning”* (James 1:17). This means that



the Lord gives His children every good thing in this world. But, bad things come from Satan.

This year, we are going to set the foundation for evangelization, and we will more vigorously spread the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the whole world. You and I must keep our hearts unmoved before God. Let us therefore turn our hearts away from being so busily engaged in this world and go before the Lord of the Truth with a yearning heart. I trust our hearts will be governed by the Truth. We should read and listen to the Word of God for that to happen. We must turn our hearts around before God and live by faith. The Bible admonishes us to look unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:2). You and I must look to Jesus Christ who gave us the best lives.

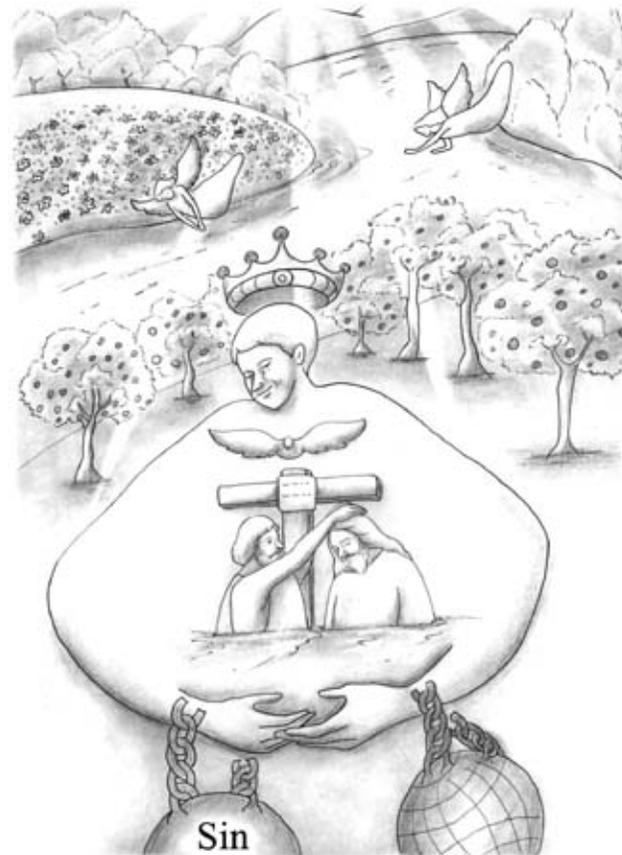
We always give thanks to the Lord. We bow our heads and give thanks to the Lord who gave us the Truth of salvation. For the Lord to save us who were like Barabbas from our sins ‘all at once’, took all our sins by being baptized by John the Baptist and died

on the Cross. We give thanks to the Lord who gave us the best lives. ☒



SERMON

1



Contents



Live with the Hope of The Glorious Life

< John 17:4-8 >

“I have glorified you on the earth. I have finished the work which you have given me to do. And now, O Father, glorify me together with yourself, with the glory which I had with you before the world was. I have manifested your name to the men whom you have given me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they have known that all things which you have given me are from you. For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me.”

The entire Gospel of John chapter 17 is devoted to and records Jesus’ praying His last prayer before being crucified. The Lord prayed in this way because He wanted something from God the Father. What was this that He wanted?

In today’s Scripture reading we can see it clearly written, *“I have glorified you on the earth. I have finished the work which you have given me to do. And now, O Father, glorify me together with yourself, with the glory which I had with you before the world was”* (John 17:4-5). It is recorded in the Word that Jesus was with God the Father before this world was created. This means that God and Jesus is the very same person, and that Jesus is God the Creator who created this universe and all things in it. Further to this God the Father has commanded something righteous to His Son Jesus, and it is telling us that Jesus glorified God the Father by fulfilling this righteous work. This is the very work of resolving all the sins of mankind. Jesus received all the sins of mankind through the baptism He received from John



the Baptist, and then He was crucified on the Cross in order to pay the full price for those sins. However, Jesus was resurrected and ascended to Heaven after dying on the Cross, and His prayer in this chapter was with the presupposition of all these things. Jesus was praying and asking God to glorify Him since He fulfilled all these works of righteousness perfectly and through it glorified the Father.

To be glorified through the work Jesus has done is a thing we who have been truly born again by the gospel of the water and the Spirit also desire. God will glorify and we will be made glorious when we become the true born-again workers of God by believing in His righteousness and complete all the work of God here and then go before His presence. Not only the workers of God who are born again by the gospel of the water and the Spirit, but also the people of this world live with such a hope of becoming like that by the glory of God. Our Lord prayed with such a heart whilst He was still in this world. We also have this hope in our heart. We have

this hope and faith of entering into the Kingdom of our Lord and to live gloriously there with Him after finishing our work here. I believe that God will grant us this glorious life after we have finished the mission God has entrusted us with - that is, to fulfill this task just as our Lord had prayed.

In my message this morning regarding this “eternal life”, I wish to say it is “the life of living eternally without dying.” If so shouldn’t we live gloriously enjoying authority and riches in the love of God, instead of living in eternal misery? Living in eternal misery would be far worse than living a limited lifespan.

What Is This Glorious Life?

You and I must also live with the hope of this glorious life just as our Lord mentioned in His prayer regarding this glorious life in Heaven. We will most certainly go before the presence of God after we



finish our life here in this world. The glorious Kingdom of Heaven awaits you and me while the horrifying judgment of God awaits those who do not know or refuse to believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

I am so happy about this. The Apostle Paul also said, *“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Romans 8:18)*. He was saying that the suffering of this present time is nothing compared with the glory he will enjoy in Heaven. And the greater the persecution and hardship one suffers due to this faith of believing in God while living in this world, the greater the riches and glory one will enjoy when we enter the Kingdom of God. Beloved saints, even when we feel disappointed and hopeless because of our terrible pain and sadness, we must instead have even greater hope in the Kingdom of God. God actually waits with this glorious Kingdom and blessing prepared for us.

As the Lord said, “I have glorified you on the

earth. I have finished the work you have given me to do,” and then He asked God His wishes, we also have such a heart. We desire to finish the work He has entrusted us with and then go to the Kingdom of God. This winter and spring are especially gloomy and difficult. Even in the midst of these difficult times, I know that we are much happier when compared with other people. How many multitudes of people are dying in the midst of there suffering without even realizing the gospel of the water and the Spirit? Our life is truly a thankful life when compared with those in this world; it seems they have a gloomy and difficult life due to this world becoming more and more difficult and evil running rampant.

However, this is not the end of the world. It’s because the Antichrist has as yet not appeared. The thing we must hope for and do in this world is to finish evangelizing this world with this gospel, and then go to live the life of enjoying and dwelling in the Kingdom of God.



Our Lord said in the Gospel of John chapter 17vs.6, *“I have manifested your name to the men whom you have given me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to me, and they have kept your word.”* This means that Jesus manifested the true salvation according to God’s will.

What then is this true salvation that the Lord manifested? It is the Lord putting on human flesh and coming into this world, and then taking on all the sins of humankind by receiving His baptism from John the Baptist, and then He was resurrected from the dead after paying the wages of our sins completely by dying on the Cross. This is the true salvation. The Lord fulfilled our salvation by sacrificing His life and everyone who believes in this fact will have kept the Word of the Father (John 17:6). The Lord has given this Word to us and He has made us keep this faith until the very end by giving us strength to endure.

When our Lord was in this world, He often mentioned that He and God the Father and His authority were the same. The Triune God allowed us

to be born into this world, and then He sent our Lord to save us from the sins of the world with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. God the Father sent His Son into this world to fulfill His salvation plan for us. And then God made us to have God’s Word through Him, and then made us know and believe in God through Jesus Christ who is in fact God. Jesus the only begotten Son of God the Father came into this world according to the plan of God. Jesus Christ came into this world like this and saved us with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We have received the remission of our sins by believing in this Truth through the Word. Dear fellow believers, do you really believe in this fact with your heart?

The ministry of Jesus and our ministry, in other words we who have been truly born again, are actually the same. As the Lord entered the Kingdom of the Father after completing His ministry here in this world, we will also likewise go to this glorious place where God dwells after preaching His gospel and fulfilling and completing the mission God has



entrusted to us with. But in spite of this evil people will always harass ‘the righteous’ who have been born again by the gospel of the water and the Spirit. They appear as if they are helping others who have as yet not become the people of God, but the reality is they are harassing them instead of helping them. It’s because their souls are different from the souls of the righteous people who have been truly born again by the gospel of the water and the Spirit. When I look at these things, I feel truly fortunate that we who serve God by faith are blessed, but despite this we are reminded that we are still clothed with weak flesh.

As our Lord prayed to God the Father by fulfilling the ministry of saving mankind from sin with the gospel of the water and the Spirit before ascending to Heaven said, *“And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was,”* so we must also hope that God will make us glorious after we finish our ministry here in this world. It’s because our hope of eternal life by living and enjoying the riches and

the glory in the Kingdom of God lies deep in our heart. We must not only have such a hopeful heart, but we must work hard and hope sincerely to receive this blessing from God. I believe that our Lord will personally make us glorious after we finish this ministry here because I sincerely believe that God has this plan and the heart to make us the true believers live gloriously together with Him in His Kingdom of Heaven. I feel so very happy, and am peaceful when I think of this wonderful glory we will soon be receiving. Living in this world would be very difficult if we did not have this hope of eternal life that will give us riches and glory. We can thus be patient and endure even though we face many difficulties.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit is now being spread effectively regardless of how the world develops. Some incidents happen occasionally in our Church, but I know that you and I can overcome all these things and fulfill the righteous work if we work united with one heart and one will. That is why we



must always think about the will of God and do His work. I know without a doubt that this is the righteous work in God's sight.

People usually think differently depending on what position they find themselves in. The heart of a born-again layperson changes when he becomes a true worker of God. And then his heart changes once again when he takes charge of some task in God's Church.

The prophet Ezekiel illustrates this very well. When the King of Babylon invaded Jerusalem and took many young men as prisoners including Ezekiel. Ezekiel then became a prophet during this time and encouraged his people with hope who were suffering from this life of slavery. If Jeremiah was the prophet of tears and Amos was the prophet of justice, then Ezekiel was the prophet of hope.

Then one day a tragic thing happened. The Babylonian army attacked Jerusalem again and completely demolished the City. They burned the Temple and captured Zedekiah the king of Judah and

took his eyes out and then tied his hands and feet to a horse and dragged him around the city like a dirty rag and left him on the dusty ground to die. Because of this the Israelites lost their country and did not have any land of their own to go back to. As a result of this the people lamented and cried in sorrow. To crown matters, Ezekiel's wife also died during this terrible time.

What do you think happened to Ezekiel in the midst of this calamity? Even in the midst of such great pain and suffering, Ezekiel did not become discouraged but instead encouraged his people by saying, "We must have hope especially in these hard times. We must hold onto one another. We must be courageous and we must live here without giving up our hope. We must believe in the Almighty God Jehovah and depend on Him." The people who were stubborn and obstinate began to listen to these sermons of healing by the prophet Ezekiel as he was pleading with the people without losing sight of the hope and the love of God.



Some of these messages were of solace, encouragement and hope as a result of a vision God had showed him: Ezekiel went into the Temple as the messenger of God. As he was standing there he saw water starting to fall inside the Temple and this water began to flow from under the threshold of the Temple towards the east. The bible says, *“And when the man went out to the east with the line in his hand, he measured one thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the water came up to my ankles. Again he measured one thousand and brought me through the waters; the water came up to my knees. Again he measured one thousand and brought me through; the water came up to my waist. Again he measured one thousand, and it was a river that I could not cross; for the water was too deep, water in which one must swim, a river that could not be crossed”* (Ezekiel 47:3-5).

The water that poured down like this went around the Temple once and flowed into the desert and then flowed down all the way into the Dead Sea. When

this water poured into the Dead Sea, the Dead Sea became alive and fish jumped and swam playfully there. Furthermore, where ever this water flowed lush bushes and fruit trees grew and bore clusters of precious fruit. This was the very promise of God for the recovery of Israel.

After witnessing such an incredible vision, Ezekiel’s faith became certain and strong that Israel would indeed recover and said to them, “We will surely rise up again although we are now suffering. The bright morning sun will most certainly visit us again and illuminate its light on us although we are walking in a dark tunnel right now. Our people will rise up again although we have fallen. We will definitely become successful and be victorious although we have failed to do so thus far. Therefore we must depend on the Almighty God especially in these hard times instead of being depressed by this miserable situation we find ourselves in. God will definitely heal our people and make us rise up again if we pray and do not lose hope.” The Israelites who



heard his sermons received great comfort from it and came to have hope for this future recovery.

The Lord Also Said That the Predecessors in Faith Should Serve Their Followers

This principle does not change. Although it might seem like the predecessors of our faith are ruling over their followers, they are actually serving them more and consequently are living with the younger saints. I know there are some of them who do whatever they feel what is good and do not serve the Lord by faith, and when I see this I become so sad. When this happens I think to myself, “It would be so much better if they did the work with active faith since they are going to do it anyway. Why then do they do it like that?” And I also want these people to work diligently with the desire to be helpful for the gospel even if it’s a little.

In today’s Scripture reading the Lord manifested His faith by praying, *“I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me.”* The Lord said this in the hearing of His disciples because He was God who enjoyed the same glory as God the Father. Therefore, even though someone who believes that Jesus received the baptism, died on the Cross, and was resurrected from the dead and ascended to Heaven, will possess a wrong faith if he does not know who and what kind of Person Jesus really is.

Therefore we need to know that Jesus is the Son of God who was with God from the time even before the creation of the universe. Although He was the Son of God, He is exactly the same God to us. Such



faith is truly important. Jesus created all things in this entire universe. Jesus created the entire universe and all things in it including the things that are not visible to our eyes.

These days we occasionally hear about reports of scientists who have discovered new stars that are some hundred million light-years away. So we see that the world that Jesus created is so much greater and immense that we cannot measure it correctly by human capabilities. This Jesus, the Great and Almighty God, has prepared the Kingdom of Heaven for us and waits for us. He waits for us to make the people who have been truly born again by the water and the Spirit to live there gloriously. Every time I think of the fact that God gives us eternal life and makes us live eternally, I become overwhelmed with such great happiness and joy that it makes me even happier to know that this is guaranteed by the Word of God, and not by our own thinking or imagination. Because no lie will ever be found in the Word of God, therefore I believe our life will become exactly like

that according to His Word. We are so happy and joyful because everything will be fulfilled exactly as it is written in God's Word. You and I must think regularly about the Words of blessing that God has promised to us as we live in this world. When I think about this eternal life in Heaven for a while, I experience such great blessings even in the midst of extreme difficulties. Although perceiving living eternally might be difficult, one thing is abundantly clear that being, people who really believe in such a life by the faith will most certainly receive great blessing in Heaven.

When common people visit the Blue House where the President of Korea resides, they buy new suits and shoes and spruce themselves up before they go there. They do not know how to conduct themselves when they dress up like this. This is because the Blue House is splendid, gorgeous and huge even though it looks like a simple house with blue tiles on the outside. Living in that place can be more uncomfortable.



However, we who have been born again by the gospel of the water and the Spirit are prepared in our hearts to live gloriously in the Kingdom of Heaven. Therefore, we can live peacefully with no problem at all when we do eventually go there. We the righteous will enter the Kingdom of God and have a noble meal listening to fantastic music. And we will throw big parties and preside over the heavenly meetings. You also have already been prepared with such ability. The spiritual mature believers of our Church will do well when they are given such responsibilities. I am also prepared for such things in my heart. It will be even better if a field is prepared for us to play soccer there.

It makes me happy just to think about it and I look forward to it. Hence, dear fellow believers, let's speedily finish the mission that has been entrusted to us so that we can go to Heaven together. Do God's work faithfully in this world and do your best in your life and also enjoy the joy God gives you. Many of our saints do not eat much because they are on a diet,

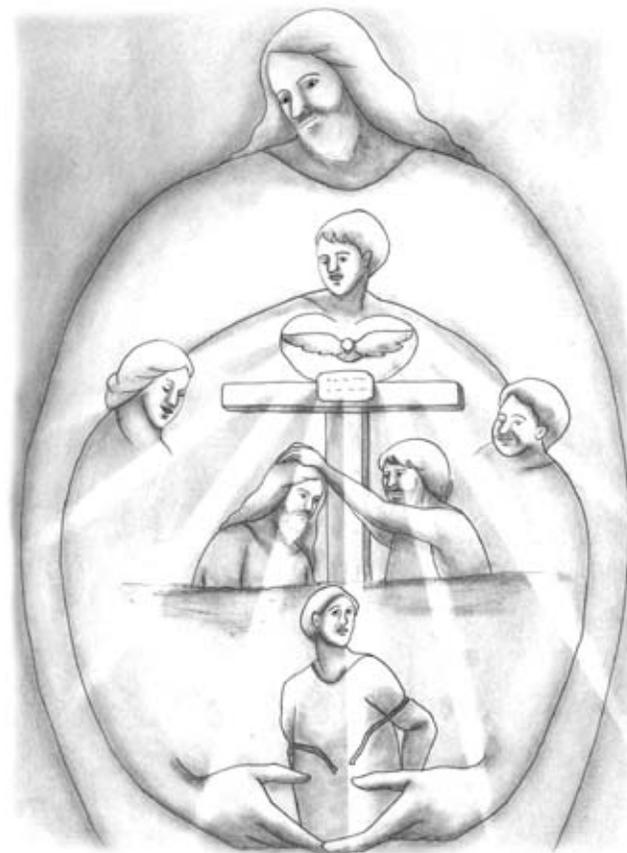
but nevertheless let's eat delicious healthy foods to strengthen our bodies for this task. Children should ask their parents to buy them delicious things and workers should also buy delicious food and share it amongst each other and live a happy and worthwhile life.

As the Lord prayed to God to fulfill His ministry and to glorify Him, let's also pray that we will work diligently until the Lord's return, and live a life of fulfilling this great mission, and let's pray that we will enter the glory of God when the Kingdom of Heaven arrives. I have a heart like this and I know that you too have such a heart. ☒



SERMON

2



Contents



The Lord's Prayer, His Last Request

< John 17:1-8 >

“Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: ‘Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was. “I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept

Your word. Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me.’”

The Lord's Last Words to His Disciples

Warm greetings to you the saints of God! As you know Easter is not too far off, and so since last week I have been preaching about ‘the passion of Jesus’. So as I continue today, I would like to continue preaching on John chapter 17.

Jesus said in the previous chapter: *“Indeed the hour is coming, yes, has now come, that you will be scattered, each to his own, and will leave me alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. These things I have spoken to you, that in me you*



may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world” (John 16:32-33). This is what Jesus told His disciples before His impending death on the Cross. We need to realize here that Jesus knew that He was going to be seized and killed on the Passover Day, the greatest festival of Israel, and that He mentioned these things to His disciples beforehand in order to plant peace and faith in them.

My fellow believers, when you face a sudden tragedy, it's natural for you to be greatly distressed. Jesus had led His disciples and done various works with them, and so you can imagine just how shocked the disciples would have been when they saw Him being violently seized by the Jews and then being crucified to death by the Roman soldiers. You can also imagine just how despondent they would have felt, how they would have lost their faith, and how they would have fallen into a deep hole of despair. But Jesus already knew about these things, and that's why He forewarned His disciples by telling them,

“Indeed the hour is coming, yes, has now come, that you will be scattered, each to his own, and will leave Me alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me. These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world” (John 16:32-33). With His impending death on the Cross, Jesus gave the disciples enough forewarning about many things to come, and when this happened, He was indeed crucified. After being crucified and died, He then rose up from the dead, and then bore witness for 40 days before He ascended to Heaven.

But even though the disciples had followed Jesus for no less than three years, and when these events prophesied by Jesus became a reality, they lost their minds and were panic stricken. This happened despite the fact that Jesus had already taught them beforehand what would happen to them and had given them enough guidance. Nevertheless, our Lord told us clearly, *“In the world you will have*



tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” By these words the Lord is admonishing us that just as He overcame the world, we should also overcome our tribulations by trusting in Him. We should not just give up and capitulate to this world; we the saints who trust in the Lord can surely overcome it. It is because we have faith in the Lord that we can overcome all difficulties and win our victories in the end.

Today, taking such faith in the Lord as an example, I would like to preach to you about this passage in John chapter 17. After praying on the Mount of Olives, the Lord was arrested by Roman soldiers led by Judas Iscariot and the Jews, and was subsequently put on a trial. Even though our Lord was sinless, He had nevertheless borne all the sins of mankind by being baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan River, and had to receive the punishment of crucifixion to pay off the wages of these sins. After dying on the Cross, He rose up from the dead in three days just as was prophesied, and He through this

became our true Savior. What Jesus said in John chapters 16 and 17, which were spoken of just prior to His crucifixion, can be characterized as ‘His last words.’ It was akin to a last will and testament that people give to their children before they pass away by saying to them, “My beloved sons and daughters listen carefully. I have written my will in a way so as to distribute my possessions among you equally.” Likewise our Lord also gathered His disciples around and said to them, “If you know that I have come from the Father, then from now on pray in My name. If you do this you will receive everything you ask for. I am your true Savior and Intercessor.” Like this, the Lord made His divine status known to all mankind regardless of whether they believe in Him or not, and He also explained to them how they can obtain eternal life. He then prepared for His death, asking God the Father not to let Him succumb to cowardice before His death.

So we see this passage in John chapter 17 being akin to the Lord's last words. He explained



everything to the disciples and everyone else as well. But we need to know that His heart was by no means light when He spoke His last words here.

Let's turn now to John 17:1-3: *“Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: ‘Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.’”*

Jesus prayed in John 17:1, *“Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify you.”* This means that the Lord already knew beforehand what was to come. Our Lord already knew all about how Judas would betray Him and to whom he would sell Him out and how He would meet His death; how He would rise up from the dead and save the entire human race from sin; and lastly who would truly believe in Him.

Who Can Receive All the Heavenly Blessings Bestowed by God?

When we turn to Genesis in the Old Testament, we see God speaking to Rebekah around the time she conceived Jacob and Esau: *“Two nations are in your womb, Two peoples shall be separated from your body; One people shall be stronger than the other, And the older shall serve the younger”* (Genesis 25:23). God when He speaks knows everything beforehand. He knows who among the countless people in this earth would truly believe in Him as the Savior. This does not mean that God has chosen certain people whilst rejecting others arbitrarily. Although some theologians make such hypothetical claims, their teachings by itself is no more than an irrational conjecture that makes a mockery out of God's justice. This is because they do not understand the Bible correctly.

What God said about Esau and Jacob, that Jacob would rule over Esau and Esau would serve Jacob,



was fulfilled exactly as God foretold. Why did Esau then come to serve Jacob, while Jacob received and enjoyed God's blessings? It's because Esau trusted in his own power, rather than relying totally on God. So God knew in advance that Esau would reject His help and love and perish without being saved, this is because God had told his mother about it beforehand. What is obvious is that God is truly a just God. So we see through this that whether you are blessed or not is really your own choice.

Even among today's people, we find many who trust in their own strength and might of the flesh, rather than accepting Jesus Christ who came by the gospel of the water and the Spirit as their Savior. Usually it is those who are strong-willed and stubborn that do this, these very people reject the gospel of Jesus outright by saying that they don't need it, no matter how much it is preached to them.

Who then would accept this God-given love and blessings, live in happiness be always thankful for these blessings, and attain salvation and eternal life to

enter Heaven? It's none other than those who are like Jacob. But we know that Jacob was a weak man. Nevertheless he was a shrewd man in mind and wit. In his days, hunting and farming were the two main occupations, but Jacob was such a weak man that he was no good at hunting or farming. So because of this he believed in God, (whom his parents also believed in), and trusted in this God and sought His help. Because he yearned for God's blessings, he was indeed blessed by God in the end. It was on account of his faith in God's blessings that he actually attained them. Just as God had spoken beforehand about these two different lives of Jacob and Esau; our Lord told the disciples beforehand that the hour had now come, for He knew all about how He would die in a few days.



The Ministry of Jesus That Was Fulfilled for Our Salvation

Since being born on this earth until He turned 30 years old, Jesus grew up under His father and mother of the flesh. And when He reached 30 years of age, He accepted all the sins of mankind ‘once for all’ by being baptized by John the Baptist; and in obedience to the will of God the Father, He saved us the believers in the gospel of the water and the Spirit ‘all at once.’ It was because He had accepted the sins of mankind through His baptism in the Jordan River that He could bear the punishment of crucifixion. So we see that He had to bear this punishment for this very reason.

Through His three years of public ministry, spanning from His baptism to His crucifixion, our Lord went on to fulfill the will of God the Father. The very first thing that Jesus did at the start of His ministry of salvation was to take all the sins of mankind upon Himself by being baptized by John the

Baptist. He then called twelve disciples and taught them personally. He trained them well. He taught them about Himself, being God the Father and about the true salvation. Jesus taught them thoroughly that He was not merely some religious founder, but He was God Himself the Creator and the Savior at the same time. And toward the end of His ministry He also told His disciples that He had to be crucified to death—as mentioned in this Scripture passage, “*The hour has come,*” this is exactly what He meant, that the moment of His crucifixion was now at hand.

It’s written in John 17:1, “*Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You.*” This passage means that because the Lord had been baptized by John the Baptist as the Savior of mankind, the hour had now come for Him to die on the Cross and thus bear the condemnation of the sin for all mankind. But we also need to know that because Jesus had only come to this earth incarnated in the flesh for a short while, He was also very concerned about physical death. Afraid that He



might cry out or succumb to cowardice unable to bear the pain of this terrible crucifixion, He prayed to God the Father: *“Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You.”* This means, “Father, let Me fulfill all the work You have entrusted to me with to save mankind completely that is, by Me taking upon all the sins of the human race through My baptism I received from John the Baptist, and then dying on the Cross, and through this bearing the condemnation of sin on the Cross, and then to rise up from the dead in three days. Let Me thus glorify You.” If we are dragged to our execution by being crucified to death, or when the time of the Great Tribulation comes before the Lord’s return on the last day, you and I would also be able to pray like this: “Father, the hour has come for me to face my martyrdom. Help me not to succumb to cowardice, but defend my faith in the Lord. Give me the faith to proclaim you bravely to everyone.” If this was the Lord’s hearts desire, so our hearts must also desire to glorify God.

The Word of faith that the Lord spoke here is on a completely differently dimension to the faith of those who believe in Christianity today as a religion. Christians who believe in Jesus merely as a matter of religion only ask for carnal blessings and worldly peace when they pray. Their belief in Jesus is limited only for them and their own families to prosper in this world. But this is not why our Lord came to this earth; He came to this earth as the Savior in order to deliver mankind from all its sins. Jesus prayed to God the Father so that He would blot out all our sins, to save us perfectly, make us God’s perfect people and through this fulfill all the work of saving us—that is, He prayed not for Himself, but for the salvation and peace of the entire human race.

In the last chapter of Mark, Jesus said to His disciples that certain signs would follow those who believe in Him. One of these blessings is that they will not die when they get bitten by a venomous snake or drink poison (Mark 16:18). This implies that the truly born-again are immune to the poisonous



teachings of Satan, because they possess ‘The Truth’ that shields and protects them from the Devil. But despite this we see during the Early Church period some misguided Christians used snakes to discern whether one really believed in Jesus or not. They allowed a snake bite someone, and if this person did not die, they then considered him to be a true believer in Jesus. As a result of this devious teaching many people swallowed poison and boasted arrogantly, “Since I believe in Jesus and my faith is so great I will not die,” but they indeed died in the end. Many early Christians perished due to this lie. But we know that this is not the true faith.

Matthew chapter 4 records the temptation our Lord faced when He fasted in the wilderness for 40 days after receiving His baptism. Satan said to Him, “Throw yourself down from the top of the Temple. Surely angels will lift You up and protect You, after all is it not written like this in the Scriptures?” To this Jesus rebuked him by saying, “*It is written again, ‘You shall not tempt the LORD your God’*” God

fulfills everything with His Word.

Of course God protects us, but the Word also teaches us that we should not tempt Him. Only those whose faith is weak try to tempt God by thinking, “The Lord will protect me no matter what I do.” So if you should say, “Well, since I believe in the Lord, I can do whatever I want,” this would mean nothing more than a reckless act by testing God.

Let me illustrate this with a driver. Will it be okay for any driver to think that he can drive in whatever way he wants, just because he believes in God? No, of course not! The right thing to do is to obey all the traffic rules and drive safely—that is, one should do everything to ensure his safety and others on the road and then pray to the Lord to protect him. If anyone drives recklessly and crashes head-on into a huge truck rather than trying to evade it by thinking, “I will not die because I believe in God,” then no one I tell you not even a Christian will be able to escape death. In all likelihood this person would not even understand his own death by wondering at the last



moment. “Is it because I don’t have enough faith? Why am I dying when I believe in God?” My fellow believers, is this really what sincere faith in God is all about? No, absolutely not!

Although there is no doubt about the fact that God has indeed granted us salvation, but to think that He will always protect us even when we don’t do everything we should do to ensure our safety, is nothing more than testing God. Accidents will happen even when one is careful enough taking all the necessary precautions; so how can anyone expect God to come to the rescue when he has not done what he is supposed to do?

Therefore, whenever we ask God for anything we should first do everything that’s within our abilities, and then only ask God for help for the things that lay beyond our means. If one walks blindly into his own death even as he knows this, then it’s not God who is taking him away, but it is a man-made disaster. Although God will accept such souls that perish from human errors, He will never be pleased by such

stupid accidents.

Our Lord prayed to God the Father after diligently fulfilling and finishing all the work commanded by Him. He prayed to the Father before His impending crucifixion lest He should be marred by the weaknesses of the flesh. And when He was eventually crucified, He indeed endured tremendous suffering as was expected. Hanging on the Cross, Jesus said He was thirsty. He felt thirsty because He was dehydrated from all the blood that was drained out from His body. After wetting His lips with a little bit of sour wine, Jesus passed away on the Cross, saying, “*It is finished!*”

One recent movie portrays Jesus’ life by depicting this scene and showing Jesus coming down from the Cross and living with some woman, and then being crucified again. But this is nothing more than the imagination of the movie producer. While artists should not be censored from expressing their interpretations, what’s wrong is wrong. But for us, we should believe according to how it is written in



the Bible—that the Lord our Savior, in order to pay off the wages of the sins of mankind, He accepted all these sins through His baptism, was indeed crucified and shed His blood just as He had prophesied.

Before being crucified to death, our Lord prayed to God the Father to help Him fulfill the Father's work to its completion. He also prayed that just as God the Father had glorified the Son, the Son would also carry out the task that was entrusted to Him. He said in John 17:2, *“You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him.”* This passage means that once Jesus was crucified to death and was resurrected, thus completing the salvation of mankind to perfection, He would have the authority to rule over the whole universe and all its hosts.

When we turn to the Book of Revelation, we see Jesus Christ sitting on a white throne as the Judge. Chapter 5 in Revelation tells us that there will be a scroll sealed with seven seals. Who will then break this seal and judge mankind according to what's

written therein, saving some and condemning others? It is none other than Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God who was crucified to death. It is Christ who has the right to accept the scroll from the Father's hand, break the seal, open the scroll and judge everyone accordingly.

But until Jesus Christ our Savior had completed our salvation by coming to this earth, and being baptized, dying on the Cross and rising up from the dead, He did not have the authority to rule over all His people. That's because God the Father had as yet not given Him such authority. To save mankind, God the Father sent His Son to this earth incarnated in the flesh, made Him bear the sins of mankind by being baptized—and had Him die on the Cross. Having then being resurrected—the Father sat Him down at the right hand of His throne. After thus completing our salvation, God the Father gave His Son the authority to reign over all flesh. That is why Jesus said, *“Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, as You have*



given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him (John 17:1-2)."

Jesus Christ has now attained the authority to rule over everyone, and He is truly the Son of God and our Savior. By accepting all our sins in the Jordan River through His baptism, He took away all the sins we commit throughout our entire lifetime all at once. He bore not only your sins but also all the sins of both your ancestors and your descendants, and having died on the Cross and risen up from the dead, has saved us perfectly. If you believe that Jesus Christ is your Savior, then you will be saved from sin and also receive eternal life.

Who grants us everlasting life? It is Jesus Christ who grants it. God the Father has granted to us eternal life, and so if anyone believes in Jesus Christ, he will be saved from sin, receive everlasting life and become God's own child. In other words, Jesus gives the right to attain everlasting life to any genuine believer. God has given today's Scripture passage to

us so that we would realize all these things.

Have You Thought about the God-Given Everlasting Life?

The God-given everlasting life refers to immortal life. It brings so much encouragement to those who believe in the Word of God. My fellow believers, what greater blessing is there than to believe in Jesus Christ, receive the remission of sins and obtain everlasting life? If we believe that we will never die but live forever once our Lord returns, there can be no greater blessing or peace in this world. The Lord said that He overcame this world to give peace to us. I admonish you therefore to remember that it is by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit which the Lord fulfilled for us by overcoming the world, that eternal life is granted.

When someone dies, he is cut off completely from the world. No matter how rich and opulent he may



have been on this earth, nothing belongs to him anymore once he is dead. That's why the Lord told us not to labor for food that perishes, but to save souls. He told us to labor to lead souls to receive the remission of sins, and to enable them to become God's own people and to receive everlasting life.

We are too preoccupied with our own carnal affairs right now, and so we may not understand what is meant by the work of saving souls. What did our Lord say about this issue? Let's turn to John 17:3: *"This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent."* The Bible says here that the way for us to attain everlasting life is to know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom God the Father sent. The phrase "the only true God" here means that there is no other divine being than our God. Even though people believe in different deities each on his own, only God the Father is the true God. That is why the Apostles said that the way to receive everlasting life is realizing who the real God is and knowing Jesus

Christ, the only begotten Son of God.

Jesus Christ came to this earth with three offices that is, the King, the High Priest and the Prophet, and He knew all about us as God, as well as the High Priest of the Kingdom of Heaven and the Prophet. In other words, the Lord knew that we as mankind were born as piles of sins destined for hell because of these sins. That is why Jesus had to bear all our sins on His own body and be condemned to death on the Cross in our place. We must take this Truth of how Jesus saved us to the depths of our hearts. We must realize that Jesus Christ is the High Priest of the Kingdom of Heaven and the Prophet who knows all about us.

Like this, the Bible says that eternal life is about knowing the only true God and Jesus Christ who was sent by Him. The way for us as mankind to attain everlasting life is to know God, and to know Jesus Christ who was sent by God the Father, and to know and believe that when Christ came to this earth He shouldered all our sins by being baptized for our sake, died on the Cross, and rose up from the dead. By



truly believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit we will receive the remission of our sins from Jesus, and receive a blessedly attained eternal life.

Those Who Truly Have Eternal Life

The Bible says that it is appointed by God for everyone to be born once and die once, and then to face judgment. So we see that human beings are so feeble that their existence is insignificant. Yet even though you are such weak beings, if you should come to know and believe in God and Jesus Christ while still living on this earth, and thus receive the remission of your sins, you will then obtain this blessed eternal life. All the riches, glory and happiness of Heaven will then be yours. This is not a fictitious story from some fairy tale or movie, but it is a completely biblical fact.

Just as the Old Testament tells us that everyone is made in the likeness of the image of God. This

implies that it is possible for human beings to live with God. Although man is a creation, he is clearly different from animals or anything else in the world. Every human being can live forever enjoying glory and splendor with God, and everyone is an honorable being that can rule over all creatures created by God. Therefore, we ought to think about whether we ourselves really have eternal life or not, and if not we must seek to obtain this everlasting life by first understanding and then believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

How about you then? Have you received eternal life through the gospel of the water and the Spirit? If your answer is yes, then the next thing you need to think about is how you should live from now on. Having attained everlasting life, we must preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to everyone so that others may also receive this eternal life. We need to know that all our human effort to try to live virtuously on this earth is of the flesh. To live virtuously is only elementary. If you have indeed



received the remission of sins, then you must preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit so that others would also receive the remission of sins. This is the most virtuous deed. You and I were born again to do this good work (Ephesians 2:10). You and I must carry out this work without fail. Teaching others what Jesus has done for us is what is meant by bearing witness of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We have the calling to devote all our lives to this work of spreading the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the entire world.

When we look outside we can hear the sounds of the approaching spring. Forsythias, azaleas and magnolias are all in full blossom, boasting their beauty. One thing that makes Chuncheon City such an attractive place is that every house has roses blossoming and you see flowers everywhere, from magnolias to forsythias. When spring comes to the City which is surrounded by so many flowering trees, every alley and lane is filled with sweet aromas. I am particularly fond of lilacs; it's said that you can smell

its aroma miles away. I love lilacs so much that whenever I come across them in someone else's garden, I remember how in the past I could not resist but sneak around and cut them to take them to my home. But every flower is so pretty and beautiful. The wonderful spring filled with blossoming flowers is now upon us. I therefore ask you to also open your eyes and heart, and to submerge yourself in the God-given beauty of nature.

My fellow believers, as well as giving us such natural surroundings, the Lord has also given us blessed eternal life. So until the day the Lord returns, we will continue to live as those who have already attained everlasting life. It's in human nature to be impatient, and so we sometimes struggle with what's right in front of our eyes, but if we want to achieve great things, we must look far into the future and act with long-term goals in mind. What would happen if a marathon runner ran fast and furious like a short sprinter? He would collapse in the middle of the race without even completing the run.

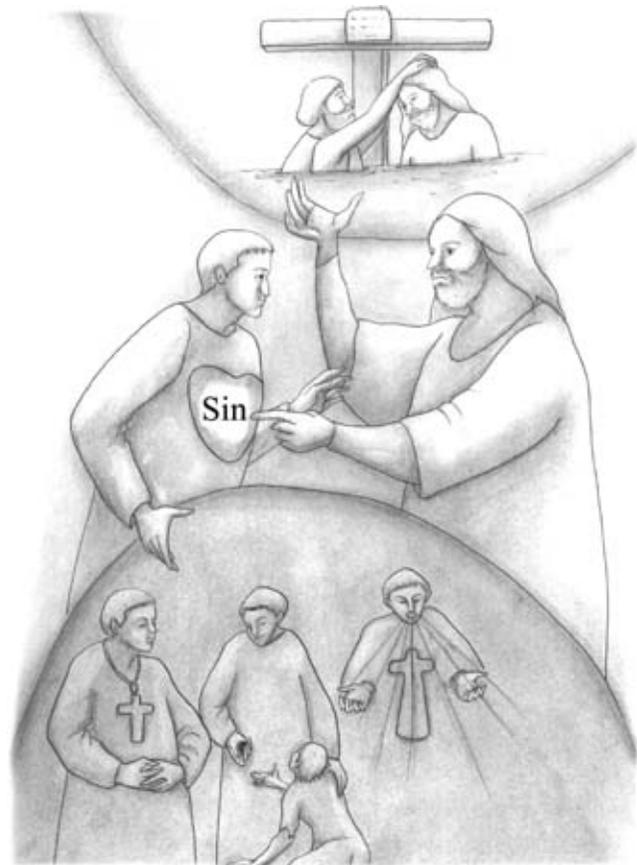


Life is like a marathon runner. If one has begun the race as a marathon runner, then he must complete the race even if he comes in last. Just like this example of a marathon runner, those of us who have attained everlasting life must fulfill and carry out the work of spreading the gospel of the water and the Spirit until the very end, so that many others would also receive everlasting life. ☒



SERMON

3



Do Not Consider It A Great Thing To Persecute Jesus

< John 18:12-24 >

“Then the detachment of troops and the captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound Him. And they led Him away to Annas first, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas who was high priest that year. Now it was Caiaphas who advised the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people. And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple. Now that disciple was known to the high priest, and went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest. But Peter stood at the door outside. Then the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to her who kept the door, and brought Peter in. Then the servant girl

who kept the door said to Peter, ‘You are not also one of this Man’s disciples, are you?’ He said, ‘I am not.’ Now the servants and officers who had made a fire of coals stood there, for it was cold, and they warmed themselves. And Peter stood with them and warmed himself. The high priest then asked Jesus about His disciples and His doctrine. Jesus answered him, ‘I spoke openly to the world. I always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where the Jews always meet, and in secret I have said nothing. Why do you ask Me? Ask those who have heard Me what I said to them. Indeed they know what I said.’ And when He had said these things, one of the officers who stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, ‘Do You answer the high priest like that?’ Jesus answered him, ‘If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why do you strike Me?’ Then Annas sent Him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.”



This summer is expected to go through some extreme fluctuations in weather patterns due to the abnormal climatical changes caused by the green house effect. Although the world is filled with such worrisome developments, I am sure that everything we do will go well, for God is truly with us.

Picking up the thread from this mornings sermon, I would like to continue to share with you this evening about the suffering Jesus faced. It is written in John 18:12-14, *“Then the detachment of troops and the captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound Him. And they led Him away to Annas first, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas who was high priest that year. Now it was Caiaphas who advised the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.”* The passage here explains that a Roman captain, along with his troops and the officers of the Jews, arrested Jesus and took him to Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas who was the High Priest for that year.

We come across countless events while reading

the Bible, but when we look at the latter days of Jesus’ life, we see that they were filled with drastic events, from being violently arrested to being judged unfairly and despised, dying on the Cross, and rising up from the dead. Although Jesus ended His 33 years of life on this earth in this way, He left us with a promise that He would return again after ascending to the Kingdom of Heaven.

Some faithless people may think on account of today’s Scripture passage that Jesus was dragged like a common criminal because He was somehow powerless. So these people feel sorry for Jesus and believe in Him out of pity. In some ways, the opponents of Jesus who delivered Him to death who denounced and accused Him of wrongdoings, and persecuted and killed Him might seem as though they were men of great power. They did act as if they had the world under their thumbs, as though they had some great privileges. But in reality, they failed to realize that the day of suffering and judgment was waiting for all those who persecuted Jesus, tormented



His disciples and arrogantly thought themselves to be powerful men.

John 18:19 says, *“The high priest then asked Jesus about His disciples and His doctrine.”* This passage means that those bent on murdering Jesus were trying to frame Him. So they asked Jesus, “What did you teach?” Jesus then answered them by saying, “I spoke everything openly without hiding anything. I taught in synagogues with many people gathered around, and so if you want to know about my teachings, ask them. They know what I said.” An unscrupulous man standing next to the High Priest then struck Jesus and scolded Him by saying, “How dare You answer the High Priest like that?” Jesus then said, *“If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why do you strike me?”*

A man named Annas appears in today’s Scripture passage, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas the High Priest for that year. So not just the High Priest but even his father-in-law possessed a great deal of power, to the extent that the troops, the captain and

the officers of the Jews bound Jesus and dragged him to Annas to be judged.

It Is the Powerful in This World Who Persecuted Jesus the Most

In this present age, it is those professing to believe in Jesus who have turned into His persecutors and are acting as though they are men of great power. These people are not in a position to be persecuted, but are positioned as persecutors. But we must realize that they are not in a place at all to persecute Jesus, to strike Him, to stand against Him, or to denounce Him. It is a great mistake for these people to act as though they are somehow privileged, aristocratic and powerful. They must realize their proper place. They should not think that they can somehow avoid the judgment of God. Non-Christians are prone to think that they have some sort of power over Christians, but this is definitely not the case.



Those who do not believe in Jesus nor in the gospel of the water and the Spirit should realize that it is not because they are more powerful, smarter, more talented or more gifted than the believers that they are positioned as persecutors. In reality, they are far worse than the believers. Yet they think that they have all the power, but this is a great mistake. When Jesus proclaimed that everyone should be saved by believing in Him as the Savior, He never meant this as a begging. Rather, He said this for our own good. He said it so that people would be saved from sin, receive eternal life and be delivered from the judgment. All those who think that it's a great prerogative not to believe are nothing more than fools.

Some people think that because they don't believe in God, God would somehow be troubled by this, and since they can persecute the believers, they think they have a great deal of power. But when looked through spiritual eyes, it is the completely opposite. If they knew the punishment that awaits them for not

believing in God, they would not be laughing and sneering at all. In reality, it is God, His Son Jesus Christ, and those of us who believe in this Jesus Christ that have the real power. It is we the believers in the gospel of the water and the Spirit who have everlasting life, have received the remission of sins, and are the truly privileged, and are God's people and His servants that have received His special love and salvation.

Yet many people still refuse to believe in Jesus and persecute Him instead, asking to be cursed out of their own volition. Even though Jesus the Almighty has compassion for them and puts up with their antics so that they would be saved from sin by faith, these people don't realize this and so by doing this are standing against Him. They think, "They are bothered so much because of my refusal to believe. What should I do? Should I believe now, or wait a bit longer? I think I will hold out a bit more just to give them more trouble, and then believe." But such thoughts are nothing more than self-conceited



delusion.

Would anyone mentioned in today's Scripture passage who persecuted Jesus, from the High Priest to his father-in-law, the Roman soldiers and the Jewish officer, ever escape from their judgment and suffering? No, all these people were destined to face even more terrifying judgment and punishment. They were arrogant only because they did not know the terrible judgment that was waiting for them. Such people should realize that they are still alive only because the One with the real power, the truly Almighty One, has patience and is waiting for them to turn around.

Who can dare to persecute Jesus? Who can dare to persecute those who believe in Jesus? It's only because the Almighty God who has all the power and authority is tolerating them with patience waiting for these sinners to have a chance to repent and turn around. When this last chance is thus given, they should realize the mercy of God and His love and power, and they should submit before Him.

One Should Not Misconceive

No one should think that it is somehow a great prerogative to persecute Jesus and His believers. Such people should realize that they have absolutely no authority to do this. And they must turn around.

Take a look at this world. There is no need to look any farther than your own family, relatives and close friends. Don't these unbelievers act as if they had a great deal of power? They sometimes treat Christians as though it is a great sin to believe in Jesus. Even though they have not been harmed by any Christians at all, they often treat them as if the believers have wronged them. What wrong have the people of faith ever done to them? Yet they still act as though it is their duty to insult the believers gratuitously, stand against and persecute them, as if they have the right to oppose them. These people must turn around as soon as possible, realizing that they will face the terrifying judgment of God. They must realize who they really are and believe in Jesus. They must step



inside the blessed Kingdom of the Son of God by faith.

Many people have misunderstood Jesus, thinking that since He was crucified for sinful human beings, He will love them always no matter what. But the reality is so very different. Although Jesus does love them, when they challenge the Lord to such an intolerable extent, even His unconditional love becomes exhausted.

First Thessalonians clearly states that God will judge both the believers and the unbelievers. Jesus said that He would deal with those who don't believe in God according to their faithlessness. He will judge the unbelievers according to their unbelief, and for those who don't believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit even though they know it, He will also judge them exactly according to their sins. There is a Korean proverb that goes, "A mere puppy is unafraid of a tiger." As this proverb says, many people are so ignorant of themselves that they arrogantly stand up against God and His Anointed by saying; *"Let us*

break their bonds in pieces and cast away their cords from us" (Psalm 2:3). But God who sits in the heavens will laugh at them, for it is so ridiculous that such weak beings would dare to challenge Him, the Omnipotent (Psalm 2:4).

As Jesus endured His suffering, His persecutors were triumphant as though they had some sort of power over Him, but the reality was very different. These people were truly foolish. I admonish you to realize that it's because Jesus is love that He is willing to forgive sinners and patiently waits for them to turn around. You have to grasp here that those who have as yet not been born again cannot stand against the truly born-again. The born-again can easily defeat 10,000 people who have not been born again. With their faith and wisdom, and not fists, they can withstand a million non-believers, and even hundreds of millions. Yet despite this, those who have not been born again of water and the Spirit, the foolish ones who have no virtue at all, are still living in self-conceit today, just as they had done so in the



past.

Is there anything to learn from Annas, Caiaphas or Judas here? There is nothing virtuous about someone who betrays his own teacher for 30 pieces of silver! On human ethical grounds alone, even those who have not been remitted from sin would not do what Judas did. Jesus had taken Judas under His wings and taught him precious truths, fed him and clothed him. It's simply unthinkable for anyone to betray such a teacher.

What about the chief priests then? They thought of themselves as powerful men, but what authority did they really have? At that time, the office of the High Priest was rotated on a yearly basis. The first High Priest of this earth was Aaron, and the last earthly High Priest of mankind was his descendant John the Baptist. The real earthly High Priest is John the Baptist, and the heavenly High Priest is Jesus alone. Real authority belongs to them. The false ones may seem to possess authority, but if you look more closely, it is all nothing more than a lie. As the

Passion Week is upon us, those who are persecuting and threatening Christians must look back, ask themselves on what authority they are doing these things, and repent from their wicked ways.

Those Who Persecute Jesus Must Contemplate Their Behavior

In my own household, many of my relatives think ill of me. Even though I have never done anything to deserve this, which is how I have often been treated after believing in the Lord.

I had been taking care of my nephews, but after I met the Lord, I could no longer help them. I just could not find the means to take care of them as I was trying to serve the Lord faithfully. To help them, I had to make money, but this left me with little time to serve the Lord. Even before that, I couldn't help them as much as I wanted to as I was not a rich man, but I still thought that I did my best.



When I met the Lord, and I could no longer help my nephews as I had to serve the gospel, and because of this my relatives blamed me. They tarnished me with so many accusations and made me look like such a bad person, but when I listened to what they were saying, much of it was just unreasonable. Many times I wondered to myself what it was that I had done to them to deserve to hear such nasty words. Everything I had done to help my nephews, they considered it only as a rightful duty. And now that I was no longer able to help them, my relatives thought that I was doing something scandalously inappropriate. So I was deeply distressed, feeling that all my previous efforts were in vain.

My family members thought that I was making a lot of money. In general, pastors in Korea are paid quite well. Most of them get paid several thousand dollars a month at least, and in some large churches, it's not unusual for the monthly salary to exceed \$10,000. If I did not help my nephews even as I was living in luxury, then that would have been wrong.

But the reality was I did not have any money to help them. Whatever money I had, it had to be spent to serve the gospel. My relatives gave me much grief, saying that I was not helping my nephews even as I was ministering as a pastor.

But I did not consider their treatment regrettable. No matter how harshly they criticized me, I told them that whatever money I had, I would spend it all to serve God. You probably have some relatives like mine; you probably have some relatives who treat you as though you were doing something grievously wrong, stand up against you and persecute you, just because you believe in Jesus. But we have done nothing wrong to them. On the contrary, it is these very people who don't believe in Jesus is what is wrong. Yet sadly, we are treated as though we have done something greatly wrong.

It's not just families and relatives, but friends can also persecute you. Have you not felt that your friends are ignoring you and mocking you for no other reason than the fact that you believe in Jesus?



Some of my friends even tried to force me to drink liquor when I told them that I believed in the Lord. I once told such friends that if they really wanted to, they could try to force me to swallow even a single drop of liquor. I said to them, “If I swallow even a single drop, I will give up my faith in Jesus and follow you for the rest of my life to torment you. So if that’s what you want, pour that drink over me! What’s so wrong to believe in Jesus?”

Many people mistakenly think that Christians should be persecuted and oppressed. They have this misconceived idea that Christians must be trampled upon time after time like worms. They think, “Since I don’t believe in Jesus, they are begging me to believe even though I am persecuting them. They will beg even more if I continue to persecute them.”

But that is a mistaken notion. Who should be begging whom? Jesus is the Savior, while we were sinners. We were all destined to be judged and cast into everlasting destruction. So who can be confident and before whom? Sinners are in no position to be

confident in themselves, but rather to beg for their salvation. Yet despite this, some of them still judge on their own fallacious thoughts and persecute Christians. This is completely wrong. They are the ones who must repent.

The World Must Indeed Kneel before Us

The world must kneel before us who have the true faith in God. Sinners must beg us to teach them the Truth. They must ask us not to forsake them. That’s because if we forsake them, they will face destruction for sure. But we have not forsaken them. What is tragic is that they just don’t know the Lord who has saved us. That is why we must spread this good news to the world. Because we are indebted to Jesus for His love, we have the duty to do so. No matter what kind of persecution we face, we must realize that people persecute us not because they have the right to



do so, nor because we deserve to be persecuted, but because they do not realize what they are doing. We must therefore carry out our work unwaveringly and preach the gospel even to them. We must continue to shout to the world to believe in Jesus.

There are some people who condescend on us just because we have faith in God. There is no need for us to show humility to such people. It is not wrong to believe in Jesus. On the contrary, what is wrong is the mindset of those who are persecuting us the true believers in Jesus, they mistakenly thinking that they are powerful. Tragically, even many Christians in the world still have this mindset and actually act like this. When such people become afraid of their judgment, they suddenly claim to believe in Jesus, singing hymns and hanging a cross around their necks. But to call on the name of Jesus and believe in Him only out of convenience is not really knowing and believing in Jesus as one's Savior. To know and believe that Jesus has saved us through the gospel of the water and the Spirit is to truly believe in Jesus.

But many non-believers including nominal Christians don't even want to find out about this, and instead try to find fault with everything we do.

There have always been people like this, now as in the past. The people of the world during the age of the Roman Empire persecuted Christians to the extremes. The cruelty of this persecution was beyond description. The Roman Empire that had ruled the world with its secular power was corrupted from within, and it eventually came across a crossroads facing its ruin. It then accepted Christianity that it had persecuted until then as the state religion. It did so because it thought the only way to ensure its survival was to accept Christians and their faith and way of this life.

Constantine the Great was the one who adopted this policy. When the Roman Empire fragmented into the Eastern Roman Empire and the Western Roman Empire, the Romans declared Christianity as their state religion and sought to reform, but ultimately it was destroyed mainly by itself. But despite this the



Roman Catholic Church survived and it could only secure a small state called Vatican City that is now ruled by the Pope. Although the Roman Empire has disappeared, Catholicism itself is still deeply rooted in every corner of the world.

The persecutors of Christians speak as though they have some great power, but in reality there is no one who is higher than Jesus. Jesus is the Master of you and me and of the entire universe, and at the same time He is the Judge. It is preposterous for any human being, who is no more than a creature, to boast of himself before the Creator and the Savior and to persecute those who believe in Jesus Christ.

Just because Jesus was crucified, do you think that Jesus is someone who always endures suffering? Do you think that now that He rose up from the dead after being crucified to death, He is somehow begging you to believe in Him? Do you think Jesus is thirsting after our love, as though He does not have enough love? No, if that's how you think of God, you are completely mistaken. Jesus, who is God, is the

merciful One who has fulfilled our salvation for our sake, He is telling us to believe in this for our own good, and He is pointing out the way of salvation for us. He is the Truth. He alone is the Truth. Yet despite this the people of this world think that they are the ones with the power, and they feel that it is their right to persecute Jesus and His believers, as though they owe something to them. This is a completely mistaken and misguided thought, one that is turned upside down.

A while ago, some people wanted to use our church building to hold a community meeting. They could not find a large enough space to hold the meeting, and so they wanted to borrow our church. But I told them to make use of the community center or look for a bigger church. Nowadays church buildings are often used for purposes other than worship for the wider community under the banner of "open church." Churches have opened up so much that some of them even allow youths to hold secular concerts. But I can never allow this to happen. How



dare they come to the place of worship and smoke and dance here?

Many people think that Christians are obligated to do something for them, but if there is anything that we owe them, it is only that we preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to them. We have no other obligations. You have to realize this clearly. There is no reason for us to lower ourselves before the worldly people, nor do we have any duty or any favor to them. Our only hope is for them to be saved by God; we have no other duty to them.

Jesus Is Not Someone Who Perpetually Endures Suffering

Those who do not know Jesus or refuse to know or believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit are no better than beasts. The Bible says that even though human beings are precious, those who don't realize their own preciousness are like the beasts that

perish (Psalm 49:20).

As the Passion Week draws upon us, I would like to tell you that Jesus is not someone who perpetually endures suffering. Although Jesus died on the Cross, He rose from the dead and bore witness to us for 40 days. Even while He was on this earth, He said, "I will give up my life for you. The Shepherd will sacrifice Himself for the flock." It's not because our Lord was powerless that He died on the Cross. He did not beg anyone to believe in Him so that He could expand His influence. The Lord is the righteous and just King of kings, and He is the only Supreme Being.

When Jesus was baptized, He said to John the Baptist, "*Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness*" (Matthew 3:15). Here the word "thus" in Greek is "οὕτως" (*hutos*), which means "just in this way," "most fitting," or "there is no other way besides this." And 'all righteousness' in Greek is "πάσαν δικαιοσύνην" (*pasan dikaiosunen*), which means the fairest state



that has no defect at all. This word in the ‘original Bible text’ shows us that Jesus took the sins of humankind onto Himself irreversibly in the most proper way through the baptism He received from John the Baptist. In short, Jesus has saved us justly and fairly. Because of our sins, we had to die, but to save people like us, Jesus had to come to this earth incarnated in the flesh, and accepted all the sins of the world by being baptized, and was ultimately crucified. He has saved us by dying in our place. None other than this is the righteousness and justice of Jesus. He has saved us justly and righteously. Above all else this is the Truth that I want to proclaim throughout the whole world.

If you don’t realize this Truth, and don’t believe in Jesus Christ who came by the gospel of the water and the Spirit, then don’t delude yourself into thinking that you have some sort of power. If you do this the day will surely come soon when you beat your chest in regret.

There Is No Time for Bravado

Time goes by so fast that a week passes by in the blink of an eye. Today is the Lord’s Day and tomorrow is Monday, but Saturday will come around in no time. Doesn’t time fly by like this? That is why time is said to pass by like a river. With time passing by like this, the day will soon come when we will all stand before the throne of God’s judgment. No one can stop the passing of time. Therefore what is really important for us is how well we use this passing time and its hours.

Do you have any time to live in bravado? Is there any time for anyone to pretend to have the power that he doesn’t have? Even though we have received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, there still are many people who do not believe in this gospel. Those who have been born again through the gospel of the water and the Spirit are making the most of the rapidly passing time and using it for worthwhile causes. In contrast, those



who have not been born again are wasting their time only to persecute the born-again, and they are living in false bravado pretending to be powerful. But there is no time for them to put on such bravado.

As time passes us by, December will come and go, and soon 2008 will be upon us. A sister at our Church moved here from Seoul as soon as she graduated from high school. I still remember when she came here just after graduating, but time has gone by so fast that she will turn 30 next year. That's how fast time goes by.

Even though everyone knows how fast time flies, not everyone realizes that he is living with some imaginary power that he doesn't actually have. Everyone must therefore be freed from such delusions, realize that they will be judged unless they believe truly in Jesus, turn around and have faith in Him. People must become 'servants of the gospel' rather than its persecutors, obey God rather than disobeying Him, live by their faith in Jesus rather than trusting in their own power, and change their

mindsets so as to live for the benefit of others rather than just for themselves. Don't you all agree?

My fellow believers, even if you believe in Jesus, you cannot achieve anything if you live just yourself. In contrast, if you live for the benefit of others, there will be so much that you can accomplish. Those, who have been truly born again through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, live to serve the Lord and His gospel instead of serving themselves; that is why they have so much work to do. If our workers in Korea were left alone, they will all fizzle away. We have to come up with opportunities for them to work. This too is serving the Lord.

Some people think that since I am a pastor, I only want to be served. But whenever our workers are gathered together I always tell them, "Is it you who are serving me, or is it I who is serving you? Am I making a living on your backs? Or are all of us living united together?" I ask them these questions clearly. Just as you are a servant of the gospel, so am I a servant of the gospel. In other words, we the



righteous are all serving the gospel in God; none of us is living off someone else's labor and trying to be served. All of us the righteous are living to serve the gospel. For me to entrust you with various tasks and making it possible for you to labor is my way of serving the Lord. This is how I serve the Lord because that's what I am able to do, and you are also serving the Lord from your assigned position with your heart, your time and your body.

What all of us must grasp clearly here is that sinners have no power. Those who have not been born again have no power at all. Yet even so, they still put on air pretending to be powerful. Such people are like those who persecuted Jesus in His days. Do you think that there will be no judgment for such people? Do you think that those who don't believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit will be able to escape from God's judgment? No, the Lord said that He will pay them back by a ten thousand-fold. He said that He will cast them into the everlasting fire of hell. Therefore, all those who act

as though they are powerful even as they have not been born again must repent as soon as possible. Those who arrogantly flaunt themselves with money will suffer under the weight of their money without fail.

To disbelieve is not a privilege. To believe is the real privilege and power. The greatest misconception that people around the whole world have is the notion that it is somehow their own privilege and authority that they don't believe in Jesus as their Savior. This is an utterly fallacious idea. God said clearly that He will cast out into fire all those who don't believe in Him. He made clear that those who did not believe in Him would be destroyed. It is God's just judgment that such people should suffer. The peoples of the world must realize this fact. Those who are deluded into thinking that they have some sort of power must now come to face their actual situation and repent before those who have the authority of God.

As the Passion Week draws upon us, I would like to emphasize the following point one more time:



There are so many people who have gone astray in this world that we must have compassion for them and preach the gospel to them. They have nothing in reality. Yet they don't even realize this, and so they live on mere bravado. We must let them know this fact clearly. If your family members, relatives or friends persecute you, mock you and try to dominate over you as though they have all the power, I want you to let them know what their actual circumstances are and what their future will be. Teach them that anyone who does not believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit will face the just judgment of the Lord and be cursed to receive the everlasting punishment of the fire of hell.

Teach them also that if they believe in the power of God and the gospel of the water and the Spirit, they will receive great blessings. Help them realize how they have been bluffing all this time, and make them recognize that persecuting Jesus and His believers is not a great prerogative. It is our duty as the born-again to preach the gospel of the water and

the Spirit to them, and to thus enable them to be truly saved and enjoy the real power. ☒



SERMON

4



Contents



Jesus the Savior and Our King

< John 18:25-40 >

“Now Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. Therefore they said to him, ‘You are not also one of His disciples, are you?’ He denied it and said, ‘I am not!’ One of the servants of the high priest, a relative of him whose ear Peter cut off, said, ‘Did I not see you in the garden with Him?’ Peter then denied again; and immediately a rooster crowed. Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the Praetorium, and it was early morning. But they themselves did not go into the Praetorium, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover. Pilate then went out to them and said, ‘What accusation do you bring against this Man?’ They answered and said to him, ‘If He were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered Him up

to you.’ Then Pilate said to them, ‘You take Him and judge Him according to your law.’ Therefore the Jews said to him, ‘It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death,’ that the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled which He spoke, signifying by what death He would die. Then Pilate entered the Praetorium again, called Jesus, and said to Him, ‘Are You the King of the Jews?’ Jesus answered him, ‘Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning me?’ Pilate answered, ‘Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered you to me. What have you done?’ Jesus answered, ‘My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here.’ Pilate therefore said to Him, ‘Are you a king then?’ Jesus answered, ‘You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My



voice.’ Pilate said to Him, ‘What is truth?’ And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, ‘I find no fault in Him at all. But you have a custom that I should release someone to you at the Passover. Do you therefore want me to release to you the King of the Jews?’ Then they all cried again, saying, ‘Not this Man, but Barabbas!’ Now Barabbas was a robber.”

How have you all been? I had been in Sokcho City and have just returned today. Even though Sokcho City is not that far away from here, I feel as though I had been away to a distant land. If I stay away from the Church even for just a week, I think I will feel as though I were away for several years. But I have had a safe trip and I am now back here in good health. I trust that you have also been doing fine. Perhaps it’s because we have much work ahead of us, but I can see that we are all more energetic than ever.

There is a flu virus going around these days, and

so I want you all to take good care of yourselves. But the flu virus is not the only problem facing us, but many economic and political problems are plaguing our country. It’s not just Korea but the entire world is facing numerous problems. Nevertheless, even though the world is in turmoil, we the preachers of the gospel must always be energetic as we are now.

The World Is in Turmoil

It’s said that the Iraqi terrorists will likely expand their activities into Europe. All around the world, there have been more and more terrorist attacks. Recently, a book written by a former official from the Bush administration has become so popular in the United States that it is making news even here in Korea. One of the issues addressed in the book is on terrorism. According to this book, al-Qaeda terrorists had warned the United States of an impending terrorist attack three months before the 9/11 attack.



But President Bush ignored al-Qaeda's warning for three months, and the 9/11 terrorist attack indeed unfolded as was predicted. After the attacks, the only person that concentrated on al-Qaeda was Secretary of State Collin Powell, while everyone else including Bush had their sights set on somewhere else. The administration officials were singularly focused on invading Iraq and removing Saddam Hussein's regime. The author of this book lambastes Bush as a man of low intelligence with a two-digit IQ.

Although the United States claims to the whole world that it does not seek war, the bottom line is that the United States started the Iraqi War, and this war has incensed the Islamic world even more. As a result of this world is now in an even greater danger of terrorist attacks. One of the thorniest issues for the Islamic world is the Palestinian issue and the American support of Israel. The Palestinians that Israel attacks are actually very poor, powerless and armed with little else than rifles. That's why they have come to increasingly rely on terrorist

organizations to stand up against Israel and the United States. So in some ways, it is the United States and Israel that have bred the terrorists that they are fighting now. As the United States invaded Iraq and brought destruction to that land, it has led many Iraqis to resent the American occupation and incited even more terrorist attacks.

I told you at the beginning of the sermon that there is a high probability of terrorist attacks occurring in Western Europe. If this happens, it may become difficult to send our books to Europe, and so we need to pray over this issue. Every time we gather together, we have to pray ceaselessly to God to prevent terrorist attacks, protect our literature ministry, and bless our books to save many souls all over the world.

Throughout the world, nationalism is also on a rise. That's why nations are increasingly standing against other nations and countries against countries. This present age in which we are now living is filled with much sorrowful news of terrorism and war. But the nearing end of the end of the world is not such a



bad thing for us, for it would usher in the new heavens and the new earth faster.

Scientists are saying that there is some evidence indicating that water had existed on Mars. Why do you suppose they keep investigating other planets and trying to ascertain whether they have similar environments as the planet earth? It's because subconsciously, they want to leave this planet earth that is becoming increasingly inhospitable. However, my fellow believers, we should live by faith waiting for the end times as promised by our Lord, rather than looking for a new planet to live on. Just as the Lord promised to give us a new kingdom, on the day our Lord returns, we will indeed enter that kingdom and live there in peace. For us who are living in the harsh reality of the present age, our great hope is the Millennial Kingdom that awaits us, and the new heavens and the new earth that will be opened for us. By this hope our troubled minds are put to rest.

I've been informed that the sermon book series on the Gospel of Matthew will be completely translated

by the 10th of this month. I've also been told that only one sermon needs to be translated before the sermon book series on the Gospel of John is completed. Half the sermons on Galatians were passed on to be translated, while the other half is in my hands. Once the remaining sermons are revised and handed over for translation, they will be published as the first volume on Galatians. I need to work even harder and prepare its second volume. Although I am very busy from all this work, I am very happy for it. So even though I have much work to do, I can do it with a joyful and willing heart.

After Being Interrogated, Jesus Was Taken to the Palace of Pilate the Roman Governor

Today's Scripture passage comes from John 18:25-45. In Israel at that time the office of the High Priest was rotated once a year, and in that year



Caiaphas was the High Priest. Jesus was first taken to Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas, and from there He was taken to Caiaphas. The people of Israel put a great deal of emphasis on various festivities, not to mention the Sabbath Day. As a matter of fact, Jesus was arrested and interrogated just when such a feast was at hand, at the very night before the Passover Day after He had the Last Supper with His disciples.

After being interrogated at Caiaphas' residence, Jesus was once again taken to the Praetorium, the palace of Governor Pilate. To keep the statutes of the Passover, the Jews did not enter the Praetorium, and so Pilate came out and asked them, "What accusations do you bring against this Man? What crime has He committed that you have brought Him to me?" The people of Israel then said, "If He were not an evildoer, we would not have brought Him to you. He is a sinner, an extremely evil Man. He is a violent Man who has committed many sins." Pilate then asked the Jews again, "Then you take Him and judge Him yourselves." The Jews then said to Pilate,

"We have no authority to put anyone to death." They had brought Jesus to Pilate to put Him to death.

Pilate then entered the Praetorium again and then asked Jesus, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Since Pilate was the Roman Governor sent to rule over the colony, there was only one crime for which he could put Jesus to death: The only crime punishable to death was revolting against Rome and its emperor. If Jesus had claimed Himself to be the King of the Jews and incited the people of Israel to revolt, then his execution was justified. That's why Pilate asked Him, "*Are You the King of the Jews?*" (John 18:33) If Jesus said yes, then Pilate could just sentence Him to death without listening any further. Since there could be no two rulers in one country, if Jesus said that He was the King, this would have been a proper ground for Pilate to put Him to death according to the Roman laws.

Jesus then said to Pilate, "*Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning me?*" (John 18:34) Pilate answered, "Am



I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered you to me. What have you done?” Since Jesus was accused of claiming to be the King of the Jews, Pilate intended to judge Him on this accusation and sentence Him to death. But Jesus asked Pilate, *“Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning me?”*

What Jesus said here was not a clear answer to Pilate’s question. Instead, Jesus asked Pilate in return, “I did not say that I was the King of the Jews, and so is it not the people of Israel or you who are saying this?” Jesus did not fall into the cunning trap of Pilate. So Pilate said, “I am not a Jew. But your own people have delivered you to me. What is it that you have done for these people to bring accusations against you?”

Jesus Is the King of His Own Kingdom

Jesus had raised the dead, healed the sick and helped the poor. So on account of this, countless people were following Him. Many of these people wanted to take Jesus and literally make Him the King of Israel. But Jesus had absolutely no intention for this. He had helped people only out of His compassion. For the sake of a mother wailing over her dead child, He had put His hands on the casket and raised the child back to life, and He had healed the sick as they wished. All those who saw such miracles praised Jesus and follow Him around, and their number was very large.

To the chief priests and the Pharisees, the fact that Jesus had so many followers was a sore sight in their eyes. They thought that they themselves deserved to be so popular, and yet Jesus was stealing their thunder. So they came to agree that there was only way to put Jesus to death: Since many people were



trying to crown Jesus as the King, they decided to frame Him by accusing Him of calling Himself the King of Israel. It is on account of this accusation that Jesus was put to death, and that is why a sign saying “the King of the Jews” was put on the Cross when He was crucified. The Bible says that this sign was written in both Greek and Hebrew.

This is not an entirely wrong sign, for Jesus was indeed the spiritual King of the Jews. Not only for those who believe in Him, but also for the entire universe; the King of kings is none other than Jesus.

As Pilate interrogated Him, Jesus said, “*My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, my servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now my kingdom is not from here*” (John 18:36). “*Pilate therefore said to Him, ‘Are you a king then?’ Jesus answered, ‘You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice’*” (John 18:37).

As Pilate continued to interrogate Him on this accusation, Jesus spoke of something fundamental: “The kingdom you speak of is this tributary kingdom that belongs to the Roman Empire, but the Kingdom that I speak of is an entirely different kingdom. My Kingdom is not of this world. If My Kingdom were of this world, my servants would have fought to prevent me from being delivered to the Jews. No, My Kingdom is not of this world.”

Pilate therefore said to Him, “*Are you a king then?*” Jesus then answered, “*You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth.*” In other words, Jesus told Pilate that He was not a king of this world, but the King of His own Kingdom.

Jesus would be eventually crucified. Regardless of how He put it, He said that He was the King, and so He was found guilty of sedition. As there is a saying that goes, “All roads lead to Rome,” the Roman Emperor was the ruler over all the known world at



that time. Although Jesus said that He was the King of His Kingdom rather than a king of this world, this was still enough for the Romans to consider it an insult to their emperor. But Jesus was speaking of spiritual things and faith, not anything secular. Nevertheless, to placate the Jews, Pilate still extracted Jesus' confession saying that He was the King and then sentenced Him to death.

Jesus said, *"I have come to this earth to bear witness to the Truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice."* Pilate then said, *"What is truth?"* (John 18:38) He then went out to the Jews and said to them, "I have not found any fault with Him at all. This Man did not revolt to overthrow the Roman rule, and so He is innocent. You have a custom that I should release one prisoner at the Passover, and I think it is appropriate that this Man should be released." Pilate said this because he felt that Jesus was innocent even after interrogating Him. Since Jesus was not trying to make Himself an earthly king, but He said that His Kingdom was elsewhere, not of

this world, Pilate thought that His action was a matter of faith and spirituality, and so he wanted to release Him. Pilate then suggested to the Jews to release Jesus. But instead of Jesus, the Jews asked Pilate to release Barabbas, the robber of robbers and a real evildoer. In the end, according to their wishes, Jesus suffered death on the Cross while Barabbas, an evil man was released.

The gist of today's Scripture passage is the following: Jesus has His own Kingdom, the Kingdom of Heaven, and He is its King. Just as the Lord said that those who believe in this Truth hear His Word, we are now indeed listening to the Word of God and we also believe in this Word. Therefore, we are the people of our Lord Jesus Christ the King.

Jesus Came to This Earth to Testify the Truth

The Lord said that He came to this earth for the



sake of the Truth, and to bear witness of the Truth to us. Pilate did not realize what Jesus meant by this, and so he asked, “*What is truth?*” (*John 18:38*) In contrast to Pilate who was only interested in earthly affairs, Jesus was speaking about the things of Heaven rather than the things of this temporal world.

We must understand and believe in what Jesus said exactly as it is. Jesus came to this earth to save people and make them God’s people by testifying the Truth to them. We must all grasp clearly that Jesus came to this earth to do the righteous work of making us, mere creatures, His very own people and children, and to thus bear witness of the greatest Truth of all. Jesus Christ came to testify the Truth of salvation. He came to save us from sin and make us His people forever. The real Truth testified by Jesus is what makes it possible for us to become God’s people, and our status is elevated by this Truth. There is only one thing that is absolutely right: It is that Jesus has saved us from sin through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Jesus came to bear witness to this Truth, and

He is the One who has saved us by this Truth.

As Jesus said, “*You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free*” (*John 8:32*), this Truth has indeed saved us. None other than this is what all of us must know. That God has made us His people by blotting out all our sins—this is the Truth. Truth is something that is not false but real and genuine. The most righteous Truth of all truths is the gospel of the water and the Spirit through which the Lord has saved us. All of us must realize this.

Pilate asked Jesus what the Truth was. Born into this world as sinners, we could not help but perish for our sins, but the Lord became our true Savior. Jesus has given us real life and true salvation through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. So it was a foolish question for Pilate to ask what the Truth was. Even though he heard Jesus speaking to him personally, he did not grasp the Truth. Jesus said, “*My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, my servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now my kingdom is not*



from here” (John 18:36). The Kingdom of the Lord indeed exists apart from this visible world.

People today live without giving much thought to why they were born, and for what they are living for, where they are going, and what the end result of their lives will be. But all of us, who were born in the likeness of God’s image, must realize what the real Truth is. What is really right? What should we believe in? What is the purpose of life? What is our relationship with Jesus? We should be thinking about these things.

As the colonial governor of Israel, Pilate was a man of great status. But despite this, Pilate did not know what was right and what was wrong. Even though he met Jesus in person and heard His Word, he still failed to understand Him to the end. The Bible says that those who are of God understand the Word of the Lord exactly as it is. Those who really recognize God believe in Him and follow Him—that is, those who want to follow the real Truth, the real life, the real righteousness and the real love—are able

to understand what the Lord said. What about you and me then? By believing in the gospel Truth of the water and the Spirit, we have become those who can understand everything the Lord said. That is because this Truth has brought us the everlasting life and the true remission of all our sins.

As I mentioned at the beginning of this sermon, the world is turning even more chaotic as terrorist attacks strike Europe and nationalists rise up throughout the world. But there is absolutely no need for us to be fearful, for we have the assurance that when the end of this world comes, the Lord our King will take us His people to the Kingdom of Heaven without fail.

Of course, there will still be some issues that concern us. I am concerned that it may become more difficult to spread the gospel because of this pending chaos. Can the gospel continue to be spread when the world is thrown into turmoil? What if our missionary work is interrupted? It’s true that we have such concerns. But even in these worries, we still wait for



the Lord's return in prayer and faith. When that time comes, I am sure that the Lord will take us to His Kingdom and make us happy and prosperous. Do you also have this kind of faith? If so, then you have no need to be too depressed over the sordid affairs of the world.

The Truth Is Attained by Believing in the Righteousness of God and His Love

As the Lord said, "*Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks*" (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18), we must indeed become such people. You and I were actually evildoers just like Barabbas. Born with twelve sins, we had committed sin every day. Yet despite this, the Lord has saved such people like us.

Turn to the first half of today's Scripture passage. It describes how Peter denied Jesus. When Jesus was

taken to the house of Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas the High Priest, Peter had followed Him from behind. Someone then recognized Peter and asked him, "Aren't you also one of Jesus' disciples?" Peter denied this, saying that he did not know Jesus. He was then asked for the second time, "Didn't I see you in the garden with His followers?" "I have nothing to do with Jesus," answered Peter.

Jesus is the Savior of such insufficient human beings. Knowing that Peter would do this, Jesus had washed his feet by saying to him, "You will deny me three times before the rooster crows." When Jesus wanted to wash Peter's feet, he had declined at first, saying to Him, "How can a teacher wash his disciples' feet? I can't let you do this." But Jesus told him forcefully, "Unless I wash your feet, you have nothing to do with me." Jesus knew all about what Peter would do. He knew very well that Peter would deny Him later on when facing difficulties. And just as Jesus had said, Peter denied Jesus three times before the rooster crowed.



All human beings are alike when looking at their acts. We were all like Barabbas. All of us were sinners. If people were judged by God every time they sinned, they would have had no choice but to be cursed and crucified like Barabbas a long time ago. However, the Lord said that those who are of the Truth hear His voice, and that He has saved such people. Therefore, it is right for you and me to believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit through which the Lord has truly saved all human beings from sin and made them God's people.

The Truth is in the righteousness of God and in His love as well. To know and believe that God truly loves us all, and that He has therefore blotted out all our sins with the gospel of the water and the Spirit, is to know and believe in the Truth. However, people do not realize this and keep asking what the Truth is, just like Pilate. They ask, "What is the way? Where is the road to Heaven? Where is the way to be washed from sin? Where is the path of virtuous living? What should we believe to really have proper

faith?" My fellow believers, the Truth is that God sent His Son Jesus to this earth out of His love for us and that He has remitted away our sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. To believe in this Truth is to receive the true love, the real everlasting life, the real life, the true remission of sin, and the true blessing. That God has blotted out all our sins with the gospel of the water and the Spirit out of His love for us, that He has made us His people and blessed us, that He has allowed us to live forever not just in this world but in the next world to come, and that He has prepared a kingdom for us to live—this power of God and His love constitute the real Truth.

My fellow believers, our lives do not just end in this world. It is written, "*And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment*" (*Hebrews 9:27*). Indeed, in not so distant future, all of us will die once and stand before the judgment throne of God. Do you also accept this? For those who are still young, it may be difficult to really appreciate that time will pass by and this day will



come soon, but that day is surely coming to everyone. Today is March 24, but soon it will be April and everything will come alive with the arrival of the spring. But just when we think that the spring is here, it won't be long before the summer comes, then the fall, and then the winter. Time indeed flies by in the blink of an eye; half a year will pass by in no time like this.

Let Us Labor for the Gospel

It is a blessing for us to labor for the Lord, for now is the time when we can still spread the gospel. Do you also agree with me?

Before, we could not help but ask about what the Truth was, but now we have met the Savior Lord who is the Truth. And we now know and believe that none other than this Truth is the love of God; that the gospel has blotted out all our sins, and that Jesus has fulfilled the Truth. Jesus indeed came to this earth,

saved us through the water and the Spirit, and testified to us that this salvation is the Truth. It is to bear witness of this Truth that Jesus came to this earth. And we have realized this Truth and we all believe in it.

Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the Truth? Do you believe that Jesus has blotted out all our sins with the gospel of the water and the Spirit? If so, then you have truly found the Truth. To give us our true salvation, the Lord came to this earth, was baptized, died on the Cross, and rose up from the dead in three days. It is such a wonderful and joyous event that it makes us grateful beyond words.

We must realize this true salvation and believe in it. By being baptized, Jesus took upon all our sins, and in order to be crucified, He allowed Himself to be arrested and taken to the palace of Pilate. You should realize here that it's not because Jesus was somehow powerless that He was arrested, but He allowed this to happen in order to save us. You and I must grasp clearly that after being crucified to death,



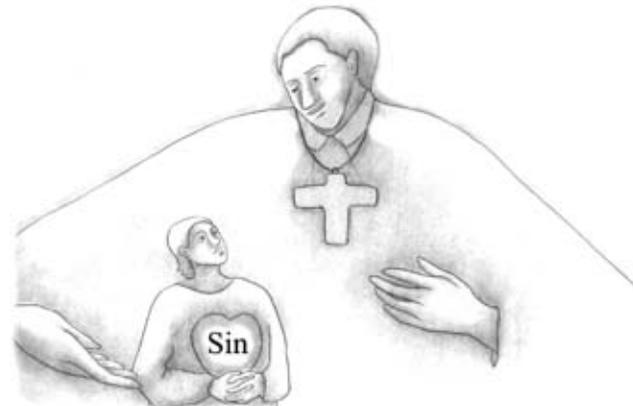
Jesus rose up from the dead and He has given us true salvation. Now, we must wholeheartedly believe in the salvation the Lord has fulfilled.

By this faith, we give all thanks and glory to our God for His infinite love. We thank Him for saving us. We give Him thanks from the depth of our hearts. Halleluiah! ☒



SERMON

5



Meditate on God's Truth

< John 18:28-40 >

“Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the Praetorium, and it was early morning. But they themselves did not go into the Praetorium, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover. Pilate then went out to them and said, ‘What accusation do you bring against this Man?’ They answered and said to him, ‘If He were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered Him up to you.’ Then Pilate said to them, ‘You take Him and judge Him according to your law.’ Therefore the Jews said to him, ‘It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death,’ that the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled which He spoke, signifying by what death He would die. Then Pilate entered the Praetorium again, called Jesus, and said to Him, ‘Are You the King of the Jews?’ Jesus answered him, ‘Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell

you this concerning Me?’ Pilate answered, ‘Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me. What have You done?’ Jesus answered, ‘My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here.’ Pilate therefore said to Him, ‘Are You a king then?’ Jesus answered, ‘You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.’ Pilate said to Him, ‘What is truth?’ And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, ‘I find no fault in Him at all. But you have a custom that I should release someone to you at the Passover. Do you therefore want me to release to you the King of the Jews?’ Then they all cried again, saying, ‘Not this Man, but Barabbas!’ Now Barabbas was a robber.”



We are leading very complicated lives in this world. We struggle with many issues, events, problems and the worries that arise from them to further complicate our lives. So when we worship God, we entrust our troubled minds to the Lord. It's a tough world out there. As there are so many complicated events happening, we are constantly worried and vexed. A human being is like a tree facing the wind. As a tree sways back and forth in different directions depending on which direction the wind blows, so does everyone also swing left and right depending on his circumstances, thoughts and environments. As everyone lives in this world, everyone is influenced by its affairs.

For example, when a businessman is preoccupied with his business, it's hard for him not to think about his business affairs even when he is in a worship service. The same goes for everyone else. Keeping one's faith is not such an easy thing. Nevertheless, we must calm our hearts and put all our worries to rest. Only when we clear our cluttered minds to rest

in peace can we truly worship God.

I know very well that just like me, when your mind is preoccupied with something serious, this worry is constantly hovering over your head. As you and I are living in this diverse and complex society that is changing all the time, our minds are very much crowded with many different issues. But in reality, it may be just our outlook that is complicated when the actual situation is not that complicated. After all, if the basic needs for clothing, food and housing are solved, the rest of the problems are not such big worries. Perhaps we humans are trying to solve the problem of basic needs in a needlessly complicated way when it could be solved rather easily and simply.

Nonetheless, I am fully aware how difficult and hard it is for you and me to defend our faith in these end times. But even so, we must lead our lives of faith unwaveringly, clearing our cluttered minds and surrendering them to the Lord, and always listening closely to the Truth of the water and the Spirit.



The Events That Occurred about 2,000 Years Ago

Today's Scripture passage describes the events that occurred about 2,000 years ago from now. After being arrested, Jesus was taken to Caiaphas, the High Priest at that time, and He was interrogated for His sins. But as we all know very well, Jesus had no sin. Yet the Jews still hated Him.

There is an old Korean saying that goes, "Shake anyone hard enough and you will find dust." Like this saying, you and I are dusty people. But Jesus had no dust at all no matter how hard He was shaken. He was completely sinless. That is why Caiaphas, who interrogated Jesus, delivered Him to Pilate, the Roman colonial governor. The Jews just could not find any fault with Jesus no matter how hard they tried to impugn Him with sin and judge Him according to the Law of God.

There was only one way that they could find a fault that would justify putting Jesus to death as a

punishment for this offence. It was applying the Roman law to Jesus. If the Roman law were applied, it would inevitable to find Jesus guilty of breaking it. At that time, many people were adulating and following Jesus as the King of the Jews. And they actually believed that Jesus would deliver them from the oppression of the Roman Empire. They believed this because Jesus had performed many miracles, including feeding over 5,000 people in the wilderness with five loaves of bread and two fish just by praying.

According to the Roman law, it was clearly a crime for the Jewish people to believe that Jesus was their King. After all, how could there be two rulers in a country? The Roman emperor was the only ruler of the known world at the time, and so even though Israel was a tributary state, it was an act of sedition to crown another king. In other words, Jesus was found guilty of the grievous crime of treason. Pursuant to the Roman law, Jesus therefore had to suffer the punishment of crucifixion that was reserved only for the most hideous criminals. This is what Caiaphas the



High Priest at that time had in mind, and that is why he deviously delivered Jesus to the Praetorium of the Roman colonial governor.

The passage that we just read today describes the scene of the last trial of Jesus that occurred about 2,000 years ago. As we read this Word of Truth that shows various ancient events, we can come nearer to God. Although our minds have been cluttered with many complicated thoughts until now, by this true Word of the water and the Spirit, our hearts can return to God to be ruled by Him and find new strength. Our hearts are filled with this Truth. Through today's Scripture passage, you and I are witnessing ancient events, and through this Word of God, we have come to fear God.

Pilate Interrogated Jesus

While Jesus was held in the Praetorium, Pilate went out and asked the Jews, "*What accusations do*

you bring against this Man?" The Jews said, "If He were not an evildoer, would we have delivered Him to you? This Man is an evildoer." Pilate then said, "But that seems like a religious issue, and so you should judge Him as you like. On just His outside appearance alone, Jesus does not appear to be such an evil man. So you take Him back and judge Him yourselves. Why have you brought Him to me for no reason?" Then the Jews said, "We have no authority to put anyone to death." This means that they were already determined to kill Jesus. Punishments rendered under the Roman law included crucifixion, an extremely cruel method of execution reserved for the most hideous criminals. As the Jewish law did not have such a provision for execution, God sought to fulfill His Word by applying the Roman law of crucifixion.

Although the Jews wanted to kill Jesus, they were thoroughly ingrained in Judaism and ardent legalists to their bones. As the Law required them to keep the Sabbath Day holy, so they were trying to keep this



day holy. Coincidentally the day on which Jesus was put on trial was the sixth day, that is, Friday in today's terms. When the sun set on Friday, the Sabbath Day began, and according to the Law, the Jewish people were not supposed to do any labor on the Sabbath Day. So they wanted Pilate to execute Jesus before the Sabbath Day arrived, in which case they would not have to do any work to put Jesus to death. The Jews were also forbidden to enter into any Gentile's house, and that is why they didn't enter Pilate's palace and clamored outside demanding Pilate to execute Jesus. In today's scene, we may say that they were demonstrating in front of a government building.

Returning to his palace, Pilate proceeded to interrogate Jesus. He called Jesus and asked Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?" Someone then probably said, "That Man calls Himself the King of Jews, and many others also call Him the King of the Jews." In fact, Caiaphas the High Priest had advised the Jews earlier, "It is expedient that one man should

die for the people" (John 18:14). Who do you think Caiaphas had in mind when he said this? He was referring to none other than Jesus. In other words, Caiaphas thought that delivering Jesus to the Romans and killing Him would secure peace for the Jewish people. And this was indeed true when political considerations were taken into account.

Many Israelites at that time were following Jesus as the king of the Jews. If a king of the Jews were indeed to emerge, the people of Israel would have been completely destroyed by the army of the Roman emperor. For a colony to establish its own king meant an open rebellion, and the Jews would then have been punished for their sedition. That is why Caiaphas the High Priest said that it was expedient to sacrifice one man for the entire Jewish people.

Prosecutors sometimes ask tricky questions when interrogating suspects. They have a way of asking questions to trap a suspect if he gives one wrong answer, and once the suspect is drawn into the trap, he has no way of getting out. In the same manner,



Pilate continued to interrogate Jesus by asking, “Are You the King of the Jews?” This question was asked to trap Jesus, as Pilate was trying to tie Him up on the charge of high treason. But Jesus said to him, “Is this inquiry your own, or did you hear it from someone else? Is it what others said to you about me?” Pilate then continued to ask Jesus, “Your own people and the chief priests have delivered you to me. So what have you done?” Jesus then said, *“My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, my servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now my kingdom is not from here.”* Jesus answered Pilate’s question by saying that His Kingdom was not of this earth. So Pilate asked again, “Are you a king then?”

Jesus Answered, “*My Kingdom Is Not of This World*”

Our Lord Jesus and His interrogator Pilate were

speaking in completely different dimensions. Pilate was just interrogating Jesus in the usual way. He followed the standard procedure and tried to induce Jesus into admitting Himself that He was the King of the Jews. Pilate wanted to make Jesus admit to treason and sentence Him to death quickly and so he asked these three short questions. But our Lord Jesus gave completely unexpected answers to these questions. He said to Pilate, *“My kingdom is not of this world.”*

So Pilate asked Him again, “Are You a king then?” Jesus answered, “You say rightly that I am a king.” This was akin to fully admitting to sedition when measured by the secular law. So Pilate now had enough grounds to sentence Jesus to crucifixion. But there is one important issue that stands out here. What Jesus admitted was of a completely different dimension from the act of treason that the people at that time thought. The Lord said, *“You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should*



bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice."

When Pilate kept on asking, "Are You the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered him by saying, "You are right. As you say, I am the King, but My Kingdom is not of this world. And for this cause I was born: To save everyone in this world. I came not only for the Jewish people and nation, but for all the people of the world. I was born on this earth to bear witness of the Truth and save everyone." He also said that everyone who was of the truth would hear His voice. As Pilate could not quite understand Jesus' answer, he asked helplessly once again what the truth was.

The interest of the worldly people is actually very different from your interest and mine. While the born-again are interested in spiritual things, secular people are interested only in their carnal affairs. Such people of the flesh are only interested in the things happening in the present world; they do not care about ancient Biblical events, which still give us important spiritual lessons. People's lives are

increasingly focused only on visible, materialistic aspects, and their interests are drifting further away from spiritual concerns.

We can see this from the conversation Pilate had with Jesus here. Pilate asked very realistic questions, but Jesus spoke of spiritual things. Jesus was in fact the King of the Jews. The King here means the spiritual King of the Jews. The Jews were Abraham's descendants, and God called Abraham and his descendants the chosen people. God said that He was the Master of the Jewish people. In other words, God and Jesus are the spiritual Kings of the Jews.

Pilate Could Not Find Any Fault with Jesus

Jesus was the King of the lost in this world, their Leader and their Guide; He had come to testify to them what the Truth was. And our Lord did in fact bear witness to the Truth. What is this Truth then? It



is that God the Father loved the world so much that He sent His only begotten Son to this earth, passed all the sins of the world to this Son, delivered His Son to be crucified, and raised Him from the dead. In other words, that Jesus Christ has blotted out all our sins and saved us is the very Truth. Jesus had come to this earth for this work, to bear witness to it.

So, even as He was standing in the court of Pilate, Jesus bore witness to the Kingdom of Heaven and the Truth: "I am the King of the Jews. I have come to save the lost. And I have come to bear witness to the Truth." The Lord was born on this earth through the body of the Virgin Mary, shouldered the sins of the world by being baptized by John, was sentenced to death and died on the Cross, and rose up from the dead, all done to save us. This is the Truth. We must believe in this Truth of God. The reason why the Lord came to this earth was to fulfill the righteousness of God that saves everyone who believes in it and to testify this Truth.

Pilate asked, "*What is truth?*" He just could not

understand what the Truth was. People today are also equally ignorant of it. They keep doubting and asking, "What's truth?" At the main entrance to Seoul National University, there is a banner with an excellent motto that reads, "The Place Where the Truth Is Searched." What then is the Truth? It's simple. The Truth is that Jesus Christ came to this earth and has saved us through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Yet many people still do not know this Truth, just as Pilate asked what the truth was.

Even after interrogating Jesus, Pilate could not find any fault with Him. So He went out of the Praetorium and said to the Jews who were bent on killing Jesus, "I find no fault with this Man at all. But you have a custom that when the Passover comes around, the most important feast among yours, I should release one of the criminals. Should I release this Man, or the famed robber called Barabbas?" If Pilate released Jesus on his own initiative, it would have caused a great deal of unrest. That's why he



asked this question, trying to find a middle ground to listen to the demand of the Jewish people and also release Jesus who was innocent. The Jews then shouted out, "Not this Man, but Barabbas!" Barabbas was a heinous criminal.

Those Doomed to Death Can Find Life through Jesus

When Pilate asked the Jews whom they wanted to be released, they said that they wanted Barabbas, a brutal criminal, to be released instead of Jesus. It is because of Jesus that Barabbas' life was spared. Barabbas, a robber doomed to death, found new life through Jesus, the real Truth. And it was also God's will for Jesus to die according to the demand of the Jews. Three years prior finding Himself in the court of Pilate, Jesus had already accepted all the sins of the entire human race by being baptized, and therefore He had to submit Himself to the

punishment of crucifixion to pay off the wages of all the sins of mankind. That was to fulfill the Truth, and that was also the way to bear witness of the Truth; and that is why our Jesus accepted this punishment. Through His unjust trial at the court of Pilate, Jesus ensured that this Truth would be testified.

That Jesus saved Barabbas the robber and died in his place shows the Truth that He has saved sinners by bearing all the condemnation of all the sins of the world and mankind. Jesus has saved us by taking upon all the sins of mankind through His baptism, dying on the Cross, and rising from the dead—this is the very Truth of salvation. It is this Truth that our Lord is speaking to us through the account of Barabbas.

We are now listening to a very ancient Truth, one going back almost 2,000 years. Living in the 21st century, we go through many different troubles in this world, but we have to turn our cluttered minds around back to the forever-unchanging Truth. We must humble our hearts, believe in this Truth, and



once again give glory to God. In short, we must thank God from the depth of our hearts for saving us, and we must lead our lives of faith to spread this gospel of Truth to the entire world.

You and I are both living in a complex time and age. How is everyone? All of our minds are extremely preoccupied. Students are busy with their studies, and entrepreneurs are preoccupied with their businesses. And they all have different circumstances. But there is a forever-unchanging Truth. It is none other than the Truth that Jesus Christ has saved us. And exactly according to this Truth, our Jesus Christ will soon return. We must bring our cluttered minds before the gospel of the water and the Spirit to clear them, and live by faith alone. This is how we can lead a true life of faith.

Faith is all about looking toward God who has saved us. Religion, on the other hand, is about making a god out of our own thoughts and holding onto it by ourselves. In contrast, true faith believes in the Lord who has saved us, meditating on the

forever-unchanging gospel of the water and the Spirit, and thinking of and believing in this Truth. Even in our constantly busy lives, we must always think of this gospel of Truth that the Lord has given us and believe in it. That is what the true life of faith is all about.

At this hour, we are meditating on the Word explaining how the Lord came to this earth a long time ago and saved us even though we were like Barabbas. We have once again come across and heard the gospel Truth of the water and the Spirit testified by Jesus Christ, who gave up His own body for our sake. Never forgetting this Truth, we should hold onto it and believe in it forever, love and praise Lord in fear of Him, seek help from this King of kings and receive His help in our lives, bear witness to Jesus Christ throughout the whole world, and then go to meet our Lord face to face.

My fellow believers, when your mind gets cluttered, you must return back to the Lord of this forever-unchanging Truth. Only then can your heart



be restored to peace to be filled with the Truth. Today, you have once again heard how our Lord bore witness to the Truth on this earth, and how He has saved us from sin. Aren't you happy to hear this again? Doesn't your cluttered mind get all cleared up? Or does it get even more cluttered?

Far from being restored to tranquility, do you feel even more vexed? Do you wonder why I am speaking of the same thing time after time when you already know it? I am saying this again because your heart and mine often depart from our faith to venture out into the world. What else could we talk about if not the Lord? Preaching about what the Lord has done for us is the only worthwhile cause.

Let me ask you a question. What satisfies your soul? It is in this Word of Truth that your soul is satisfied. To whom does everything in this world belong? As the Lord's creation, everything in this world belongs to Him. You and I are also included in this. In whom are we living? We are living in the Lord. No matter how complex the world is and how

radically it may be changing, the bottom line is that everything is found in the Lord's Word. That is indeed true.

The Best Way to Live Is to Always Think of Jesus

It is my ardent hope and desire that the gospel of the water and the Spirit would be spread to the ends of this world as soon as possible, and that Jesus would return quickly. Other than thinking of Jesus and carrying out His work, everything else is boring and tiresome. I love the Lord the most, and I am happiest when I am doing His work. Is this how you also feel? My fellow believers, when your mind is troubled, try doing the Lord's work. You will then feel the joy of having the fullness of the Spirit in your heart. When you think about the complicated affairs of this world, it will bring you only a headache; but if you think of the things of the Spirit, your heart will



be filled with joy.

I truly wish that the gospel of the water and the Spirit would soon be spread all over the world, and that Jesus would return sooner than later. Do you also wish for this? As this world will not last forever, we must do everything we can while we are still able to work, and we must fulfill our mission before Jesus' return.

What is it that the seekers of faith throughout the whole wide world are looking for in this last age? It is none other than the Holy Spirit. They all want the Holy Spirit to dwell in their hearts. This age is the age of the Holy Spirit, one in which the Holy Spirit is received by believing in Jesus, as it is written, *“But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:*

‘And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God,

*That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh;
Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
Your young men shall see visions,
Your old men shall dream dreams’” (Acts 2:16-*

17). So everyone around the world is yearning for the Holy Spirit. The countless books written on the Holy Spirit indicates just how interested people are in the Holy Spirit.

We are now distributing our spiritual books in various languages to people all over the world. Our readers show mixed responses, but most of them agree that these books hold the Truth that explains the most basic elements of faith to Christians who have not been born again. In the last book, I put more emphasis on the indwelling of the Holy Spirit for those in this age who are yearning for the Holy Spirit in their lives. I pointed out in that book that for anyone to be filled by the Holy Spirit, he must first believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and after reading this book, many of our readers have come to ruminate on the gospel of the water and the Spirit once again. Soon, they will bring glad tidings telling us that not just they themselves but also many more souls around them have received the true remission of sins, that they have received the Holy



Spirit by believing in this Truth.

We must continue to bear witness to the Truth until the day the Lord returns. Every day we gain new strength through this Truth, that the Lord has blotted out all the sins of the entire world by being baptized and crucified to death, and that He has thus enabled His believers to avoid their judgment.

I would like to raise the following point to all of you today: We must defend the gospel of the water and the Spirit until the very end, while we live on this earth fearing God and spreading the gospel, and put our troubled minds to rest with faith.

Let Us Diligently Spread the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

There is no need to worry even if we get weary from preaching the gospel. We have the Truth that puts our weary hearts to rest. What the Lord accomplished on this earth is what comforts our

hearts to rest in peace. In whom do you and I find riches? It is in the Lord. From whom do we find the strength to live in this world? It is from Jesus. Indeed, everything is found in the Lord. All creation belongs to the Lord, as do all the riches and blessings. The best and the most wonderful things come from above. In other words, everything that is good in the world is given by the Lord. Everything bad, on the other hand, is from Satan.

This year, I would like to establish a firm foundation for preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit throughout the entire world, so that we may continue to carry out the Lord's work. You and I must keep our hearts uncluttered before God. Bring your heart preoccupied with worldly affairs to the Lord of Truth. I want your heart and mine to be ruled by the Truth. To do so, we must read and listen to the Word of God, return to His work, and look towards God. The Apostles admonished us to look towards Jesus who made us perfect. True to their call, you and I should look towards Jesus Christ.



We give all our thanks to our Lord. We bow before the Lord and thank Him for bearing witness to the Truth, and for giving us this Truth of salvation. We are all like Barabbas; but to release us from sin and condemnation, the Lord was baptized and crucified to death in our place. He has through this saved us all.

Once again I give all my thanks to the Lord.

Halleluiah! ☒



SERMON

6



Contents



Do Not Live Like Judas

< John 18:1-14 >

“When Jesus had spoken these words, He went out with His disciples over the Brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which He and His disciples entered. And Judas, who betrayed Him, also knew the place; for Jesus often met there with His disciples. Then Judas, having received a detachment of troops, and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, came there with lanterns, torches, and weapons. Jesus therefore, knowing all things that would come upon Him, went forward and said to them, ‘Whom are you seeking?’ They answered Him, ‘Jesus of Nazareth.’ Jesus said to them, ‘I am He.’ And Judas, who betrayed Him, also stood with them. Now when He said to them, ‘I am He,’ they drew back and fell to the ground. Then He asked them again, ‘Whom are you seeking?’ And they said,

‘Jesus of Nazareth.’ Jesus answered, ‘I have told you that I am He. Therefore, if you seek Me, let these go their way,’ that the saying might be fulfilled which He spoke, ‘Of those whom You gave Me I have lost none.’ Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest’s servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant’s name was Malchus. So Jesus said to Peter, ‘Put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink the cup which My Father has given Me?’ Then the detachment of troops and the captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound Him. And they led Him away to Annas first, for he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas who was high priest that year. Now it was Caiaphas who advised the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.”

I just returned here this morning from traveling to Inje Discipleship Training Center to take care of



some business. It was nice to be in Inje as it was cool despite the recent heat wave.

Easter is just around the corner. Although we don't observe Christian holidays strictly as we consider it hypocritical, nominal Christians observe them rigorously and religiously. As this week is the Passion Week, the last week of Lent according to the Christian calendar, I'd like us to ruminate on John 18:1-14 and ponder on Judas Iscariot's life.

Was Judas Deceived by Satan into Betraying Jesus?

When Jesus went with His disciples to the Garden of Gethsemane over the Brook Kidron, He already knew that it was time for Him to die on the Cross and return to God the Father. As Jesus had visited this garden often with His disciples, Judas Iscariot also knew the place quite well.

As one of the twelve disciples of Jesus, Judas was

responsible for the money box. In today's parlance, he was the treasurer. However, true to the saying that opportunity makes the thief, Judas used to steal from the money box and spend it for himself. Judas was greedy like this, and when he found out that the chief priests, the religious leaders of Judaism, wanted to kill Jesus, he led them to where Jesus was in exchange for 30 silver coins. Judas had betrayed Jesus.

With Judas guiding them, the officers of the chief priests and Pharisees entered the garden where Jesus was, bringing with them a detachment of troops armed with lanterns, torches, and weapons. But Jesus did not try to escape from them, as He already knew that it was time for Him to return to God the Father. Far from fleeing, He said to them, "I am the One you are looking for!" Taken aback by this boldness, Jesus' arrestors drew back and fell to the ground.

Although the Bible provides a brief account of this event, it's all but certain that Jesus was not happy when the people came to arrest Him. Even though He



already knew what was to unfold, He must have felt some resentment against His arrestors when He said, “I am the One you are looking for!” It was natural for Him to feel this way, since these people did not realize that He was the Son of God and just wanted to put Him to death, even though He had come to this earth to save the world. But, at the same time, His heart was resolute and ready enough to face all the sufferings that awaited Him. So when Jesus said forcefully, “I am the One you are looking for,” the people who had come to arrest Him with so much enthusiasm couldn’t help but fall on the ground in fear.

Since Jesus is God Himself, He could have easily defeated all His arrestors even if they attacked Him with swords. However, even though Jesus was more than able to do this as the Almighty God, because He had come to this world to save the human race, He did not exercise His power. If He had used His power to take away His arrestors’ lives, He would not have been arrested. Even if Jesus were attacked by all the

heavily armed troops of the Roman Empire, He could have easily defeated them all.

When we turn to Luke 4:28-30, we see people trying to kill Jesus for preaching the Word of God in a synagogue. Full of rage, the people drove Him out of the village, took Him to the edge of a cliff, and tried to push Him over. But Jesus walked through them untouched while none of them dared to stop Him. He had such power to prevail over anyone and everyone.

Why, then, did Jesus not escape from His arrestors even though He had done so once when people tried to push Him over a cliff? That’s because He knew that it was time for Him to return to God the Father. Although Jesus was on this earth incarnated in the flesh of man for a short while, He was not a creature like us. He was fundamentally God Himself. However, rather than claiming His rightful, equally divine status as God the Father, He humbled Himself like a servant. To save us from sin, He had forsaken all His majesty, exaltation, and glory, and He had



become a humble servant for a short while.

To the soldiers and officers cowering down on the ground, Jesus asked once again, “Whom are you seeking?” and said to them that He was Jesus of Nazareth. He asked them not to harm the disciples that were with Him. He said this not to lose any of His beloved disciples as He had prayed to God the Father, *“Of those whom You gave Me I have lost none” (John 18:9)*. This was the fulfillment of His prayer for His disciples that was offered a few hours ago: *“While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled” (John 17:12)*. Even though Jesus saw how Judas had betrayed Him and come to arrest Him, and even though He knew that Peter would deny Him three times, He still loved His disciples until the end like this.

It’s not because the people at that time had some great power that they could crucify Jesus. Rather, Jesus had permitted them to do so. When Jesus was

taken to Pilate, he could not find any fault with Him. So Pilate tried to release Jesus, saying to him, “I have the power to release You. So speak to me; if You appeal to me, I am more than able to release You.” However, Jesus did not say anything. Did Pilate really have the power to release Jesus? Without Jesus’ permission, Pilate could have neither arrested Him nor released Him. Our Lord remained quiet only because He had come to this earth to do the good work of saving the human race from sin; it’s absolutely not because He was somehow powerless that He was put to death. Because Jesus had accepted all the sins of the world through His baptism, He had to die on the Cross. And He had become our true Savior by rising from the dead again, and He had to break the power of Satan by fulfilling all His works of salvation to perfection. It’s for this that Jesus had stayed quiet.

However, when the chief priests’ servants tried to arrest Jesus, Peter stuck one of them named Malchus and cut off his ear. From a human point of view, this



was a just and fully understandable act. Since Peter was wholeheartedly devoted to Jesus as his Teacher, it was only a matter of course for him to try to prevent His arrest. However, Peter acted on his own thoughts, stemming from his failure to understand the true purpose for which Jesus had come to this world.

Jesus had come to this earth to solve the problem of the sins of mankind with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. That is why He had accepted all the sins of this world once and for all through John the Baptist. As Peter had served Jesus at His side, he had heard countless times that the Lord would die and rise from the dead again, but Peter had not really understood what all this really meant. Instead of trying to prevent Jesus' arrest in a fit of rage, Peter should have realized that the Lord's time had come. So, far from commending Peter for his act, Jesus rebuked him, saying to him, "*Put your sword into the sheath.*" He said this because God the Father had entrusted Him with the work of salvation to bear the sins of the world once and for all by being baptized

and die for them on the Cross, and therefore it was fitting for Jesus to drink this cup of suffering.

Judas Iscariot should not be confused with Jude, another disciple of Jesus who wrote the Book of Jude. Although Judas Iscariot was also a disciple of Jesus, he betrayed Jesus and eagerly delivered Him to the chief priests. This happened because Jesus had already accepted all the sins of the world through John the Baptist, and therefore He had to be crucified to death.

Why, then, did it specifically fall on Judas to betray Jesus? Was there any reason why Judas in particular was used as such an accursed instrument? How could he, as a disciple of Jesus, deliver his own Teacher to certain death? Of all people, why was Judas specifically used for this? It's because Judas had not believed in Jesus as the Son of God and the Savior of mankind, even though he had served Him at His side.

Take a look at what Judas did here. He led the servants of the chief priests and Pharisees to Jesus to



arrest Him and deliver Him to Pilate the governor. Even though Judas had followed Jesus for three years, he had never believed that Jesus was God Himself, not even once. He was just interested in drawing people's attention through the miracles performed by Jesus, and he was blinded by his greed over the money box.

In those days, the chief priests were in collusion with the Roman Empire. To put it simply, they were traitors and thieves. This means that Judas had joined hands with the religious leaders of Israel who had not only betrayed their own people to the Roman Empire but were also sucking on their blood. And he did all this just for 30 coins of silver.

Even without Judas, Jesus would have gone on His way. Because He had already borne all the sins of this world through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, He had to be crucified to death without fail. So even if Judas hadn't betrayed the Lord, there were plenty of people who could have played his role.

But why did this role specifically fall on Judas, a disciple of Jesus? I am not asking this question just because Judas was a disciple of Jesus and I somehow feel pity for him, but to explain why, of all people, it fell on Judas to fulfill this role. Why was it specifically Judas who betrayed Jesus? It's true that there were others responsible for Jesus' death, from the chief priests to the Roman soldiers and the Pharisees, but it was Judas who played the most decisive role. Everyone should be used for a good purpose; then why was Judas, who was not just anyone but a disciple of Jesus, given this evil role of bringing suffering to Jesus in His work of salvation? Let's ponder on this question carefully here.

Movies and television serial dramas usually have a few villains. But the actors who play such a role often suffer from their type-casting because of their image as villains. In Korea, there was a time when anti-Communist movies were in vogue, and an actor named Gosung Dok, who has passed away, used to play as a villainous North Korean soldier in many



such movies. It was a time when many South Koreans still harbored ill-feelings toward the North Korean regime, and so the people hated Dok intensely because he used to play the role of a wicked North Korean soldier who massacred innocent civilians. As the people were prone to equate the movie character with the actor, they saw Dok as an evil man while anyone who killed North Korean soldiers was considered a hero. Like this, even actors are hated by many if they play as villains.

Why, then, did Judas—of all people, a disciple of Jesus—actually play such an evil role? Even though he had followed Jesus for no less than three years, he did not recognize that Jesus was God Himself. Did Judas fail to recognize Jesus just because He was humble and had little that was attractive in His outside appearance? That's unlikely, since Judas saw what the Lord did, and therefore he must have known that Jesus was the Son of God. Jesus had even raised the dead back to life. Is there anyone in this world who can raise the dead? No, of course not. Only

Jesus can raise the dead and heal the blind.

There is a Korean movie named *Halleluiah*, which makes a parody of Korean Christianity. In this movie a charlatan feigning as a pastor hires homeless people to pretend to be lame or blind, so that he can stage fake miracles.

In contrast, the miracles and signs that Jesus showed were not such staged shows, but they were real. While on this earth, Jesus healed many people and saved many lives. His Word was the truth. He had no wickedness at all. Why did Judas then betray Jesus and side with the wicked religious leaders such as the chief priests and the Pharisees? It's because he had no faith that Jesus was God Himself. That's why his soul was seized by Satan, to ultimately be used for the worst role in the world.

Let's consider ourselves here and now then. Let's examine ourselves to see if there is anyone among us who is being used for an evil purpose. Where are you being used? Born as human beings, all of us are destined to leave a certain mark in history before we



disappear, though it may be no more than a dot in the greater scheme of things. For what purpose, then, are our lives being used? Are we being used for evil purposes? Or are we really being used for a righteous cause?

Judas betrayed Jesus because he did not believe that Jesus was the Son of God and his Savior. He couldn't have done this if he really believed in Jesus. Contrast Judas to Peter. When Jesus was about to be arrested, Peter swung his sword and cut off the ear of Malchus, one of the men that had come to arrest the Lord. Had the Lord not stopped him, Peter himself would have been killed for sure. Like this, Peter risked his own life to defend Jesus. His faith was fundamentally different from Judas' faith, and it was the latter that was flawed.

How about you and me then? Should we allow ourselves to betray Jesus and persecute His righteous servants? Let's think about this for a moment. If we believe in neither the gospel of the water and the Spirit nor Jesus who is the Son of God and our Savior,

then we would also become like Judas. You have no choice but to become another Judas unless you believe that Jesus the true Sheppard of mankind is your Savior. In other words, if your heart deviates from the gospel of the water and the Spirit and instead sides with the unrighteous, then you will be used by the Devil.

Man is nothing. Your life is determined depending on what you believe in and rely on. If you believe in what is truly right—that is, in the gospel of the water and the Spirit—and you serve this righteous cause and follow it until the end despite your shortcomings, then you will become an upright person. If, on the other hand, you side with the wicked, then you will end up committing evil deeds even if this is not what you really want. What kind of people should we become then? And what kind of people are we becoming now?

Let's consider the entire span of our lives here. We need to consider how many years are left from our remaining lives, and it only takes a quick



calculation to find it. Let's say that your life expectancy is around 80 years. It may seem like a long time, but if you really think about it, it's not that long. Years go by so fast that by the time you are done with school, find a job, have children and raise a family, you will be an old and decrepit man facing the sunset of your life. This is inevitable for everyone; no one can stop the clock, and all must grow old and die eventually. Life is not such a big deal. Once born, it's unavoidable for you to get sick and die in your old age, and that is how every human life runs its due course. Life is indeed insignificant. I am sure that you know this even if you are still young.

As I've mentioned it to you many times before, when I was about to graduate from a graduate school, I was grappling with the question of how I would end my life. At that time, I had not met the gospel of the water and the Spirit yet, and so I had concluded that I was already dead, no different from someone in the grave.

Our lives are meaningless like this, but there is

another life, one that is truly worthwhile, that all of us can lead. How can we then live such a life? Our worthless lives are made priceless once we are saved by believing in Jesus as our Savior and in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that He has given us. What the consequences will be if you don't believe in Jesus as your Savior is clear. You don't have to wait until the end of your life to find out its consequences; instead, you can find them out even while alive, right at this very moment. No matter how wonderful you may think your life is even without Jesus, its consequences are obvious for everyone to see.

What would have happened to me if I had not believed in Jesus as my Savior? I'd probably have believed in another religion. And I'd have acted according to my beliefs. What would have happened then? Satan would have been my guide, and I would have followed him to harbor evil thoughts and do evil things. No doubt I'd have lived such a wicked life. There is no one who doesn't know this.

Judas also did not know what he was doing. But at



the last supper, Jesus clearly identified him as His betrayer, saying, *“He who dipped his hand with Me in the dish will betray Me” (Matthew 26:23)*. In Jesus’ days, people usually ate bread by dipping it into a vinegar dish. At the time of the last supper, Judas was the only one who dipped his hand with Jesus. Although all the twelve disciples were gathered around the table, Judas alone dipped a piece of bread into the vinegar dish along with Jesus. That’s why Jesus had said that the one who dipped his hand with Him in the dish was His betrayer.

Judas could have withdrawn his hand from the dish and pretended nothing had happened. The other disciples were troubled by what Jesus had said, and so they all asked Him, “Am I the betrayer, Lord?” But Judas knew whom Jesus had in His mind. The Lord then told him to do quickly what he had decided to do. At that moment, the Devil took over Judas completely, and right away Judas went to the chief priests and the Pharisees to betray the Lord. The chief priests handed him 30 coins of silver, and he

took their officers to the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus was. He then delivered Jesus to the chief priests to be ultimately crucified to death. Only after this did Judas finally realize what he had done.

You must examine yourself to see whether or not Jesus is in your heart. And depending on what your answer is, you can know who you really are, whether you really believe in Jesus as your Savior or you believe in something else more. You yourself know this answer better than anyone else. No one is ignorant of himself, so long as one is not deceiving himself. Everyone knows what and how he believes, and what he will do in the future.

Let’s Think about Our Present Spiritual Condition

On this Passion Week, I’d like to ask you to think about your spiritual condition rather than the suffering of Jesus. Ask yourself whether or not you



are becoming like Judas. Even among Christians professing to believe in Jesus as their Savior, there are many who are like Judas. It's not true that they don't know who they really are. They are just deceiving themselves even as they know it. So they must stop deceiving themselves, turn around from wickedness, return to God and surrender themselves to Him as soon as possible, and believe that Jesus is God Himself with thanksgiving. And they must receive all the blessings God is offering them. If you are such a nominal Christian, I admonish you to turn around from the wicked way as soon as possible. Why would you want to be used for wickedness like Judas? I hope and pray that you would turn around and return into the Lord's arms.

Depending on whom we follow, we may be used for evil purposes or good causes. It's akin to what happens in school: If a student falls into the wrong crowd in school, this student will go astray, but if he befriends good students, he will do well in school. Likewise, if you befriend good people, you will also

become such a good person, but if you befriend charlatans, then you will also turn into a charlatan.

Above all else, you must not allow yourself to be used for evil purposes only to be cursed and destroyed forever like Judas, even as you believe in Jesus. You can prevent this beforehand if only you don't deceive yourself. If you know that you've gone astray, then all that you have to do is just admit this, rebuke yourself, and repent from your old way to return to the righteous path. You only have to turn yourself to the right direction, and believe in and follow what is right. You can then become a perfect person.

Someone who follows his instincts is no different from a beast. The Book of Jude also writes that those who trust and follow just their own instincts are like brute beasts (Jude 1:10). If there is anyone who is like Judas among our ministers, workers, and saints in the Church, I hope and pray that all such people would repent, turn around, and believe in and follow Jesus as the Son of God and their Savior.



In some ways, Judas Iscariot is a pitiful man. What happened to Judas after he was used by the Devil is clearly explained in Matthew 27:2-5: *“Then Judas, His betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, was remorseful and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, ‘I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.’ And they said, ‘What is that to us? You see to it!’ Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself.”*

Only after Judas betrayed Jesus did he finally realize to his great regret that he had been used by the Devil. So he returned the 30 pieces of silver to the chief priests, but they told him that the consequences of his betrayal were his to bear. Realizing that by then it was too late to change anything, Judas ended up killing himself over his guilt.

It’s a grave sin to commit suicide before God. That’s why the Old Testament says, *“You shall not eat anything that dies of itself” (Deuteronomy 14:21)*. When Judas realized his mistake, he should have

turned around and repented, but he instead tried to mitigate his guilt in his own way.

Believe in Jesus as Your Savior

If you still don’t believe in Jesus as your Savior who came by the gospel of the water and the Spirit, then believe in Him according to this true gospel even at this very moment. Think about the baptism of Jesus and His Cross. Jesus’ baptism was the means by which He bore the sins of the world, and the Cross is where He was cursed for you. Isn’t it true? Why was Jesus then baptized and crucified to shed His blood? Instead of just thinking about the suffering Jesus bore on the Cross, think about the reason why He had to be baptized and crucified.

Jesus had to bear our sins through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, and He had to shed His blood on the Cross to pay off the wages of these sins, thereby saving all of us who believe in this. It’s



because of your sins and mine that Jesus was baptized and crucified to death. Because we could not solve the problem of our sins by ourselves, the sinless Jesus had to become our propitiation and be baptized and crucified in our place.

If we think about our destiny carefully, we know that we cannot help but commit sin throughout our entire lifetime. It is our common destiny to do nothing but sin until we are cast into hell. Yet Jesus loved such people like us so much. He did not want us to be cast into hell, for He had made us the objects of His love. That is why Jesus came to this earth incarnated in the flesh of man, shouldered the sins of the world by being baptized by John the Baptist, and died on the Cross in our place.

Do you then now realize that the baptism of Jesus is also found in the Cross? If we delve deep into the Lord's work of salvation rather just looking at the final outcome of the Cross, we can realize that Jesus was crucified because He had borne all our sins once and for all through the baptism He received from

John the Baptist. Ultimately, it's because of your sins and mine that Jesus was baptized and crucified to death in our place. And having risen from the dead again, He bore witness of the perfection fulfillment of our salvation. That is how we ought to believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We shouldn't just think vaguely of the baptism of Jesus, His blood on the Cross, and His resurrection. Jesus' baptism, blood, and resurrection all stemmed from one Truth. And this Truth is found in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Therefore, we need to ponder carefully on how this Truth is related to you and me.

You have to think about the baptism of Jesus, His blood on the Cross, and His resurrection in relation to yourself. Once you do this, you will realize that none of them is irrelevant to you. You and I also are related to each other. Through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, all of us must become God's people, and we must fulfill His will by carrying out His work in unity. If we were to live scattered rather than living out our faith together even after believing in



the gospel of the water and the Spirit, then we would be unable to carry out God's work or receive His blessings. That is why we must gather together to worship God. There, in God's Church, are those who preach the Word of God and those who listen to it. All are gathered together to listen to the gospel of the water and the Spirit and serve this gospel. There is nothing in this world that is irrelevant. Everything is relevant to everything else.

Even Judas is relevant to you. Think about it. From Judas' account you have much to learn and realize—namely, that you shouldn't allow yourself to be like Judas and, if you are already acting like Judas, then do everything possible to correct yourself. Therefore, when you listen to the Word of God, you should never think of it separate from you, as though it has no relevance to you; instead, you must consider every Word in relation to yourself.

God is profoundly relevant to you. Will you then still say, "I have nothing to do with God"? How can God not be relevant to you? Isn't it because of God

that you were born on this earth, and isn't it also God who saved you from sin through the gospel of the water and the Spirit when you were trapped in sin deceived by Satan? So how can you say that God is not relevant to you?

It's because of God that we were born; it's because of God that we received the remission of sins; and it's because of God that we were able to avoid our certain curses. It's all thanks to God that we no longer have to be cast into hell. So how could there be no relationship between God and us? How could we live the rest of our lives as though we had nothing to do with God, when in fact we already have several important ties to Him? We are already related to God very closely. All of you must realize this and believe so.

The very fact that God has saved us from the sins of the world through the gospel of the water and the Spirit itself shows clearly that we have a close relationship with God. God Himself came to this earth to save you and me from the sins of the world,



He bore all our sins by being baptized by John the Baptist, and He paid off the wages of these sins on the Cross with His own life. And He completed our salvation by rising from the dead again. That Jesus was born on this earth, that He took upon all our sins by being baptized, and that He carried the sins of the world to the Cross—all these things are indispensably relevant to us. That's because these works were carried out to eradicate all our sins.

The betrayal of Judas and the arrest of Jesus shown in today's Scripture passage are also eminently relevant to all of us. Jesus was dragged to Golgotha because He had borne our sins through the baptism He received from John the Baptist. There is no other reason but this. Jesus was crucified to blot out all our sins and to be condemned in our place. Like this, everything Jesus did on this earth is inexorably related to you and me.

Just as the Lord's work of salvation is relevant for all of us His believers, it is also relevant to the people of the world. They must all listen to the gospel of the

water and the Spirit through Jesus Christ. Far from being irrelevant, the gospel of the water and the Spirit is absolutely indispensable to each and every one of them. And through this gospel Word of the water and the Spirit, they must rebuild their relationship with the Lord as His true disciples and servants, not as Judas.

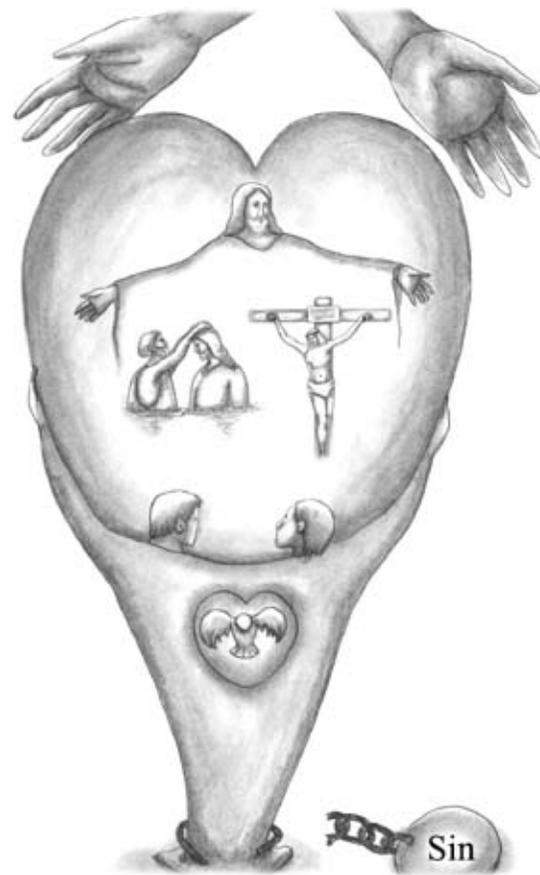
If you have nothing to do with Jesus at all, or if you have no faith in the Lord as your Savior and end up delivering Him to death like Judas, then you will be destroyed. Such people will all be cast into hell in the end. If you are like Judas right now, then I ask you to believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit as soon as possible and escape from Satan's curses. I admonish you with all my heart to free yourself from such an accursed life of Judas. The choice is yours to make.

Hallelujah! ☒



SERMON

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Contents



Have the Faith of Resurrection

< John 19:38-20:31 >

“After this, Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took the body of Jesus. And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. Then they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in strips of linen with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury. Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. So there they laid Jesus, because of the Jews’ Preparation Day, for the tomb was nearby. Now the first day of the week Mary Magdalene

went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, ‘They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him.’ Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple, and were going to the tomb. So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first. And he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen cloths lying there; yet he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying there, and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and believed. For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead. Then the disciples went away again to their own



homes. But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down and looked into the tomb. And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. Then they said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping?' She said to them, 'Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him.' Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?' She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, 'Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away.' Jesus said to her, 'Mary!' She turned and said to Him, 'Rabboni!' (which is to say, Teacher). Jesus said to her, 'Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your

God.'" Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things to her. Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, 'Peace be with you.' When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. So Jesus said to them again, 'Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.' And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.' Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to him, 'We have seen the Lord.' So he said to them, 'Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and



put my hand into His side, I will not believe.’ And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, ‘Peace to you!’ Then He said to Thomas, ‘Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing.’ And Thomas answered and said to Him, ‘My Lord and my God!’ Jesus said to him, ‘Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.’ And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.”

It was on Friday in today’s term that our Lord was crucified to death. Friday is the day when the Jewish

people prepare for the Sabbath. The Sabbath Day is set from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset, and on this day the Jews were not supposed to do anything. So if Jesus’ dead body was not taken care of right away, it would have been left alone on the Cross.

So Joseph of Arimathea, who believed in Jesus as his Savior, asked Pilate to hand over His remains so that he may bury Him. He did this even though all the other disciples of Jesus and His followers had fled. Joseph was thus given Pilate’s permission, and he took down Jesus’ body from the Cross and washed the remains clean. Nicodemus, who had appeared in the Gospel of John chapter three, also came and brought about a hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes mixed together, and Joseph and Nicodemus washed and shrouded the body of Jesus clean. They then interned Jesus’ remains in a small tomb in the garden next to Golgotha.

It was a Jewish burial custom to dig a dry cave and make a tomb out of it by interning the dead body in it. In general, it was common for the Jews to have



family burial sites, and so most caves had the remains of other deceased ones, but the body of Jesus was buried in a new tomb that was never used before, so that God’s Word would be fulfilled.

Joseph and Nicodemus laid the body of Jesus in the tomb, wrapped in linen to go through the natural process of degradation and leave only bones. They buried Jesus before the sunset of that Friday, that is, before the Sabbath day, and then sealed the entrance to the tomb with a boulder to prevent any animals or anyone else from entering it.

Jesus Rose from the Dead

On the first day after the Sabbath, when Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early in the morning, she saw that the stone blocking the entrance had been removed. Mary then ran to Simon Peter and another disciple, and said to them, “Someone has taken away the Lord, and I don’t know where He has been laid.”

So Peter and the other disciple ran to the tomb, and they saw that the boulder was indeed removed. As the boulder was very large, it was not something that just a couple of men could move, and yet it had been moved. The other disciple looked into the tomb with Peter, but he didn’t go in probably because he was too afraid. So Peter went into the tomb and saw the linen cloths lying there, and the handkerchief that had been around Jesus’ head folded together in another place. The Jewish people wrapped the whole remains with linen cloths from the toe to the head, but the linen that had been wrapped around Jesus’ head was folded together in a different place by itself, apart from the linen cloths that had been wrapped around His body.

Even though the Old Testament said that death would not be able to swallow Jesus, and Jesus Himself also said repeatedly that He would be resurrected, His disciples did not keep in mind that He would rise from the dead again. So the disciples thought that someone had stolen Jesus’ remains. But



at the same time, they also wondered why, if the body of Jesus was indeed stolen, the handkerchief that had been wrapped around Jesus' head was folded down neatly.

Mary Magdalene is the woman who, after being derided as a prostitute, met with Jesus and came to receive the remission of sins. She is also the woman who had broken and poured an alabaster flask of very costly oil of spikenard on Jesus' head. Hearing that Jesus' body had disappeared, Mary wept at the tomb. And as she looked into the tomb, she saw two angels in white garments sitting at where Jesus had been laid, one at the head and the other at the feet. The angels then asked her, "*Woman, why are you weeping?*" Mary said to them, "*Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him.*" She then turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus.

The disciples had left the tomb by then without seeing Jesus. When Mary saw Jesus, she thought that He was the gardener, and so she asked Him if He had

removed the body. But to her surprise, Mary heard Jesus calling her name. She then finally recognized that the voice and the face were indeed those of Jesus. Mary was shocked, and Jesus told her not to touch His body, as He had not yet ascended to the Father. This happened at the very first day of Jesus' resurrection.

Afterwards, the disciples of Jesus also saw the Lord, and they testified that they had seen the resurrected Lord. When Jesus appeared for the second time, His disciples were trembling in fear. They were all gripped by fear, thinking that since the Jews had crucified their Teacher to death, they would also be arrested and crucified to death. Jesus then appeared before them through the wall. As Jesus now had been resurrected into a spiritual body, He could walk through the wall.

Saying to the disciples, "*Peace be with you,*" Jesus showed His hands and His side. The disciples were rejoiced to see the Lord. Jesus then said to them again, "*Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I*



also send you.” And He breathed on them, saying to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.” Although the disciples of Jesus had believed in Him, because they believed based only on what was visible, their faith was not a perfect one but mixed with doubts. But our Lord appeared before them after His resurrection, told them to receive the Holy Spirit, and then said to them, “If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.”

Like this, Jesus rose from the dead again. We believe that it was for our salvation that Jesus bore all our sins by being baptized, died on the Cross, and rose from the dead again. The body of Jesus was crucified and His death was complete. When a soldier pierced His side to confirm His death, water and blood had poured out. Given how the Roman Soldiers made sure that Jesus was dead, it is not plausible for the Lord to have just woken up from

fainting. Even if He had fainted, since His body was completely wrapped around in linen, He could not have risen up. The very way in which the Jews buried the dead proves that the Lord had indeed died and was resurrected.

Today is the Lord’s Day. In the old days, the Sabbath was the day of worship, but now it is the Lord’s Day. The day on which Jesus rose from the dead is this very Sunday morning. We call Sunday the Lord’s Day precisely because this is the day when the Lord was resurrected. It is on the Lord’s Day that He rose from the dead again.

When Jesus was alive, He had said, “*Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up*” (John 2:19). In this passage, the “temple” here refers to the body of Jesus, and this passage clearly implies that He would be resurrected in three days. Jesus was the true God who had the power to raise the dead and heal the sick. His Word was true, and there was nothing false to His Word. Because the work of life and power were found in the Word of Jesus, the



Pharisees and the chief priests were worried that what Jesus said might come true. So when Jesus was put to death and buried, they asked Pilate to put some Roman soldiers at Jesus' tomb to guard over it. They were afraid that if someone stole the body of Jesus and claimed that He had risen from the dead, it would create an even greater commotion, and so they put armed Roman soldiers to guard the tomb of Jesus. In other words, they made sure that no one would go into Jesus' tomb.

However, an angel descended from Heaven and sat on the boulder blocking Jesus' tomb. When the soldiers guarding the tomb saw the angel, they were so shocked that they fell on the ground and were completely paralyzed in fear. The angel rolled the stone, removed the linen wrapped around the body of Jesus and His head, and folded it neatly. The Lord then rose up. He had been resurrected.

The Resurrection of the Lord Is His Victory and Our Resurrection

The Lord had to rise from the dead again for no other reason than to bring us back to life. To save all sinners, God Himself had come to us in the image of man. He had accepted all the sins of mankind by being baptized, borne all the condemnation of every sin and died on the Cross in our place, and risen from the dead again to guarantee us our resurrection. God had resurrected His Son. God had made Jesus live on this earth for 33 years in the image of man, bear all the suffering of man, shoulder all the sins of the world, and die in our place. That is how God has saved us. And our Lord then rose from the dead again. The resurrection of the Lord means that He has saved you and me to perfection. Just as the Lord rose from the dead again, so will we the saved saints also rise from the dead again after our physical death. It is to testify to this that the Lord was resurrected.

Our Lord has not only saved us from sin, but He



has also delivered us from physical death. Jesus Christ, who has saved you and me, bore all our sins, was condemned to death in our place, and rose from the dead again. It's to give us new life by replacing our death with His own life that Jesus died and rose again. We have come to live again thanks to His sacrificial love. Our Lord did this work, which only God can do. It is physically impossible for anyone to die once and live again. This is something that only God can do: Only God could take upon all our sins, be condemned to death in our place, and rise from the dead again. God did this because He is the Lord of life. That's why only God can give us life and resurrect us from death.

The Lord described the passing of our saints as sleeping. Jesus had many beloved saints and disciples. Among the most cherished saints were Martha, Mary, and Lazarus. But when Jesus was told that Lazarus had fallen seriously ill and was nearing death, He did not go to him. Only when Lazarus was completely dead, stopped breathing, and began to smell and rot,

did our Lord say, "My friend is asleep. Let's go to wake him up." Someone who is asleep can wake up again. Our Lord did not see the dead as dead, but only as sleeping, because every dead saint will be resurrected when the Lord comes again to this earth.

We Will Live Again

My fellow believers, when we run out of bodily strength, stop breathing on this earth, and fall asleep, this does not mean that we are dead forever. We will live again. Just as Jesus Christ was resurrected, so will we also be resurrected into a new and spiritual body. We will live again in a body that is neither corruptible nor limited, a body that can enjoy all pleasures of life but none of its displeasures, and an immortal body that lives forever. All the born-again will live again.

All those who have not been born again will also be resurrected on the last day. When sinners rise



from their graves, they will be resurrected into immortal sinners once again. Sinners cannot be resurrected with the righteous. The Bible speaks of the order of resurrection: *“But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ’s at His coming. Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power”* (1 Corinthians 15:23-24). Jesus is the only One who has already been resurrected. And we the born-again will be resurrected when the Lord Himself descends from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God (1 Thessalonians 4:16). In short, the saints will be resurrected just before the Millennial Kingdom. But the sinners will be resurrected to be punished forever when the Millennial Kingdom is over (Revelation 20:7-15). The Bible says that while God will give eternal life to the righteous who participate in the first resurrection, rewarding them with heavenly blessings, He will make the sinners who participate

in the second resurrection suffer by throwing them into the everlasting fire of hell.

Our Lord has saved us. He bore all our sins on this earth, was condemned for them, and died on the Cross in our place. And rising from the dead again, He bore witness for 40 days, and He ascended to Heaven before the eyes of many. Our Lord will return to this earth again. With the archangels and the sound of their trumpets, He will descend on this earth again. First Thessalonians chapter four tells us that when Jesus returns, the righteous sleeping in the graves will be resurrected first, the born-again saints still alive will be changed suddenly, and then rapture will happen. Rapture will take place when our Lord lifts up His born-again children. As the last event to unfold at the very end of the world, rapture means that at the moment the Lord returns, this world will end and a new millennium will begin.

Those who are not familiar with rapture think that only the living saints will be lifted up while the dead saints in the graves will be left behind. But this is a



completely mistaken belief. Whether rapture has taken place or not is something that you should confirm at the grave. You should go to the tomb of a righteous saint and see if his grave is opened or not. If the tomb is closed tight, then any claim of rapture is just a lie. The redeemed who are asleep in the graves are the first to be resurrected and lifted up, and the living are lifted after that. It's at this time we will see the end of the existing world and the beginning of a new world.

It Is the Righteous Who Will Partake in the New World of the Millennial Kingdom

When our Lord returns, if some of us have fallen asleep, we will be resurrected first. Those who have been born again through the gospel of the water and the Spirit will also be lifted up at that time in a spiritual body. Like Jesus, the righteous will be able

to enjoy all the pleasures of life on this earth and also do supernatural things like passing through the wall. They will receive a body that is unconstrained by the limits of the natural laws, that is, a perfect and flawless body that is in the likeness of God. The body of the righteous will no longer be bodies made of dust, but they will be spiritual bodies like God.

In this light, it is a tremendous blessing that we have received the remission of sins. Those who have received the remission of sins will be resurrected to live again and enter Heaven, where there will be neither pain nor destruction. Those who have not received the remission of sins will also be resurrected, but it is not a good resurrection, for they will be brought back to life only to be judged. So we must realize just how great it is that we have received the remission of sins. It's because we have received the remission of sins that resurrection awaits us to enter Heaven and we can receive new life. None other than the remission of sins is the very beginning of heavenly blessings. It is by receiving the remission of



sins that we are made God's children and His righteous people to live again and enjoy splendor and glory forever. It is on account of this remission of sins that all blessings are bestowed.

Therefore, while living on this earth, we must all realize that what is on this earth is not everything there is; and we must remember that we are just travelers staying in this world only for a short while. A traveler stays in a place only for a while regardless of whether it is a good place or not, and he eventually leaves it behind to once again journey to his destination. Those who have received the remission of sins are basically such travelers on their way to Heaven.

The resurrection of eternal life is preserved for only those who have received the remission of sins, and only they can attain Heaven. And only these redeemed people have the power and authority to blot out other people's sins. It is when those who have received the remission of sins speak of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that others can also

receive the remission of sins. Our Lord said to the disciples, "*If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained*" (John 20:23).

As the real saints, you and I have the amazing authority and tremendous blessings that the Lord has given us. We must believe that those who sleep after receiving the remission of sins will rise up in the resurrection of eternal life, while all the sinners will rise up in the resurrection of judgment. The resurrection of judgment means that sinners will also be raised from the dead, and as such, it means that life in this world is not everything there is. If there is anyone sitting here who still has not received the remission of sins, then no matter how this person may have prospered and lived a virtuous life on this earth, when our Lord returns, he will be resurrected into an accursed body to suffer forever in the never-ending fire of hell. Because such people have not received the remission of sins, for this one reason alone they will have to suffer and be subjected to all



curses and hatred. However, if they receive the remission of sins, then on account of this alone, they will receive all blessings, all love, and all grace.

Is there anyone here who takes the resurrection of Jesus too lightly? Perhaps there are some people who are not that thankful for their salvation, who think only carnally to calculate over what they have gained and lost from receiving the remission of sins, and who, if there isn't much that has improved in carnal terms, think that it makes little difference whether they have received the remission of sins or not. However, it is completely wrong to think this way. The very fact that you have received the remission of sins is such a blessed and wonderful gift. It's because you have received the remission of sins that you can partake in the good resurrection and attain everlasting life. If anyone has not received the remission of sins, on the other hand, he will surely partake in the accursed resurrection to be judged. Everyone who is not remitted from his sins will be brought back to life in pain only to be judged.

Let Us Not Be Faithless People

There was a man named Thomas among Jesus' disciples. Of all the disciples of Jesus, Thomas was the most faithless one. It is a wonder how he became a disciple of Jesus, but still, he is a thousand times better man than Judas who betrayed Jesus. Thomas will be resurrected to live with the Lord forever in glory. Judas will also be resurrected later on, but he will be resurrected only to be cast into the never-ending fire of hell.

At the very evening of the day of His resurrection, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, "*Peace be with you.*" And He showed them His wounded hands, saying to them, "I have risen again for you." Since He had been crucified with large nails, there must have been clearly visible wounds in His hands even if they were healed. Jesus showed not only His hands, but He also showed the wounds at His side and His feet. Saying



to the disciples, “I have risen again. And I’ve come to you. Didn’t I tell you that I would live again? Do not fear, for I have risen again,” Jesus comforted the disciples and strengthened them.

Let us read John 20:24-29 together. *“Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to him, ‘We have seen the Lord.’ So he said to them, ‘Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.’ And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, ‘Peace to you!’ Then He said to Thomas, ‘Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing.’ And Thomas answered and said to Him, ‘My Lord and my God!’ Jesus said to him, ‘Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.’”*

How faithless must Thomas have been that Jesus would offer His hands and side for him to put his finger into His wounds? Thomas was so ashamed. So he believed, saying, “I believe. You are My Lord and My God.” Those who have a lot of doubts like Thomas can believe only in this way. However, you must believe just from the Word of God that there indeed is resurrection waiting for you, and that Jesus indeed is the Christ.

It’s written in verses 30-31, *“And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.”* This passage admonishes us to believe that Jesus is the Son of God and the Christ. The word Christ means that Jesus is our God, the High Priest who took upon all our sins, our Savior who was condemned to atone for them, and the Prophet who teaches us everything. It’s to tell us this that the Word of God was written.



Let Us Have the Faith of Resurrection

Today, on this Easter Day, we are commemorating the resurrection of Jesus. You and I, the redeemed people, must believe that we will also be resurrected. Regardless of how you may pass away, when your time comes, you will only fall asleep. We must have the belief that you and I will live again through the Lord. We must have the unwavering faith that you and I, as those born again of water and the Spirit, will sleep only for a while and then wake up from this sleep to live forever. We believe with all our hearts that we will indeed be resurrected, and it is by this faith that we can spread the way of everlasting life and resurrection.

We have been blessed so tremendously. We have received so many blessings that it would take all day long to list them all and it would still not be enough. All that we have received is the remission of sins alone, but on account of this, we will also be

resurrected. So what a great blessing is this? Even though we have received just the remission of sins, we have not only become saints, but we will also be resurrected to put on a spiritual body. It is indeed a marvelous blessing that we will put on a spiritual body like God, live with Him, share fellowship with Him, be resurrected into a body that can feel everything God feels, and see Him face to face.

Some of us may have thought that all that we've received is just the remission of sins, but now we've come to know that such wonderful blessings are waiting for us. When you first received the remission of sins, you probably didn't know that such great blessings would wait you. But I believe that your ailing body will be resurrected into a body that will never fall ill again. Faith is the substance of things hoped for, and God fulfills His every promise without fail. I admonish you to believe that God will indeed bless us His believers. I admonish you all to be a believer, not a faithless person. So let us all live the rest of our lives by placing our faith in God.



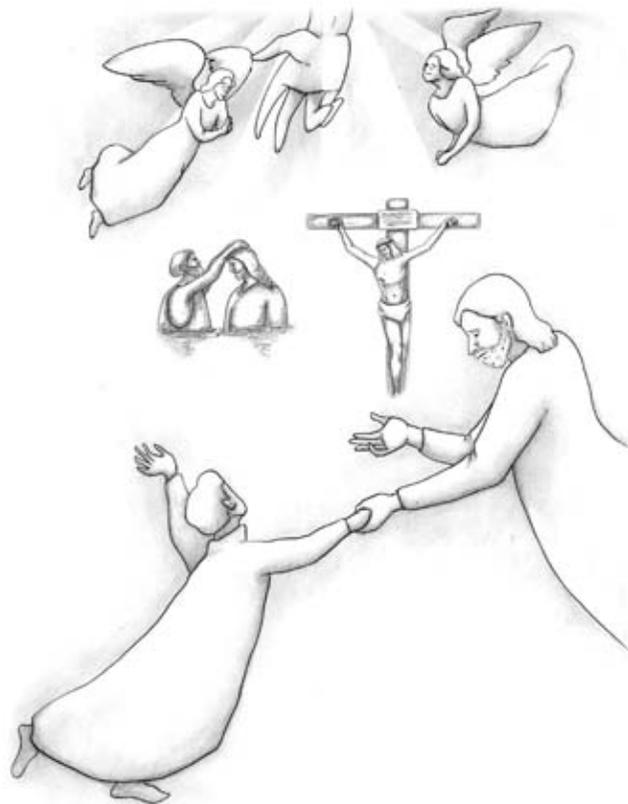
Our Lord will return to this earth soon. If we fall asleep before the Lord's return, He will wake us up when He is here. While we are thus resurrected to live in the Millennial Kingdom, those who have not received the remission of sins will be excluded from this Kingdom. Only after we enjoy all God's blessings for a thousand years will these sinners finally be resurrected to be judged. Even though we may suffer on this earth for the sake of the Lord, He will reward us for all such sufferings for a thousand years. After we are thus rewarded for a thousand years, the everlasting Kingdom of Heaven will descend on us while the judgment of hell will be rendered on sinners. That's why the Lord will resurrect the sinners a thousand years after we are resurrected. When we enter the everlasting Kingdom of Heaven, the sinners will pound on their chests and wail on their way to hell.

I believe that just as the Lord rose from the dead again, we will also be resurrected. I give all my thanks to God for giving us new and everlasting life. ☒



SERMON

8



Recognize the Love That the Lord Has Shown Us and Believe in It

< John 19:1-11 >

“So then Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him. And the soldiers twisted a crown of thorns and put it on His head, and they put on Him a purple robe. Then they said, ‘Hail, King of the Jews!’ And they struck Him with their hands. Pilate then went out again, and said to them, ‘Behold, I am bringing Him out to you, that you may know that I find no fault in Him.’ Then Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And Pilate said to them, ‘Behold the Man!’ Therefore, when the chief priests and officers saw Him, they cried out, saying, ‘Crucify Him, crucify Him!’ Pilate said to them, ‘You take Him and crucify Him, for I find no fault in Him.’ The Jews answered him, ‘We

have a law, and according to our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God.’ Therefore, when Pilate heard that saying, he was the more afraid, and went again into the Praetorium, and said to Jesus, ‘Where are You from?’ But Jesus gave him no answer. Then Pilate said to Him, ‘Are You not speaking to me? Do You not know that I have power to crucify You, and power to release You?’ Jesus answered, ‘You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above. Therefore the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin.’”

How have you been? The weather has been very erratic lately, and it seems quite a few of us have come down with a cold. If you think you are coming down with a cold, see your doctor as soon as possible and get it treated before your health deteriorates. It’s not always the case that you can get rid of a cold just by hunkering down and waiting; if it persists, you



may have serious complications down the road. So I ask you to take good care of your God-given body.

Today's Scripture passage describes Jesus' trial in the court of Pilate, and we can realize here just how much the Lord loved all of us. As described in the passage, Jesus was unjustly interrogated and tried in the court of Pilate, and through all these things we can experience the love of God in both body and spirit.

In those days when Jesus was facing His crucifixion, Israel was a colony of the Roman Empire, and therefore the Roman governor had jurisdiction over any criminal trials. That's because the authority to judge and render punishment had been transferred to the Roman Empire from Israel. So when the chief priests and the Pharisees arrested Jesus, they took Him to Pilate the governor. They then asked the governor to punish Jesus, accusing that Jesus claimed Himself to be the King of the Jews and the Son of God. Although Governor Pilate had no jurisdiction over religious matters, the chief priests were accusing

Jesus of inciting the mass, and so Pilate tried to look for any punishable offence from Him, but he could find none.

Pilate therefore sought to release Jesus. But the chief priests of Israel and the Pharisees objected to His release. In Israel it was customary to release a prisoner on the Passover Day to commemorate it, and Pilate had asked the people of Israel whom they wanted to be released between a brutal criminal named Barabbas and Jesus. Pilate had thought that since Barabbas was such a hideous criminal, the Israelites would naturally ask him to release Jesus instead of Barabbas. But contrary to his expectations, the chief priests instigated the crowd to demand loudly to crucify Jesus. Like this, they were pressuring Pilate to crucify Jesus to death.

The Jewish leaders accused Jesus of calling Himself the king of the Jews and inciting the people of Israel. They demanded the death of Jesus Christ so vocally and fiercely that Pilate was afraid of an uprising, and so he began to interrogate Him. Pilate



asked Jesus, “Are You the king of the Jews?” Answering affirmatively, Jesus then said, “*My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here*” (John 18:36). What Jesus said here was true, for He was indeed the Son of God. But because of what Jesus said here, Pilate decided to put Jesus to death, and it gave him the pretext to sentence Him to death.

It’s written in John 19:1, “*So then Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him.*” It’s said that according to the Roman law, criminals were stripped of clothes and whipped forty stripes minus one before their execution. As sharp pieces of hook-shaped metal were attached to end of the whip, every time the whip landed on the body, these pieces of metal dug deep into the flesh and tore it apart. So, since Jesus received forty stripes minus one, His whole body was covered in blood.

The Roman soldiers did not stop there; they also

mocked Jesus by clothing Him in a purple robe and putting a crown of thorns on His head. Kings wore purple robes in those days, and since Jesus was saying that He was the king of the Jews, they put the purple robe on Him to ridicule Him. It’s for the same reason that they made the crown of thorns and put it on His head to scorn Him.

The thornbushes growing in Israel were several times thicker and sharper than the common thornbushes that we are familiar with. So when Jesus’ head was pierced by the sharp thorns, there was so much blood that His whole face was covered in it. Like this, the Roman soldiers clothed Jesus with a purple robe and put a crown of thorns on His head to ridicule Him, saying mockingly, “Hail, King of the Jews!” They also slapped His face, struck His head with a reed, and even spat at His face. They mocked Jesus like this to heap every possible shame on Him. Once Pilate sentenced Jesus to death, the soldiers not only whipped Him but also ridiculed and mocked Him without restraint.



Before such a terrible pain of whipping and crucifixion, an ordinary man would have proclaimed his innocence at least once and tried everything possible to save himself. But Jesus did not open His mouth, like a lamb led to the slaughter and a sheep silent before its shearers, just as prophesied in Isaiah 53:7. He showed no resistance and endured all His suffering silently for our sake.

No matter how closely Pilate examined Jesus, in his eyes Jesus was not someone trying to proclaim himself a king or conspiring to rebel against the Roman Empire. So Pilate brought Jesus out to the crowd and tried to release Him again, saying, “I find no fault in Him.” The chief priests and their underlings then shouted out even more loudly, “Crucify Him, crucify Him!” Pilate could not comprehend why the Jews were demanding Jesus’ death when He was completely innocent, and so he said to them, “*You take Him and crucify Him, for I find no fault in Him*” (John 19:6). But the Jews objected even more fiercely and justified themselves

by saying, “*We have a law, and according to our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God*” (John 19:7).

Pilate became even more afraid of Jesus who called Himself the Son of God. Let’s look at John 19:8-10 again here: “*Therefore, when Pilate heard that saying, he was the more afraid, and went again into the Praetorium, and said to Jesus, ‘Where are You from?’ But Jesus gave him no answer. Then Pilate said to Him, ‘Are You not speaking to me? Do You not know that I have power to crucify You, and power to release You?’*” Pilate was afraid of what would happen to him if Jesus was indeed who He claimed to be, thinking, “What will happen to me if He is indeed the Son of God? Will I be spared even after I torture the Son of God?” This seems to explain why Pilate was increasingly agitated to release Jesus. Perhaps for this reason, it even appears that Pilate was desperately asking Jesus to assert His innocence so that he could release Him when he said, “*Are You not speaking to me? Do You not know that I have*



power to crucify You, and power to release You?”

But Jesus remained calm. Far from being slavish, He said boldly, *“You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above. Therefore the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin.”* He told Pilate that those who delivered Him to Pilate had the greater sin, for it was God’s just plan to put Jesus to death as the propitiation for all humanity.

Like this, even though Pilate tried to release Jesus several times, because Jesus had already accepted all the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, He had to be crucified without fail, and therefore Jesus did not give the answer that Pilate was looking for. If He said, “I am innocent. Release me,” then He could not be crucified to be punished for the sins of this world that He had accepted by being baptized by John the Baptist, and that is why He did not say anything.

When we turn to the Apostles’ Creed which was made by the Catholic Church after the passing of the

apostles, we see a phrase that says, “He suffered under Pontius Pilate.” Although the Apostles’ Creed says that it’s Pilate who tortured Jesus and put Him to death, Pilate actually tried to release Him. It was Jesus Himself who sought to be crucified voluntarily. Although Jesus was crucified by the Roman soldiers under Pilate’s command, Jesus had said to him in John 19:11, *“You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above. Therefore the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin.”* Pilate did not have the authority to put Jesus to death, nor did He have the power to crucify Him. God the Father had temporarily granted such authority to Pilate. It was to explain to Pilate that his authority to judge Jesus was actually given by God the Father that the Lord said to him, *“Everything you now have in this world was given to you from above. You have no authority to harm Me, and the sin of those who have delivered Me to you is greater than your sin.”*



Jesus Endured His Suffering Because He So Loved Us

It's because the Lord had been baptized by John the Baptist that He was crucified to bear the punishment of everyone's sins while shouldering all the sins of this world. The Lord was punished for our sins because He had borne them by being baptized by John the Baptist. In other words, our Lord was crucified for us because He had taken upon all our sins. The Lord said that He was baptized by John the Baptist on this earth to accept all our sins and was crucified to death so that this world may know God's love. The world here refers to none other than you and me. God had sent His Son to this earth to blot out all our sins. The Lord had come to this earth according to this will of the Father, and after being baptized by John the Baptist, He was crucified to death, so that we may know God's love. God did all these things in order to save each and every one of us from all our sins.

Jesus came to this earth incarnated in the flesh of man to save you and me from sin. And having accepted all the sins of the world by being baptized by John the Baptist, He was crucified to death. You must grasp here why Jesus Christ had to endure the suffering of the Cross even though He had done nothing wrong. That's because if Jesus Christ had not been baptized and crucified because of our sins, then we could never solve the problem of our sins by ourselves.

Among the countless people living on this earth, only those who are poor in spirit truly remember that the Lord was baptized and crucified to save sinners from sin, only these people understand His will, and they alone accept Him as their Savior. The Lord endured His suffering like this in order to make the Truth of salvation known to the world. He was baptized by John the Baptist and crucified so that we may realize that God the Father loves us that much. As the Lord was baptized by John the Baptist and endured the suffering of crucifixion when He came to



this earth, He could save us once and for all. We must realize this Truth without fail and believe in it with all our hearts. Jesus endured the pain of His flesh being torn apart by 39 lashes, He bore the shame of being stripped naked, and He was even slapped in the face surrounded by ridicule. God Himself endured all these things because He loved us so much that He wanted to blot out all our sins. Everyone must realize and believe that the Lord Himself bore all the suffering on this earth to make this love of God known to all. All of you must grasp here without fail that God loved the world like this, and that He loved you and me to death.

Because God loved you and me and the entire human race, He wanted to solve the problem of sin that we could not solve by ourselves. So God Himself came to this earth incarnated in the flesh of man, bore all the sins of the human race through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, and endured indescribably cruel torture until He was at last crucified. Our Lord then poured out all the blood

that was in His heart and died on the Cross, rose from the dead again, and is now personally testifying that He has saved us from all our sins. You must realize this clearly.

God loved us so much like this that He delivered us from sin and judgment and saved us from everlasting destruction and hell by blotting out all our sins. God Himself went through such hardships to save you by accomplishing the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Therefore, it would be a great mistake if you not only failed to recognize this but, even worse, showed no desire to know it nor believe in it. God loved all of us, and He still loves us. Therefore, all of us must not only realize with our heads but also believe with all our hearts that our Lord was baptized and crucified because He loved us, and that all these things were done out of His love for us. We must truly grasp the love of God through the gospel of the water and the Spirit.



Everyone Must Die Once

As it is written, “*And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment*” (Hebrews 9:27), everyone has to die once after being born in this world without exception, and everyone will be resurrected for sure. Some people will be resurrected into eternal life, while others will be resurrected into judgment. Because judgment awaits everyone after death, your physical death does not mean that everything is over. Although we were all destined to be condemned and cast into hell for our sins, the Lord has made it possible for us to go to Heaven. Our Lord loved us so much that He saved us from all sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Out of His love for mankind, Jesus Christ came to this earth, willingly received His baptism to bear all the sins of the world on His own body, and died on the Cross to personally pay off the wages of all these sins for us. And rising from the dead again, He has saved us perfectly. The Lord has thereby enabled all of us who

believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit not to be destroyed in the next world but instead enter Heaven and live with God happily forever. In this way, God “did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all” (Romans 8:32). That is how much the Lord loved us.

Although we often act as though we would live for a thousand years, all of us must die in fact. It’s written in Psalm 90:10, “*The days of our lives are seventy years; And if by reason of strength they are eighty years.*” Do you think you will live forever? If not forever, then do you think you will at least live for a long time? But some may die in ten days, others in a month, and still others in a few years. The only difference is how long one lives; once born, everyone must die eventually. And once you are dead, you will stand before the presence of God to face the judgment awaiting you. True happiness is not all that we have in our everyday lives. Once the hours allotted to us are gone, sooner or later the day will come for us to stand before God’s throne of judgment.



That's why everyone must believe in Jesus Christ who came by the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Dragged to the court of Pilate, Jesus Christ received forty stripes minus one, and His entire body was covered in blood. He was then revealed to the people with a crown of thorns on His head and a purple robe on His body. Even though Pilate tried to release Him several times, he was outmaneuvered by the political skills of the Jewish leaders and ended up delivering Him to the Roman soldiers. But Jesus endured all His suffering quietly, like a sheep silent before its shearers. And He carried the Cross to Golgotha, a hill whose name meant the skull. He was crucified there, and although He poured out all His blood on the Cross and suffered the most painful death, His last words were, "*It is finished!*" (*John 19:30*)

Jesus had come to this earth to bear all our sins through His baptism and save us by being condemned in our place. He was born on this earth to carry out His work of salvation, but for us, it was to

bring the infinitely joyful news of salvation, just as we sing, "Joy to the world, The Lord is come!" In other words, Jesus Christ came to this earth to save us from all our sins by being baptized by John the Baptist and crucified to death. His purpose on this earth was to make us God's own children by giving up His own life for us and blotting out all our sins. He did all these things because He loved us. It was to manifest His love to us that Jesus was baptized and crucified, thereby fulfilling our salvation.

Did Jesus Christ have any sins at all? No, He was completely sinless. Yet onto His sinless body, He accepted all your sins and mine through the baptism He received from John the Baptist. Jesus Christ was crucified for our transgressions, and He was bruised for our iniquities. It's because He had been baptized by John the Baptist that He was crucified to pay off the wages of our sins and rose from the dead again. It's entirely because of our sins that Jesus endured such terrible sufferings. It's because He loved us so much like this that we could be saved from all the



sins of the world. It's not because of our own merits that we were saved by Him.

Have we ever asked the Lord for our salvation? But even before we asked Him, the Lord already knew us so well that He saved us by washing away all our sins with the baptism He received in the Jordan River and the blood He shed on the Cross. Just how selfish and flawed were we before God? Although we have been born again by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, both the believers and the unbelievers are completely selfish. After all, do we not blindly accept anything that serves our own interests and reject anything that does not? In contrast to such selfish people like us, God Himself came to this earth in the flesh of man to be baptized and crucified, thus saving our souls once and for all without demanding anything from us. This means that God had come to free us from sin and the punishment of death, to give us the happiness of the next world, and to also make us prosper in this present world as His own children. In this way and

through such salvation, the Lord has manifested His love for you and me.

Therefore Everyone Must Believe in God's Love

Because God loved you and me, to manifest His love, He forsook the glory of Heaven and was born on this earth incarnated in the flesh of man. And because He loved us, He bore all the sins of mankind by being baptized by John the Baptist at the age of 30, and He was crucified to be condemned for all these sins that He had already accepted. God did all these things because He loved us. He endured all His suffering silently like a lamb led to the slaughter because of the infinite love of salvation He had for us. All us must therefore realize this love and be born again by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. That is how we can repay our Lord for His love.



However, although this fact can be realized through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, countless people are living without realizing God's love because they do not know this gospel Truth, and because there aren't enough people preaching this gospel. That God loves you and me is demonstrated by the fact that Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist to wash away all our sins and paid off all the wages of our sins by being crucified. Yet too many people do not realize that the Lord is their Savior. Having come to this earth by the gospel of the water and the Spirit, Jesus has completely revealed His love for us by saving us from all the sins of the world once and for all. God truly loves us and wants to make us His people. Then, does He just say to us with empty words, "You have no sin"? No, of course not! Jesus came to this earth to make us God's true children, to turn us into His people, and that is why He was personally baptized, crucified to death, and resurrected from death. In other words, the Lord had come to this earth so that our souls, our bodies, and

our future would all prosper, and we would be freed from the condemnation of sin in particular. Having come to this earth, Jesus accepted all the sins of mankind by being baptized by John the Baptist, and He endured extreme torture until He was crucified to death. Like this, Jesus Himself has revealed everything about salvation, and therefore we can now know and believe in His work of salvation. Through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the Lord has saved His believers from all their sins most justly and most fairly. That is why it is completely just and legitimate for all of us to be saved from sin by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Only then could we be fully qualified and lack nothing to live happily forever with God. Like this, Jesus has revealed His love to the whole world through the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

We may not know much, but all of us must at least know that God loves us. And to manifest this love, God Himself came to this earth incarnated in the flesh of man, and accepted all the sins of mankind by



being baptized by John the Baptist. And because of this, He had to be crucified to shed His blood to death. But we also know that He did not end His work of salvation with His death, but He rose from the dead again to give us eternal life.

We must remember this without fail and believe it with all our hearts. Even if we know nothing else, we must at least know the love of God shown to us through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. This must be grasped by all of you, even if you were illiterate, that God sent Jesus Christ His only begotten Son to this earth to manifest His love for you. The Son of God bore all our sins by being baptized by John the Baptist, and God the Father even allowed His Son to be crucified. God the Father loved us so much that He did not spare His own Son and delivered Him to death. So all of us must believe that this is how much God loved us. I ask each and every one of you to realize and believe with all your heart that God the Father loved you like this.

When we think of God's love, we can see just

how great and noble it is; in contrast, when we think of us human beings, we see that we are too weak, selfish, and wicked. When animals are trapped in a forest fire and perish helplessly, we feel sorry for them. But the corruption and wickedness of humankind have reached such an extreme extent that we would not feel sorry for human beings even if fire came down from the heavens right now and devoured the whole planet earth. However, far from punishing such evil people like us with terrible suffering, the Lord has given us the gospel of the water and the Spirit and saved all who believe in this gospel.

If I had God's power, I would have punished such people in every way possible, by plaguing them with incurable diseases and bringing every conceivable plight to them so that they would all agonize in suffering for the rest of their lives. God could have done this easily. But God is not like me, and so rather than bringing such suffering to mankind, He has brought salvation by giving us the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Are you really thankful for this?



We were made by God's hands, and when we had gone astray despite being God's creatures, instead of punishing us, God manifested His love through the salvation of the water and the Spirit. Could we then still claim to be good people if we do not believe in this Truth of salvation? If we were to reject this love of God, we would be worse than beasts. Even a ferocious beast like a tiger, if it's taken as a cub and raised by its masters, obeys and listens to him. Even an animal trusts and follows its kind master, and so how much more should you, as a human being created by God's hands, trust and follow your Creator? God has shown His unbound love for you through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, but do you even recognize Him as your Savior?

It's undeniably true that man was made by God. Everyone was indeed created by God. It's also true that everyone can put on God's love and be remitted from all his sins. Because human beings are in fact evil by nature, all of them must receive salvation from God by faith. What we must remember without

fail is that God has given us the gospel of the water and the Spirit out of His love for us, and that He still loves us all. God wants you to realize His love. Yet despite this, many people do not know the love of God, and instead they just seek carnal love that only brings temporary gratification to their flesh. When they accomplish something, they think it's all because of their own merit, and they are not grateful to God at all. Just how ridiculous is this? That is why the Lord said that the unsaved are like the beasts that perish.

How long can a human being live even if he were to live a long life? Life is not that long. When you are healthy, you may think that you will live for a long time, but once you fall ill, it's in your human nature to feel as though death is just around the corner. Have you ever thought about death? Do you think death won't come to you? That's certainly not the case! Death will also come to you. Everyone must face physical death. Yet do you still think that you will live a long life? Even if you were to live for a



long time, it's only 100 years at most. You may even live longer than this, but only by a few extra years.

What is then left after your life? God said in the Bible, "*As it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment*" (Hebrews 9:27). Is there anything special to life? From dust to dust is what life is all about; once born, everyone must die eventually. But you must remember here that after this, you must face your judgment without fail.

Because of our sins, all of us were destined to face God's just judgment. We were so full of sin that we were all doomed to be cast into hell. We all deserved this fate.

But even though we should be rightfully cast into hell, God loved us so much that He endured untold suffering in our place and paid off the wages of all our sins for us, thereby manifested His great love to us. What would happen to us then, if we were to neither accept this love with thanksgiving nor remember it? Wouldn't we then become the most depraved of all sinners, since we would be adding the

sin of not believing in and rejecting God's love on top of all the sins that we already have?

Therefore, all of us must believe in God's love exactly as it is, neither adding to it nor subtracting from it. When God Himself says that He loves us, we must accept this love. And we must carry on with our lives in this world by trusting in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. God Himself came to this earth to manifest His love, was baptized by John the Baptist to bear all our sins, and was crucified to death while shouldering all these sins. And He rose from the dead again in three days, thereby saving us once and for all. That is just how much God loved us all. All of us must therefore remember what Jesus has done to save us from sin, never forgetting the purity and nobleness of all the sacrifices that He had to suffer out of His love for us.



From Now on, We Must Work for the Sake of Other Souls

Even though God loved us so much that He gave us His only begotten Son, there still are too many people in this world who do not know this love of God. Therefore, to manifest God's love correctly to all who still don't know it, we must preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit by faith. As we have been born again by faith through the gospel of the water and the Spirit before everyone else, we must live the rest of our lives by faith. The Lord admonished us saying, *"Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God"* (1 Corinthians 10:31). What is God's glory then? Isn't it all about being born again by faith through the gospel of the water and the Spirit God has given us? And isn't it to God's glory that we preach this gospel so that even more people would be born again?

We must therefore always remember the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Regardless of our

circumstances, in good times and bad times alike, we must remember this true gospel at all times and preach it constantly by faith. To manifest His love to us, the Lord has saved us from all our sins through the gospel sacrifice of the water and the Spirit, and He has also delivered us from our everlasting destruction. All of us must believe in this Truth to reach our salvation, and we must also reveal this Truth to everyone else. This means that we must live for the righteousness of the Lord until we go to see Him face to face. Instead of just living for our own flesh, we must live the rest of our lives for the sake of other souls, and then receive the Lord when He returns. I'd never say this to you if it really didn't matter whether you lived for your flesh or not. I'm saying it because it's something that you must realize without fail. If we have indeed met the Lord while living in this world and realized His love through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, then from now on, all of us ought to manifest the Lord's love to everyone else. I give all thanks to the Lord for saving



us through the water and the Spirit.

My fellow believers, do you realize just how much suffering Jesus had to endure for having borne your sins and mine through His baptism? As though being flogged was not painful enough, the whip that was used on Jesus had pieces of hook-shaped metal attached to it, and our Lord had to endure the pain of His flesh being torn apart by them. Could you have endured this pain? You could not have lasted beyond just a few lashes. Yet the Lord endured no less than 39 such lashes.

Why did He have to suffer like this? It's because of none other than our sins that He had accepted through the baptism He received from John the Baptist. Do you grasp this? You must remember without fail that Jesus endured such terrible suffering because He loved us to death, even though we were all sinful. And you must believe in this Truth with all your heart and give thanks to the Lord.

The Scriptures say, "*Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us*

(for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree')" (Galatians 3:13, Deuteronomy 21:23). Put differently, it's the accursed who should be hung on a tree. And these accursed people were none other than us. Yet instead of us, Jesus was hung on the Cross. He had been cursed for our sins in our place. Whose curse was this? It was none other than ours. Had the Lord not borne all your sins and mine through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, we would have borne His accursed punishment. Our own flesh would have been torn, and we ourselves would have been crucified. However, because the Lord had taken upon all our sins through His baptism, His body was cursed to be torn apart in our place.

Do you think that there were many at that time who were put to death in this way? No, absolutely not! In those days in the Roman Empire, only the most hideous criminals who committed the most atrocious crimes were crucified to death rather than being executed by hanging or thrown into dungeons to be fed to savage animals. How would you feel if



you were to face such a punishment? Would you be able to endure if you had to be stripped naked before everyone, whipped until your flesh is all torn apart, slapped and spat at in your face, and ridiculed with all kinds of insults?

The Lord felt every pain and suffering that human beings can feel before His death. Pierced by the thorns, His head was covered in blood, and His heart was also hurt by every conceivable ridicule and insult thrown at Him. He suffered in both body and spirit. Yet despite this, Jesus did not protest His innocence, and instead He endured all His suffering silently. Why did He do this? For whom did He do it? It's none other than for you and me that the Lord endured all such sufferings, punishments, and insults. We were healed by His stripes, and we were made whole by His wounds. Had the Lord not accepted all our sins through His baptism on this earth, and had He not been crucified to death as a result, then we could have never reached our salvation. It's because Christ has saved us personally through the gospel of the

water and the Spirit that we have come to reach our salvation by believing in this Truth. And it's because He was punished for our sins in our place that we could be freed from all our sins.

This world will change time after time, but there is something that we must never forget no matter how much the world changes. It is the fact that Jesus has manifested His love to us to death, through all His suffering and crucifixion. That is how much God loved us all. He loved us so much that He laid down His own life for us. Now then, whoever believes that Jesus has revealed His love through the gospel of the water and the Spirit can be saved from all sins once and for all. This is what you must realize here. All of us ought to give thanks to Jesus by believing in this Truth, and we ought to praise Him for what He has done for us. And just as the Lord is righteous, so must we also live righteously for the rest of our lives, preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit until the day we receive the Lord.



Look at the Love God Has Manifested to Us

Picture in your head the suffering that God endured to save us from the sins of the world, and try to feel it with your heart. Most people take the baptism of Jesus and His Cross too lightly without really understanding their full significance. But the baptism of Jesus and His Cross are extremely important elements manifesting the Lord's love for us. Yet despite this, many people do not really believe in the love of God manifested in the Cross even as they are looking at it. However, if you believe in the Lord's love shown on the Cross and are born again through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, then you will come to thank the Lord for His grace and become an exceedingly humble person before this love.

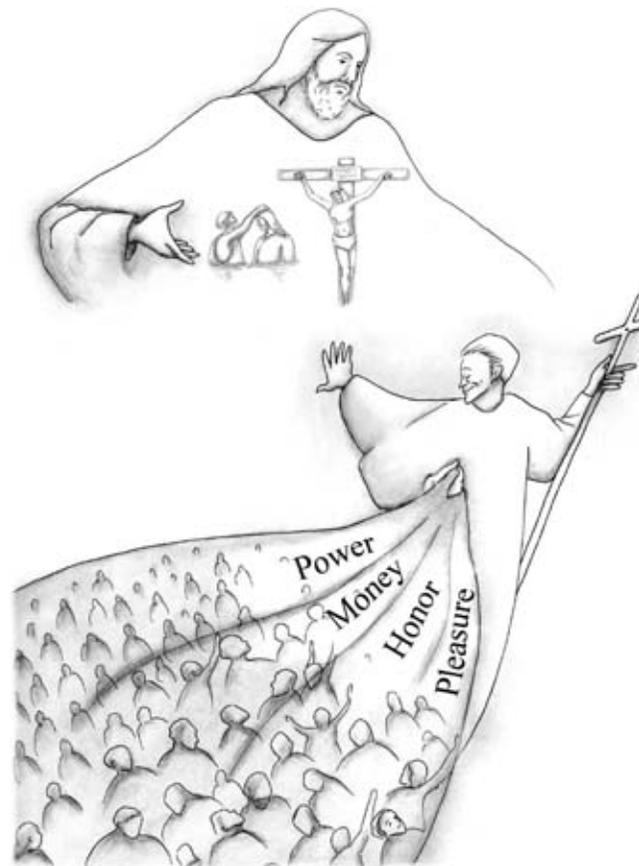
How much of God's love do we know? How much do we really appreciate the sacrifice that God Himself made to reveal His love to us? On this

Passion Week, all of us should thank the Lord from the depth of our hearts for saving us by manifesting His love like this, and for making it possible for us to believe in Him. Let us therefore all thank God by once again reaffirming our faith in the gospel of the water and the Spirit on this Passion Week. ☒



SERMON

9



Contents



False Faiths That Stand against Jesus

< John 19:12-37 >

“From then on Pilate sought to release Him, but the Jews cried out, saying, ‘If you let this Man go, you are not Caesar’s friend. Whoever makes himself a king speaks against Caesar.’ When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus out and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called The Pavement, but in Hebrew, ‘Gabbatha.’ Now it was the Preparation Day of the Passover, and about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews, ‘Behold your King!’ But they cried out, ‘Away with Him, away with Him! Crucify Him!’ Pilate said to them, ‘Shall I crucify your King?’ The chief priests answered, ‘We have no king but Caesar!’ Then he delivered Him to them to be crucified. Then they took Jesus and led

Him away. And He, bearing His cross, went out to a place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha, where they crucified Him, and two others with Him, one on either side, and Jesus in the center. Now Pilate wrote a title and put it on the cross. And the writing was:

JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

Then many of the Jews read this title, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin.

Therefore the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, ‘Do not write, ‘The King of the Jews,’ but, ‘He said, ‘I am the King of the Jews.’” Pilate answered, ‘what I have written, I have written.’ Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments and made four parts, to each soldier a part, and also the tunic. Now the tunic was without seam, woven from the top in one piece. They said therefore among themselves, ‘Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be,’



that the Scripture might be fulfilled which says:

**‘They divided my garments among them,
and for my clothing they cast lots.’**

Therefore the soldiers did these things.

Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, ‘Woman, behold your son!’ Then He said to the disciple, ‘Behold your mother!’ And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home. After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, ‘I thirst!’ Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on hyssop, and put it to His mouth. So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, ‘It is finished!’ And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit. Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not

remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with Him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe. For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, ‘Not one of His bones shall be broken.’ And again another Scripture says, ‘They shall look on Him whom they pierced.’”

In today’s Scripture reading we see how Jesus went through terrible suffering to show us His love, and that water and blood came out from the side of



Jesus when He was pierced with a spear.

Pilate sought to release the Lord Jesus first, but after hearing the yelling of the crowd he delivered Him to them to be crucified. *“From then on Pilate sought to release Him, but the Jews cried out, saying, “If you let this Man go, you are not Caesar’s friend. Whoever makes himself a king speaks against Caesar.” When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus out and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called The Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha. Now it was the Preparation Day of the Passover, and about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews, “Behold your King!” But they cried out, “Away with Him, away with Him! Crucify Him!” Pilate said to them, “Shall I crucify your King?” The chief priests answered, “We have no king but Caesar!” Then he delivered Him to them to be crucified. Then they took Jesus and led Him away” (John 19:12-16).*

The Jews Cried Out for the Crucifixion of Jesus

On that day Pilate asked the Jews, “Shall I crucify your King?” But the Jews cried out, “We have no king but Caesar!” and bayed out ruthlessly for His crucifixion. Pilate tried to release Jesus, but the Jews kept telling him to crucify Jesus. To them Jesus was neither a King, nor their God.

Who then is this Jesus? He is none other than our King. Did Jesus become the King just because we had so desired for Him to be our King? No not at all. We need to know that Jesus created everything in the universe; He was and still is the King, the God, and the Sheppard who has saved us from all our sins. Therefore, even if the Jews did not recognize Jesus as their King, He is without a doubt our King.

Jesus is the King and the Creator of the entire human race; by being born on this earth He showed us His love, and also saved us from all our sins. After receiving His baptism for us, He died by being



crucified. The Jews rose up against Jesus because of this. The Jews said that they had no other king but Caesar who was the Emperor of Rome at that time. Is this really true? Is the King of the Jews, Caesar or Jesus? The fact is Jesus was and is the King of His people - the Jews. For those people who did not believe in the righteousness of God, Caesar was their colonial king. For them what they saw tangibly was everything. Knowing that God was alive and was their God how could they dare rise up against Him like this? If they had knowledge of this fact they would never do this. Jesus told Pilate that those who delivered Him to him had the greater sin.

Jesus was born in the land of Judea in Bethlehem. He was raised in the town of Nazareth, and at the age of thirty, He received His baptism from no one else but John the Baptist. And when He turned 33 years of age, He died by being crucified, and He was resurrected in three days. How could someone like that not be the King of the Jews? Jesus is truly the spiritual King of the Jews. He is truly the King of all

the descendants of Abraham. He is Abraham's God as well as to all his descendants. The Jews rejected Jesus, but you and I believe that Jesus is our King. Not only to us, but also to all those throughout the world who believe in Him like that. Jesus is the King of all kings, the Lord of all lords, and 'the Savior God.'

Let us think once more about Jesus before God the Father. Jesus is our Savior, our Master, and also our King as well as our Shepherd. Because of His great love towards us, He suffered such terrible insults. Therefore, we must believe with all our hearts and take heed that the Lord was indeed crucified and suffered such harsh insults for us.

Nailed above the head of the crucified Jesus, Pilate wrote and put the title of His crime for all to see, "JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS." The Jews who saw this complained bitterly and said, why wasn't the words 'I am the King of the Jews,'" written instead of "the King of the Jews." But Pilate answered and said, "What I have written, I



have written. So, do not discuss this any more. From my point of view, He is your King. Yet despite this you delivered your King to me.” The Jews did not fear God when they stood against Jesus. When they urged Pilate to crucify Jesus, Pilate said, *“I am innocent of the blood of this just Person. You see to it.”* But all the people answered and said, *“His blood be on us and on our children”* (Matthew 27:24-25).

As they swore and took this oath, their descendants have been cursed severely since then. When we look at this curse the people of Israel received after having delivered Jesus to be crucified. Not only did they lose their country for a very long period of time, they were also dispersed all over the world, and what is more, they even suffered the cruelest holocaust in human history. Therefore we should take heed that anyone who does not believe in Jesus as the King will receive such curses. This bears witness to the fact that terrible punishments await those who do not believe that Jesus is the Son of God and the Savior who has saved them from all their sins.

Jesus Did Not Get Crucified Because He Was Powerless

Did Jesus die by being crucified because He was powerless? No, He did not. To save us from the sin of this world, Jesus took away all our sins by receiving His baptism from John the Baptist, and to receive the full judgment for them, He died by shedding His blood on the Cross. We must surely realize and accept this.

We should also know that this punishment by being crucified is something truly horrible. When we talk about Jesus being crucified we should not say it as if it was meaningless words that just fall off our lips, but rather think about it seriously like as if a thorn was stuck deep in at the end of our finger. It will really unbearably sore and painful. Just imagine someone driving nails into your feet and wrists, cutting off and through vital arteries. The unbearable pain and blood flowing down freely and skin tearing apart would be unimaginably horrible. Medical



doctors had once proved that this kind of death is the most terrible and painful that a person could suffer.

When a person is hung on a cross with crude nails are driven into through the wrists and feet, the body will first become limp, and then the skin will begin tearing, spilling much blood. When that happens, the blood inside the heart will circulate and then spill out from the body, and any remaining blood will circulate once more and then spill out. It is said that the ensuing shakes and pain cannot even be expressed into words. The pain of crucifixion cannot possibly be imaginable.

Thus, we cannot but express it into words like this. This is because we are unable to express our emotions so intimately; we can only elaborate this by saying, “They crucified Him.” Could you imagine being nailed to the Cross like this? How horrific would this be? But when expressed into words - in a single sentence, “He suffered death by being hung onto a crude execution device,” would suffice. Whatever the case, that Jesus was crucified instead of

us should be engrave deep within our hearts and just how much the Lord loves us and just how much suffering He had to go through for us.

Talking about this, a certain famous movie director created a film to reproduce such gruesome pain suffered by Jesus. We see this movie drawing great popularity these days. It is also said that many people began believing in Jesus just by watching this single film, and that those who had distanced themselves from the Lord had returned. I think the gruesome pain of Jesus must have been well depicted in this movie.

Jesus Suffered the Horrific Pain of the Cross for Us

When see this movie, we see Jesus suffering great pain while hanging on the Cross. The nails that were driven into and through Jesus’ wrists and feet were large thick crude nails like those used on old wooden



electric poles. And it is said that once such crude nails are driven into a human body, it goes through horrific suffering for a long period of time and does not die immediately.

When someone gets shot by a gun or gets stabbed with a knife, their limbs convulse and they die soon thereafter. But unable to die immediately, Jesus hung on the Cross for six hours; from 9am through to 3pm. (Mark 15:25-34); could you really imagine experiencing such great pain? It truly must have been gruesome to the uttermost. But we should know that Jesus suffered such pain for us. He having received His baptism from John the Baptist and then having suffered such unbearable pain by being nailed to the Cross, was all because He loved us so much and because He had taken onto Himself all our sins.

Because the Lord loved you and me, He was born into this world with a lowly appearance. Jesus was born with such an unattractive appearance to save you and me who were also lowly from all our sins. Jesus did not come to this world to save the rich, but

rather He came to save you and me who were poor in spirit. For this reason Jesus has become our Savior, and He is the true Shepherd who feeds, clothes and raises us up with His great love. Jesus is the King of Love. We must deeply recognize this and believe that only Jesus Christ and only God the Father loved us like this, and that He had gladly suffered this terrible pain for us.

The Lord said, *“I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors”* (John 4:38). We therefore praise Jesus by saying, “My Shepherd is the King of love, and He is my Shield in tribulation.” Because Jesus suffered such great pain and hardship to save us, we are now able to receive our salvation by faith, and also reap the spiritual harvest by faith. Furthermore, we have come to receive much grace and blessing. Could you serve another god by setting aside a Lord like this? No, we cannot. By coming down to this earth, Jesus showed us His love and also suffered much hardship in order to save us. If we



truly believe this, how can we have any other god? There can never be another god. No such one can ever exist.

Many things in this world often tempt us; and there will be times when we cannot escape them due to our own weaknesses. But one thing that never changes and that is, there is no one else more loving than God. Therefore we praise Him by singing, “I’d rather have Jesus than anything. ♪This world affords today♪” This is true. There is no one else besides our Lord. There can never be anyone else. Right now, we are neither professing some religion nor following some fanatical religious leader, but instead believe in the genuine God who saved us completely. By receiving our salvation from this loving God, what we only desire is to know only this God, go on living through Him, realizing only He is our King, and lead our lives believing this and serving Him.

The Crucifixion of Jesus Is the Perfection of Love

By Jesus being nailed to the Cross means the perfection of God’s love. This is Jesus, the King of all kings; He who set aside His glory and sacrificed Himself for His people. Because of this, His people should never betray the King.

Just before Jesus died on the Cross, He cried out, “*It is finished!*” It is written, “*After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, “I thirst!” Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on hyssop, and put it to His mouth. So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, “It is finished!” And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit” (John 19:28-30).* By Him saying “I thirst” means that He had spilled all His blood. And this also means that He had given us the water of everlasting life. Because Jesus gave us this new life, we must refresh His heart by living out



our faith without betraying Him. Also, we should love and follow the Lord and lead a life in Him.

The Bible says when the Lord died on the Cross, a certain soldier thrust his spear up into His side, blood and water immediately came out. By water and blood coming out from His side means that Jesus had indeed died whilst still hanging onto the Cross. From a medical perspective when someone dies blood and water will flow separately out of the body and not mixed together. And so, when a dead person is pierced by a spear like this, blood and water will flow out separately.

There are unfortunately people who doubt Jesus dying on the Cross and being resurrected in three days by saying, “How can a person die in three hours? Could He have not died before? He could have fainted and then woke up?” But the fact that water and blood came out separately proves without a shadow of doubt that Jesus indeed died as recorded. Even a living person would die once pierced like this, and so the piercing of a dead person is like

performing a confirmation that such a person has indeed died. Because Jesus had showed the power of raising the dead previously, the soldier did so wondering if He would come back to life again. As was the custom to confirm their death, the soldiers broke the legs of the two criminals who were crucified with Jesus. But when they came to Jesus, they saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs; instead one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear to confirm His death. Like this, being nailed to the Cross, Jesus died in six hours.

Jesus had suffered such terrible hardship for us. Because of this shouldn't you and I believe in Jesus like this and live out our lives to the end with that faith? Things are not what they used to be, but we must never forget the Lord's love. If there is faith inside our hearts, Jesus' love will reside in it. Furthermore, because the Lord has given us this great love and salvation, it is only proper for us to carry out the work that will satisfy and bring delight to our Lord's heart. That is to go on living united with the



Lord with our hearts and to follow Him. This is what refreshes the Lord's heart.

Even though Jesus was not the King to those who were opposing Him, but to the faithful, He was the absolute King. To those who do not believe in Him, Jesus comes as the King that passes judgment, but to those who believe in Him, He comes as the King that bestows blessings. Pilate wrote the words, "JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS" on the Cross because Jesus was the true King of the Jews. As the King who sacrificed Himself for His people, He did not resent the people at all. Can we find such a king in this world? There can never be one. Of course, one can die for one's own country or for one's friend. But in reality, such a death is really for one's own self, for one's own fame or conviction. But, Jesus indeed died for you and me, and He was resurrected for you and me. And some day soon our Lord will come back to this earth for you and me.

When we look at the death of Jesus, the question arises "Who in fact killed Jesus? Did the Jews kill

Him? Or did the Roman soldiers kill Him?" This question is said to have become a hot issue. As the Jews re-examine Jesus, they will no doubt discuss this very question. This seems to be something good happening because many Jews have now become believers in Jesus.

But dear fellow believers the ones who actually killed Jesus are to be found elsewhere. They are those who do not believe in Jesus. People who do not believe in Jesus as their God and as their Savior are likened to the opponents of Jesus who had cried out for His crucifixion. They are the fleshly Jews and not 'the spiritual Jews.'

Can We Go on Living without Jesus?

No, we cannot go on living without Jesus. Could all living creatures including human beings go on living without God? No, they cannot. They are able to live because God grants them sunlight. Likewise,



we can go on living because of God and because of Jesus Christ, and not anything else.

Even though we believe in Jesus as our Savior, there are many who stubbornly refuse to believe in Him. We have mentioned incessantly that “Jesus came down to this earth to save us, and died on the Cross after having received His baptism. He then was resurrected from the dead; through this He has saved us perfectly.” People who do not believe in this great love of God must realize that they have a grave punishment waiting over their heads. After having lived well on this earth, they will one day be taken away, just as a plump pig goes to a butchery. People who do not believe in Jesus will share the same fate as that of the pig ending its life at a slaughterhouse. Perhaps the pig may be better off. It’s because once an animal dies, it’s the end; but for people the next life starts from the moment they die. The everlasting life starts at a crossroad between eternal happiness and eternal punishment.

Furthermore, people who do not believe in Jesus’

love are just like the Jews. Because the Jews had bayed for the blood of Jesus, they were attacked by other nations and had wandered around for almost two thousand years without their own country. They also have been dispersed all over the world, they have received so much persecution that there is no other nation who had received more curses than the nation of Israel. Just like this, if anyone were to rise up against God and His gospel of the water and the Spirit, that person will suffer severe judgment while still living on this earth. And should they die in this situation they will be thrown in to the eternal fire that never dies and receive the punishment of never dying. This is the justice of God.

But in this world we find persistent and stubborn people who refuse to believe no matter how hard we try to convey this Word to them. They tend to think that as long as they can live well in this world, all will be well. I just cannot understand them. These kinds of people will receive pain later on due to their refusal to believe; therefore we do not need to have



any mercy on them. Jesus had suffered such bitter pain to save His people from their sins; knowing this if you were to suffer pain due to your own refusal to believe, then that is your share you must suffer before God.

If this be the case then what type of work is required from the Lord, who saved you and me by suffering such a woeful passion on the Cross, for all the people of this world? It is the work of spreading His gospel to the whole world.

Not too long ago Pastor Andrew Jung the director of our distribution center visited me and told that people all over the world were ordering so many books these days. With small individual orders set aside, there are many larger orders in box units. The total amount of books that we are distributing now in one two month is larger than that we used to distribute in six months. The pastor also reported that postage has increased markedly. As I reviewed our Monthly Financial Report, I saw much money that has been spent and or needs to be spent that the

thought arose in my mind that we should be earning more money. It would be good if we were in an abundant situation; if we had enough funds to spread the gospel of the water and the Spirit to many more nations, many more people will be receiving the remission of their sins.

Not too long ago I tried decreasing our expense that went into homepage advertising, but soon I found out that the number of visitors decreased in proportion to the amount of expense that was spent. I just tested it to make sure that the funds would be spent on something wasteful, but it was apparent that our advertisement expenses were not wasteful. Even these days, we have book orders amounting to 500 books per day, and I came to think that this was because of the effect of the advertisement which had been made all this time. Therefore, when I meet the board ministers this time, I want to discuss the issue of increasing advertisement expenses so that we can increase our book distribution to the level we used to maintain before.



A few days ago, a newspaper correspondent in Vietnam read one of our books and contacted us. According to him many pastors in Vietnam, especially those who have a false ministry, do not want people to read our books. It is because our books refer to Jesus' baptism and are too biblical, and because they differ from their faith. However, even though these pastors might say things like this, he told us that he thinks the content of our books fits perfectly with the Bible. Also he did not forget to give us a blessed counsel, saying that the book repeats a single topic so often that the teaching therein could not but be engraved in his heart. And so I had sent him a message of gratitude.

In spite of this I think that many people in this world are still unaware of the secret of the baptism even though they believe Jesus died hanging on the Cross. The reporter in Vietnam told me that he at last had found out just why Jesus was hung upon the Cross by reading our books. He had found the Truth and confessed, "Jesus had suffered through the

sacrifice of crucifixion for He had taken on the sins of this world through the baptism." Not only that reporter but also many people of this world will find out the Truth through our books. Having experienced things like this, I have come to know that this work that we are doing is so very worthwhile and precious; and I have come to possess the conviction that we must ceaselessly carry out this work despite much distractions, disturbances and hardships.

Therefore, as a part of our method in spreading the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we are producing books that will preach the truth. Once a book gets published in English, it then gets translated to almost all the languages of the world. Can you now imagine how just how many versions and titles there are? The book that is getting published now will be our fifteenth volume. Currently, we are translating 'sermon books on Galatians', but because one of our translators quit, leaving us with only one translator, I think it will take at least a month to publish it.

Once people read these sermon books on



Galatians, there will be an epoch progress in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It is because instead of just spreading the gospel of the water and the Spirit, it will clearly manifest the truth that all those who had been offering prayers of repentance by just believing in the blood of the Cross are all wrong. Even during the days when the Apostle Paul was preaching the gospel, the people of Israel believed that people who had received physical circumcision would become people of God.

At the beginning of the Epistle, the Apostle Paul introduces himself by saying, “*Paul, an apostle (not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead)*” (*Galatians 1:1*). And he goes on to speak about how wrongful the circumcisionists are. He also speaks about the fact that God’s Church that previously had faith in the gospel of the water and the Spirit had been disturbed because of these circumcisionists claiming physical circumcision. Right now, the entire Christian community believes that if one were to

offer prayers of repentance, that person will receive the remission of sins; these claims are exactly the same as those who were advocating physical circumcision during the days of the Apostle Paul.

Some people say, “Even though the gospel of the water and the Spirit is right, what is wrong with offering prayers of repentance?” and they go on regardless asserting that one must believe in Jesus and offer prayers of repentance as well. To compound matters many people think there is nothing wrong believing like this. But we should know without a shadow of doubt that prayer of repentance is gravely mistaken. And that is what is mentioned in the Book of Galatians.



The Gospel of the Water and the Spirit Is True, but the Gospel That Believes Only in the Blood of the Cross Is False

Through these sermon books on Galatians, all peoples of this world will come to realize that the gospel of the water and the Spirit is the real truth and that, like now, prayers of repentance and having faith only in the blood on the Cross is entirely false and stands in opposition of God. Just by reading the first volume of this series, many people say, “Now I know what heresy is.” Also many confess what they had believed in was in fact heresy and they testify the past fallacies of their faith.

Just like a tsunami, the inside of Christianity will completely be wiped away and be overturned through the sermon books on the Book of Galatians. It is because people will begin realizing that what they had previously believed in until then was something

completely in opposition to God. I sincerely hope these Christians will realize this soon that their faith in something completely wrong, not just a little bit wrong. And through this teaching, I hope that they will come to cleanse away all their sins by believing in Jesus and His gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Dear fellow believers, offering prayers of repentance just by believing in the blood of the Cross is to stand directly against the love of God. Do you really think your sins disappear by offering your many prayers of repentance? The Jews cried out, “Crucify Him, crucify Him,” and they said that they had no king but Caesar. But is Jesus really less than Caesar? Is the gospel of the water and the Spirit really less than the faith of believing only in the blood of the Cross and the many prayers of repentance? If one could cleanse away one’s own sins by offering prayers of repentance, then the accomplishments of Jesus would have become unnecessary. That would tantamount be rising up against Jesus? This false faith is to challenge the love



of Jesus publicly.

Many people still believe only in the crucified Jesus, and they claim in loud voices that by offering prayers of repentance, they can cleanse away all the many sins they commit after believing in Jesus. This is a 100% wrongful faith, and it is a belief and man made doctrine that deteriorates God's love and your salvation. These sermon books will explain step by step why that is so wrong. And so I am thinking about sending these books all over the world. By reading this single volume many will come to the realization that what they had believed in until now was neither God's love nor God's Truth, and that they have all this time been challenging God standing and bandying together in palatial churches they built. From God's point of view, building high church-bell towers implies challenging God. In front of the Congress building in the United States, there is an obelisk named the Washington Monument. This obelisk looks like a sword, and that clearly shows people challenging God. In like fashion, when people

try to add on their own efforts by offering prayers of repentance, are they not just simply making foolish claims that they will add onto their own strengths since the Lord was not able to do so completely? So the reality is many Christian sinners today are really challenging God.

Believe in the God-given Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

In today's Scripture reading we read when Jesus died on the Cross and said, "I thirst," and "It is finished!" Jesus indeed finished it all, so why is there a need to add on with our merits and strengths? We just have to believe in the work that He has done for us; so the question is asked, what lacking can we find in His salvation that requires a need for weeping and offers of prayers of repentance? Did God by saving us by coming down to this earth do an imperfect job? Before the dawn of the end of days, all peoples of



this world will come to realize their erroneous faith.

But still many people have a wrongfully belief, “Could we not receive our salvation by believing only in the blood of the Cross or just by living a devoted lifestyle?” But just as those who had advocated circumcision did not receive the remission of their sins, people who carry one asserting prayers of repentance are those who have as yet not received the remission of sins. People who believe only in the blood of the Cross do not know Jesus’ baptism, and thus they cannot but offer prayers of repentance for they still have sins intact in their heart. This is because they cannot pass on their sins over onto Jesus for they do not have the faith of believing in Jesus’ baptism. For those who do not believe in the true gospel, that must be their best way. But we should know that these people cannot go to Heaven, not even one. You may question this by saying, “Can you really say this to all these people?” I can say this with the utmost certainty. Numerous people read our books and tell us, “These teachings are correct.”

I did speak about a certain AP newspaper correspondent in Vietnam. He told me that there were people who did not want to read our books because our books pointed out all too clearly that their faith was wrong. Like this, if people were to read the entire first three volumes of our books, they will be able to realize the superstitious faith exists in the churches of this world, and they will also realize just how wrongful their faith is.

Do you know just how many Christians are opposing God even as I speak? The Jews, although professing to believe in God, gave up Jesus to the cruel Roman soldiers to be nailed to the Cross. These Jews and the Christians of today are all the same. The many legalists and Presbyterians who offer prayers of repentance by believing only in the blood of Cross all profess to believe in God, but the reality is that they are all the opponents of God’s love. Even though they say they believe in Jesus and do what they do, because they do not believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, they rise up against Jesus and for this



will indeed go to hell in the end.

I like preaching this gospel of the water and the Spirit. Of course a lot of effort goes into it, but because I know all too well that there are still many people who need to hear the gospel throughout the world, I try to gather up my strength. I admonish you also to gather up strength. And doing this we must unite with the Church. We must unite our hearts in the work of spreading God's gospel. We must also serve the Lord by our faith. If our hearts are elsewhere and just pretending to do so is really not being united. True uniting lies in the heart as well as in the body going forth together before the Lord. The Lord has allowed us to carry out this task thus far by bestowing you and me with such faith and strength.

The World Is Becoming Extremely Difficult

Recently the United States made an announcement

that anyone regardless of nationality, will have to have their fingerprints and pictures taken before they can enter the States. What does this all mean? Also seven countries among the past subsidiary countries of the now dissolved USSR have now jointed the NATO military alliance. What do you think all these means? It means the United States; by making an alliance with each country will consider any country that is not a part of this alliance as an enemy. The marking of the sign on the end of the days is being carried out silently and steadfastly. The day of receiving the mark on one's forehead or right hand is upon us this is when terrorism becomes rampant throughout the world, and the world becoming chaotic. Until that time arrives we need to be vigilant. Eventually a terrible dictator will make his appearance and we will face the days of terrible tribulation which we fear all so much.

Even now, isn't a president of a certain powerful country trying to implement a policy to put the entire world under his grasp? From a human perspective, he



is a true policy maker and a person worthy of being the president and a leader of the entire world. It is because he has a broad and grand view of things. But he incurs resistance from the entire world because he thinks of wars all too easily and wages them recklessly. However, the sad fact is that world figures like this will continue to appear in the future.

Someone who is a true leader must know how to implement policies. A leader must look ahead into the future and present a direction for a life of faith by implementing a proper workable policy. And as for the rest of us who are to follow this leader, we must move forth together with the leader by complementing him whilst under his leadership. If a leader does not know how to establish policies, everything he does becomes useless. No matter how talented they may be, if a person does not know how to establish policies, then he is not worthy of becoming a leader. It is the same for anyone who is leading the world as well as the president of any country. A leader must establish policies well. If the

leader establishes policies on how to run a country and if that leader carries out these policies while reinforcing it one by one, that country will become wealthy and powerful. However, if a president cannot establish policies and goes back and forth recklessly, then that country cannot but be ruined in the end.

Knowing this we must pray for our nation's economy, political stability and our leader. It is because we can serve the gospel well only when the country is in stable condition. If a country becomes unstable, its citizens become withdrawn and refrain from spending money. If this should happen, that domestic economy will dwindle away and will become an obstruction to our serving of the gospel there. Therefore, we must pray for the economic stability and prosperity of our country and others where we are spreading His gospel.

As I mentioned before, I feel so great serving this gospel of the water and the Spirit with you. Also just as our Lord was sacrificed for us, I always think that we must refresh the Lord's heart by living for the



Lord by faith. I actually conduct myself like that everyday. Until the day when the Lord will come, we should refresh God's heart by spreading the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

When I visit a house of mourning to offer my condolences, I come to realize anew that life is nothing. In the end when a person dies, everything in this world become totally irrelevant and that person will now face the afterlife by departing from this material world. Therefore I think that I must prepare well lest at that time I would receive the judgment and pain for my sins. So for us the believers there are many preparations of faith before one can go to the next life; but sadly there are just too many people who go on living without having prepared their faith by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. When I see these people, I truly feel pity on them. And so I become increasingly aware how fortunate it is for me and you to have been entrusted with the mission of spreading this gospel of the water and the Spirit. As I continue preaching the gospel of the

water and the Spirit like this, I gain strength spiritually. Therefore whenever I visit a house of mourning to give my condolences, I deliver the gospel of the water and the Spirit as if it is a revival meeting. I tell them to prepare for the next world because no one knows when a person's life will end. I hope you will also be prepared for the day you die.

Dear fellow believers, I am always thankful for all the works of God. Although we experience many disappointments, such things must exist, but despite this I will continue to live by faith until the end by bracing up my heart. The work of spreading the gospel of the water and the Spirit has not come to an end yet. Perhaps this is only the beginning.

More than anything else, Jesus is our King and our God. And I believe Jesus has blotted out all our sins by receiving His baptism and shedding His blood for our sins. Let us now engrave the sacrifice of Jesus deep inside our hearts by faith. The Lord has given to us His great love so that we could be saved from all our sins. When sit down and ponder about the gospel



of the water and the Spirit, I become so amazed. Also I am always thankful for having been able to know and believe in this gospel of the water and the Spirit.

But you must know this I was never able to find out about this gospel of the water and the Spirit just by chance. I studied it until my head hurt, and I begged to God for it without sleep asking, “Why did Jesus receive His baptism from John the Baptist?” When everyone else was asleep, I prayed by knocking my head on the floor, and when everyone else was memorizing English vocabulary, I read the Bible. The Lord instilled curiosity in my heart and eventually met me through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Furthermore, He allowed me to know, believe in and also preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to everyone.

It is none other than God who has established His Church like this. Is this true, or is it not? Yes, it is true. God’s Church does not get realized through the will of any human being. As we the righteous become united with each other through the gospel of

the water and the Spirit by being obedient to God, we will naturally come to spread the gospel of the water and the Spirit throughout the entire world. So you must know this that this was not something that came about just by chance, but rather, it came direct from God’s wisdom and revelation. It is something for which we should thank God for.

From now on, the entire world will change at a great speed. With the expansion of the Internet it will become an age when most people of the world will be able to read the gospel of the water and the Spirit in an electronic book form. Then as we translate our books into various languages, and then upload them as electronic books and also publish and send them as paperback books, there will come a time when we will be able to spread the gospel throughout the world while sitting down. God has given us that wisdom.

When we first started spreading this gospel of the water and the Spirit, it was rather feeble. Of course we know that there is not anyone in the world who is



spreading the gospel of the water and the Spirit. In the beginning we started the work of making books by purchasing a PC, the function of which was limited to that of a typewriter. Also you don't know just how much hard time we had by not knowing how to use a computer. But things have improved. Isn't it the Pentium and wireless age? It is so fast that just by web surfing, we can weave around every corner of this world. Like this we are spreading the gospel of the water and the Spirit by utilizing the benefit of this information-oriented society. Currently the number of people visiting to our homepage has surpassed five thousand a day, and the gospel is being spread at a rapid rate. The work that God does is like this.

Despite this when we consider the works being done now; we do neither celebrate too much nor feel content, but rather we feel our lacking. We reflect upon ourselves to see whether we are working with devotion and by faith or not, or whether we regard the outcomes of our ministry as 'booty' trapped in

self-absorption. God is the One who has done all these works. For God has entrusted us to do these wondrous works through these wonderful electronic instruments; so I wish to administer it until the day when the Lord will return and to hear Him say to me, "Dear good and loyal servant, you have been loyal in small works, so I entrust you with many things." Until that day arrives when the Lord will entrust us with many things and bestow us with many blessings, we must ceaselessly carry out the works of the Lord.

I hear many people these days suffering with colds and flu. I therefore admonish you all too please take care of your bodies well so that you can serve the gospel energetically. Just as it is said that ground hardens after the rain, once the trials in body and spirit pass, your faith will have grown even more. I will again be going to the revival meetings that is held by one of our branch Churches. I will have a good trip and come back soon. I hope you will all carry out the works which was entrusted to you. And please be mindful of your health.



With the desire to always serve the gospel of the water and the Spirit until the day when the Lord returns, I hope for us to live out our faith by loving the Lord, just as God has loved us. ☒



SERMON

10



Contents



The Righteous Have New Life

< John 20:11-31 >

“But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down and looked into the tomb. And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. Then they said to her, ‘Woman, why are you weeping?’ She said to them, ‘Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him.’ Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?’ She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, ‘Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away.’ Jesus said to

her, “Mary!” She turned and said to Him, ‘Rabboni!’ (which is to say, Teacher). Jesus said to her, ‘Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, ‘I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.’” Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things to her. Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, ‘Peace be with you.’ When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. So Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.’ And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they



are retained.’ Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to him, ‘We have seen the Lord.’ So he said to them, ‘Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.’ And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, ‘Peace to you!’ Then He said to Thomas, ‘Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing.’ And Thomas answered and said to Him, ‘My Lord and my God!’ Jesus said to him, ‘Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.’ And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the

Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.”

Today is Easter Sunday. At our daytime service I preached on the topic “We should thank God who gave us new life.” Brothers and sisters a glorious new life is waiting of the righteous who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. As for the righteous, life on earth is not everything, but there is new life, a glorious new life after the resurrection of our physical bodies.

What should our true hope be? Our hope should be waiting for our Lord to return. Everyone waits for something great to happen whilst living on this earth. What then would be the most desired thing people are waiting for during their lives? It is to have a second chance to live by being resurrected. People have many regrets during their lives, so they want to make up for these failures to live a perfect life if they could have just another chance to live again. We the



born again will enjoy what we have hoped for when that Day arrives. Therefore, we the righteous should wait in anticipation for our glorious new lives in Heaven by faith as we live in this world.

There was a woman named Mary Magdalene while Jesus was on earth. She was caught in the act of adultery, but she met Jesus and was saved from all her sins by His grace. She was one of the first women who went to the tomb of Jesus on the third day after His burial.

Our Lord loves everyone, but He specially loved Mary Magdalene who had received the grace of salvation from Him. Our Lord loves people like Mary Magdalene more whose soul was poor and hungry for His grace.

At the dawn of the third day after Jesus' burial, Mary Magdalene went to His tomb with another woman. It was to pour spices and perfume on His body, as was the custom. But she was absolutely surprised to see the heavy tombstone had been rolled away when she arrived there. When she turned

around whilst standing there, she noticed someone standing behind her. She did not know that it was Jesus. At that moment Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" Thinking that he was the gardener she said, "If you had carried Him away, please tell me where you put Him, and I will go and fetch Him."

When the man who she thought was the gardener called her by her name, "Mary!" she realized then it was Jesus who had risen from the dead. So she cried out in Hebrew, "Rabboni!" which means 'teacher.' Jesus said, "*Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.'*" Mary Magdalene returned immediately to the disciples and said, "I have seen the Lord," and she told them what Jesus told her.

Mary Magdalene was one of those people who had received the remission of all their sins from Jesus. She was the one who was about to be stoned to death



when she met Jesus, and both of her body and spirit were saved by the grace of Jesus. Because of this she could not help but love Him very much.

We notice a number of women with the same name as this ‘Mary’ in the Bible. For example, the name of Jesus’ mother was Mary, so you might think that the woman who went to the tomb first after Jesus was buried was the mother of Jesus. But the Bible says clearly that it was in fact Mary Magdalene. When Jesus was crucified on the Cross, there were several Mary’s standing there including Jesus’ mother, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, the wife of Clopas (John 19:25). The name ‘Mary’ was a common name in Israel just like there are so many ‘Sunja’ in Korean women’s names.

Mary Magdalene was a woman who had received great grace from Jesus. So she visited Jesus frequently and spent time with Him. This is described in detail especially in the Gospel of John. The other gospel writers did not lay emphasis on Mary. However, the Apostle John highlighted this Mary in

the Gospel of John.

Let’s go back to the tomb scene. The other women who accompanied this Mary thought that the man standing in front of the tomb was an angel. So they ran away gripped with fear. But Mary Magdalene stayed and asked the man if he was the gardener, and she told him boldly that she would go and fetch Jesus’ body if he told her where the body was. When Jesus called her by her name, “Mary!” she then realized it was Jesus. That is why she shouted, “Rabboni!” Unlike Mary Magdalene, most people could not recognize the resurrected Jesus right away. It might have been because it was early in the morning.

You all know what early dawn is like, don’t you? When we go to early morning prayer meetings, it is still dark to see anything. By the time we get done with our morning prayers, it slowly starts to brighten up so that we can see the roads and people’s silhouettes. We call this time of the day early dawn, and that was the time when Mary Magdalene went to



the tomb.

Mary Magdalene met the resurrected Jesus at dawn the next day. “Rabboni! Are you really my Teacher?” This was Mary’s question as she tried to hold on to Him. Then Jesus told her not to touch Him for He had as yet not gone to the Father. He told her to go to the disciples instead and tell them that He was going to ascend to the Father. He was indeed the resurrected Lord. So Mary Magdalene ran to the place where the disciples were and testified to them with much excitement.

Brothers and Sisters, I believe that our Lord has risen from the dead. I believe this because by being resurrected from the dead He was able to complete the work of salvation. If our Lord had not been resurrected, our salvation would not have been completed. I have been telling you over and over again that we have gained new life because of our Lord’s resurrection. We need to understand that we will not live the same kind of lives as we are living right now in the next world. We will not live this

miserable life which is limited and then dies, but rather everlasting new life awaits us. We the righteous are living a whole new life. I want you to know our lives are blessed forever.

I would like to tell you a little about myself. On my heart’s tablet is engraved God’s remission of sin. And the fact that the Lord is my shepherd, and that I will live in His Kingdom forever is also engraved there. Therefore, a great hope arises in my heart whenever I think, “I will live again. I will surely live again!” Because of this a great hope arises within me that I will be living a glorious life with God forever. What I always wanted and hoped for will come about. I will live this life when I will rise up from the dead. The Book of Revelation describes what that day will be like. The Apostle Paul also waited for that Day when he will enjoy the glory of Heaven with the Lord by saying, “*For I consider that 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 believe we will live a wonderful and



satisfactory life then. So I am looking forward to that Day.

Brothers and Sisters, this hope is not a temporal hope that fades away like the morning mist. This is the kind of hope we keep thinking about during our lifetime. I want you to know that this is the glorious and precious blessing that our Lord gave us. We the righteous should hope for this first resurrection. As we carry on living in these end days, our hope is that we will be the partakers of the first resurrection. We must think about these things; “My life will begin anew. Present suffering and pain are not everything that I will face. A glorious ‘New life’ is waiting for us the righteous,” and we must wait patiently for that Day. Our Lord gives us enough joy, patience and boldness to handle things that have been assigned to us until that day when we get to live with Him. I believe the whole Bible relates to this hope. I know that new life is waiting for you and me. Therefore, I live with anticipation that this hope we have will eventually come true. I want you to live with the

hope of resurrection also. I really have this hope.

Jesus revealed Himself to Mary Magdalene and the other woman on Easter Sunday morning. And only showed Himself to His disciples on that Sunday evening. His disciples were gathered together for fear of the Jews who were trying to arrest them. They were talking about what they saw; some might have said, “I have seen Jesus. He really rose up from the dead.” Peter and John might have talked about how the tomb was empty when they arrived there.

“Peace Be with You”

They kept all the doors and windows locked in order not to be caught by the Jews, when Jesus suddenly appeared amongst them. He said to them, “*Peace be with you*” (John 20:19). This was the very first greeting to His disciples after He was resurrected. “*Peace be with you.*”

What is this peace? This Heavenly Peace is the



great thing to have. Peace is a state of absence of any danger accompanied with the presence of pure joy. People who do not know this peace call being comfortable and having safe conditions, peaceful. But the word ‘peace’ here was one of the very first words Jesus said to the disciples after He arose from the dead. Jesus greeted them, *“Peace be with you.”*

We know what Jesus said was very appropriate for that moment. Why did Jesus wish them peace more than anything else? The reason was that the disciples were very uneasy and fearful at that time. That’s right. Since the Jews crucified their teacher Jesus, they were afraid of getting arrested as well for following Him. They were afraid that things would get worse and the Jews would decide to arrest them as well by saying, “Why don’t we arrest and kill those who followed this Jesus as well?” They were worried that the Jews would want to kill all the followers of Jesus as they did with their teacher.

So at that very moment when they were talking about the risen Jesus with all doors locked in fear of

the Jews, He appeared amongst them with this greeting, *“Peace be with you.”* The disciples physically saw the resurrected Lord. They also saw His hands and side with its wounds. When they saw Him and His wounds, they were overjoyed.

“If You Forgive the Sins of Anyone, Their Sins Are Forgiven”

Let’s read John 20:21-23. *“So Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.’ And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.’”* Jesus showed His wounded hands and side to His disciples, and greeted them with *“Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.”* And He breathed on them and told them to receive the Holy Spirit.



The Holy Spirit is ‘*Pneuma*’ in Greek. The word ‘*Pneuma*’ has the meaning of breath. What does this mean? Do you remember the verse from the Book of Genesis where God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into His nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being? That’s it. Jesus breathed into His disciples just like that. He first said, “*Peace to you!*” and then said, “*Receive the Holy Spirit.*” And finally He said, “*If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.*”

Our Lord came to this earth in a human body through Mary’s body according to the will of God the Father. He was baptized by John the Baptist when He was thirty years old. And through this He took all the sins of the world onto His body once and for all. He was crucified on the Cross bearing all the sins of the world; He shed His blood and died on the Cross. He rose up from the dead on the third day; and He appeared to His disciples with this greeting, “*Peace to you.*” He also said, “*As the Father has sent me, I*

also send you.”

Let’s Think about What These Words Mean

He came to this world to save us from the sins of the world. He did indeed save us by the gospel of the water and the Spirit. He completed His work of salvation, and told His disciples that He was going to send them forth. His Word is His commandment that goes like this, “Save the souls of people the same way I did while I was working with you on this earth.” That is why He told them to receive the Holy Spirit and about the authority to forgive the sins of people by saying, “*If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.*”

Our Lord has indeed removed all our sins with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. After He rose up from the dead, He gave the authority to forgive



people's sins. Whoever believes in this will indeed be one of the people who have received the remission of their sins. Those whose sins have been forgiven have received the Holy Spirit as a gift. Brothers and sisters, we were saved from our sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Those who are saved receive the Holy Spirit. What happens when you receive the Spirit of God? You become a child of God immediately. Here is one very important thing for us to remember. The Holy Spirit is not something we can obtain by praying. It is a free gift from God given to His children who have been saved from all their sins.

Jesus told them to receive the Holy Spirit. And He gave them authority to remit the sins of others. From here we can see that the disciples who received the remission of sins received the authority to forgive other people's sins. The Lord indeed gave this authority to His disciples. Let's look at today's Scripture passage again. *"If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of*

any, they are retained." Jesus told them these words for a very good reason.

Jesus' disciples knew well who He was. They knew and believed that He was born of Virgin Mary; and that He was baptized by John the Baptist when He was thirty years old to bear all the sins of the world; and that He was crucified on the Cross to save us from the punishment of death and from all our sins; He rose from the dead; and through this became the Savior of all humankind. When they shared their faith with other people, these people who heard and believed also received the remission of sins. If the disciples were wicked and decided not share the gospel of water and the Spirit with other people, they would never be able to receive the remission of there sins.

A question arises here on whether or not the followers of Christ really have this authority to remit the sins of others. Firstly, we need to know that Jesus has this power to remit sins. And secondly we see this same power been manifested in the disciples who



believed in Jesus, who came by the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Therefore, we too have this very same power so that we can preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to other people. Those who have as yet not heard or refused to accept the gospel of the water and the Spirit will not receive the remission of their sins; but on the other hand those who believe and are obedient and believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit through us who preach it, will receive the remission of their sins without exception by faith. So we see that the authority of the disciples was very great.

When Peter looked directly at the lame beggar and said, *“Silver or gold, I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk,”* the man stood up immediately and walked and even ran with joy. What did Peter say he could in fact give him? He said, “What do I have that I can give to you.” What he only had was his faith. When Jesus’ disciples gave their faith to people, it immediately brought results in

people.

If this be so then what kind of change can we bring to people we meet? We have this very same authority to remit people’s sins with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We are the righteous people who can bring changes to everyone. We have this very same power. I cannot overly emphasize this fact. But despite this, there are still people who mistreat us, and try to harm us, hate us so much and desire to kill us like the disciples. What they don’t realize is that they are not doing this to us, but to God. These very stubborn people are rebelling against God’s righteousness.

We are the true and approved ambassadors of God’s Kingdom. There are a lot of ambassadors in Korea, as in your country. They include the American ambassador and the Japanese ambassador etc. If any unpleasant thing happens such as distorting our history in say, the Japanese textbooks, our Minister of Foreign Affairs calls the Japanese ambassador and would question him about it. “Why



does your country teach what is not true in our history? Are you not supposed to teach the truth?" Then what would this ambassador do? As the representative of Japan, this ambassador might say to the Korean people. "We sincerely regret that such an unpleasant affair has happened. I will notify our government about this as soon as possible to rectify it." So we see in this example, the Japanese ambassador is only doing his job as a representative of his country.

Likewise, we as the true believers who have received the remission of our sins are working for Jesus Christ as His ambassador. We are the people who are carrying out His work. He has given us this very same authority to do His work. So we are doing it diligently. Therefore, those who carry on disregarding and ridiculing our words and make fun of the gospel of the water and the Spirit will never receive the remission of their sins. On the other hand, those people who bless us 'the truly born-again' will be blessed. But as mentioned before, those who

despise, mistreat and kill the righteous who have received the remission of sins by faith will be judged severely by our Lord Jesus Christ. People will win prizes or be punished according to what they deserve. God has given us such authority.

Only the righteous have this authority to remit people's sins. Brothers and sisters, do you think this authority is worthless? Never! This is a great authority. No one else in this world has this authority as a true disciple of Jesus Christ. Only we the children of God have this authority. Only you and I have this authority. No matter how many shortcomings we have, we do indeed have this authority to remit sins and bring changes in others.

Pastor Park's brother-in-law who was notified too late that he had liver cancer, passed away a few days ago. He lost consciousness and was hospitalized last weekend. He was in-and-out of a state of consciousness. When he woke up, Pastor Park earnestly shared the gospel of the water and the Spirit with him.



His wife Pastor Park's elder sister had also been suffering from breast cancer. While he was taking care of his wife in hospital, he discovered that he had liver cancer. Pastor Park's sister recovered from the cancer after her surgery, but her husband passed away not long after he was admitted into hospital.

Before he died, Pastor Park asked his brother-in-law, who was not able to keep consciousness, "Do you believe that all your sins are taken away, because Jesus bore the sins of the world when he was baptized by John the Baptist?" His brother-in-law just nodded his head. So he continued, "Can you receive the remission of your sins just by offering prayers of repentance? You will most certainly stand before God now. The problems of your sins must be solved now! I am telling you again: Jesus bore our sins when He was baptized by John the Baptist, and He took all your sins as well. You can be saved if you will accept this truth in your heart. We are not saved by our works. Do you understand?" To this, he nodded again without saying anything. He then

passed away after being a few days in the hospital. I believe he received the remission of his sins.

People become very truthful when they face death. Their faith becomes purer than a child's faith when they are staring into death. People in these moments say "yes" and "no" exactly according to the condition of their hearts. Dong-ook's grandfather also heard about the gospel from Pastor Park and Deaconess Yung-Ae Kim. He could not do anything but to accept the gospel by faith, and received the remission of all his sins solely by faith.

So the question, who has this authority to wash away people's sins? You are right! This authority belongs to you and me who truly believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The Pope does not have this authority. Neither do any Catholic priest. Only you and I who believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit have this power. Do you truly believe this?

Brothers and sisters, people who condescend on us by holding onto and believing in the doctrines of



their own respective denominations are being separated from true blessings. But we should know that God indeed promised 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).

God also promised here that he would be the source of all blessings. Who is the real source of blessings? The real source of blessings stems from no-one else but Jesus Christ. What does this mean? Whoever believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit becomes this source of blessings on this earth. Therefore, if someone blesses us by understanding and showing favor on God’s righteous people, He will bless and show favor on such a person. On the other hand, should one despise God’s church and mock His people, that person will indeed be cursed.

The Lord said, *“If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.”* This is the authority God gave each

one of us. In other words, God gave us ‘the righteous’ the power to forgive sins. We most certainly have this authority. That is why we should preach this gospel. Since we have this authority, we withhold from preaching this gospel to those who do not fear God and stand furiously against Him and His righteousness. There are people who openly argue and reject His gospel even when we explain it to them. These are the pitiful souls that will be cursed in the end.

Dear fellow believers, God indeed has given us these great blessings. In summary, I would like to share this with you. There was a disciple named Didymus or Thomas, he was not present in the room when Jesus appeared to the disciples after His resurrection. Even though he was told about Jesus Christ being resurrected he would not believe it unless he put his finger into Jesus’ wounded hands and side. Jesus appeared to them again. The doors and windows were locked as before, but despite this Jesus appeared in their midst and showed Himself to



them. Jesus again greeted them, *“Peace be with you!”* and then said to Thomas, *“Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing.”* Then Thomas answered and said to Him, *“My Lord and my God!”* Jesus said to him, *“Thomas, because you have seen Me, you believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”* From Jesus’ appearance and greeting, we can say with certainty that the resurrection of Jesus was clearly an established fact.

Dear fellow believers, I am telling you over and over again that Jesus Christ indeed rose up from the dead! He started a new life after He was resurrected, and ascended to Heaven. Because of this fact we also will have this new life in the near future. The Bible tells us that there were many other miracles besides Jesus’ resurrection. Verse 30-31 says, *“And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is*

the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.” What would the reason be for the author to mention some events without writing about the other miracles? The Bible tells us clearly that it is in order for us to have eternal life in His name. John in his epistle wanted us to know that we have eternal life through our Lord, who rose up from the dead.

Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And He is God who rose up from the dead, and He also has revived us up from the dead. Jesus is also our Savior who has the power to heal the deaf, open blind eyes and make the lame to walk. He is your God as well as my God. Do you believe this?

Jesus said about Himself, *“I am the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25)*. He is the Master of Life. If He decides to destroy all the creatures on earth, nothing will be left. Jesus who is the Master of the universe promised us that He would make a whole new world. And He told us that we would begin this new life there. When our Lord says He will do this,



things will happen just as He had promised. Our Lord has the power to do all these things. That's why we have been learning about our great Lord and fully trust Him.

There are many people who believe and know Jesus properly. Their faith will keep growing as time passes by. But there are other people who have heard the gospel but cannot or just simply refuse to understand it. Some people have received the remission of their sins, but are unfortunately in a spiritual slumber due to the desires of their flesh. Others do not know how precious this gospel is, and do not know how to serve God by not knowing their positions and duties in the Church.

That is why we need to always watch ourselves carefully. We need to know what our duties are and what the Church has entrusted us to, and realize that God also confirms these duties. We have to try hard and do our best to take good care of these works God has entrusted us with. When we try to take good care of these entrusted works with strong faith and

responsibility, we will be able to stay spiritually alert.

My heart feels so blessed on this Easter Sunday. It is difficult to talk about the resurrection of Christ unless it is Easter Sunday. So I am thankful that I could talk about His resurrection today. I am especially thankful that there is this glorious new life waiting for us. So I thank God for this. I believe you feel the same way.

I want you to stay alert both in body and spirit. Do not just sit around to kill time during the hours of sermons. Your job is to listen and take notes to what God is talking to you during these sermons. I am delivering to you what God wants me to tell you. "What does God tell us through these sermons?" This is very important. If you are interested in finding out what God is saying, you must listen carefully with a clear mind no matter how tired you are.

But, if you are just sitting here to kill time, you will be bored to death. If you are not fully awake, you will feel bored even with the most exciting Word of God. Even though you think I have been repeating



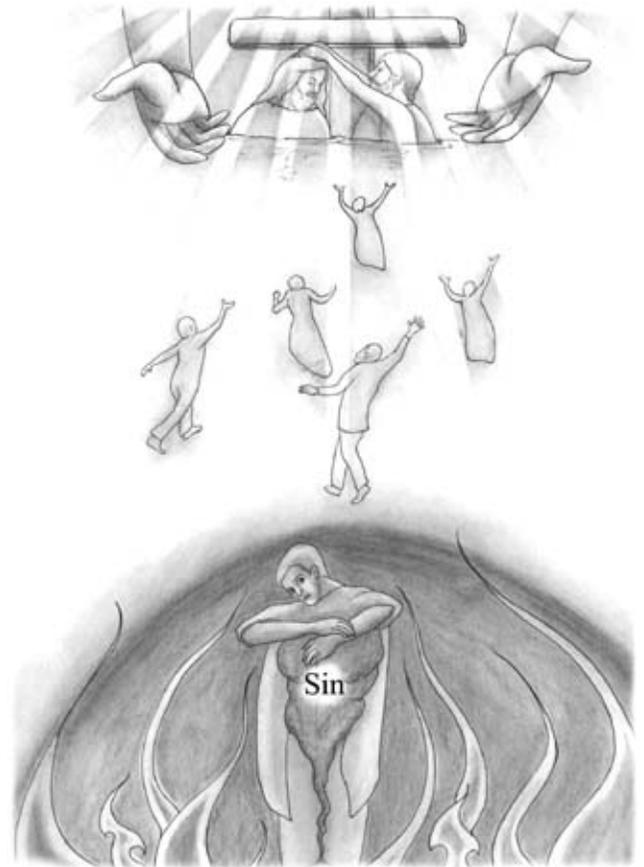
this same old story over and over again, there should be no way for you to feel bored. But you need to know there is ‘no same-old story’ in my sermons. If you were to read my sermons in our books, you will find that they differ from one another. Each sermon is preached differently to bring change in people’s hearts. Through this you will get the whole picture eventually.

I pray that God will give you faith and bless you both in body and spirit. I pray that God will give you faith that makes you fully alert and live by His grace.



SERMON

11



Contents



Believe in The Resurrected Jesus

< John 20:19-31 >

“Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst and said to them, ‘Peace be with you.’ When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. So Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.’ And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.’ Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples

therefore said to him, ‘We have seen the Lord.’ So he said to them, ‘Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.’ And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, ‘Peace to you!’ Then He said to Thomas, ‘Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing.’ And Thomas answered and said to Him, “My Lord and my God!” Jesus said to him, ‘Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.’ And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.”



Over a period of one year, Easter will only last for one week. During the so-called Lent we think about the passion of Jesus for forty days, and we observe the week where Jesus died on the Cross and was resurrected in three days. Although we don't observe Easter by boiling eggs etc, like others do, we instead strengthen our faith during this time by meditating on the meaning of Jesus' passion and resurrection. At Easter many people boil and then by writing on the eggshell phrases such as 'Easter Celebration' or 'Jesus Has Risen.' Those who eat much will eat four and those who overfeed will even eat thirty. They think that by eating in the way they can pay a tribute to the resurrection of Jesus.

Even though we don't observe this feast in any special way, because if we don't eat eggs and if we did some of you might regret it, we would nevertheless like some boiled eggs this Easter. If you want to draw pictures or write words on the eggshells, please do so, and please make sure that there will be at least one for each person. However I would like

you to eat these eggs thinking about the true meaning of Easter.

The Meaning of Easter

In fact it was all because Jesus Christ had received His baptism from John the Baptist that He went through suffering in Pilate's court, was adjusted to die despite having no sin, and was crucified. At the onset of His public ministry, the very first work Jesus did was to receive His baptism from John the Baptist. Jesus, who came down to this earth in human flesh to save us as mankind from all our sins, had first of all taken all the sins of mankind through His baptism. Like this He perfected all the righteousness of God by receiving His baptism. Where did Jesus go after shouldering all the sins of the world? By carrying the Cross on His back Jesus went to a place none other than Golgotha. There on that mount He was nailed to the Cross and was hung like a brutal criminal. With a



crown of thorns embedded deep in His head, blood flowed freely down. On His body torn marks from whipping were showing all so clearly. Since He received forty stripes minus one, His entire body was in a state of being torn asunder. Though this method of cruelty was the custom according to the Roman law, condemned criminals were whipped like this instead of being put to death right away.

As it is written, *“But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed”* (Isaiah 53:5), Jesus received the baptism and carried all our sins on His back, and died tragically like this because of our sins. But He was resurrected in three days. By dying on the Cross He paid for the wages of all our sins completely, and by being resurrecting in three days, He bore witness to having perfectly saved us. Indeed all these things were the love of God to save you and me from sin.

In fact Jesus was able to die nailed to the Cross

like that because He had taken on through His baptism all the sins of everyone in this world without leaving any behind. Because He loved us so much He took on all the sins of the world through His baptism, He was able to be nailed to the Cross in that most cruel way. This was done solely for the salvation of His people; in other words, it was to liberate you and me from our sins. And that is why our Lord died by getting nailed to the Cross vicariously, and then was resurrected from the dead.

Dear fellow believers, please do not cry because you are going through these days of Lent. The days of Lent do not exist for you and me to wail and cry. On Easter Sunday you must have faith that the resurrection of the Lord is also in you. You must not shed tears in vain. If we were to collect our tears and offer it before Jesus, He will not like it at all by telling us that it has salty stench. He will rebuke us for our lack of understanding by saying, “Do you think I got baptized and nailed to the Cross and died so that you may cry like that?” Therefore instead of



crying and screaming we must become those who are thankful by believing that the Lord received His baptism and vicariously died on the Cross in order to save you and me from our sins. We must know this without a shadow of doubt: God finds joy from our faith in His love rather than in our crying and screaming of sadness.

Jesus Christ was resurrected on the Sunday morning, the next morning following the Sabbath. According to the Jewish calendar, the Jews keep the Sabbath from sunset on Friday until sunset on Saturday in accordance with that Law. According to their calendar, Jesus died at 3 PM on Friday just prior to the Sabbath. With the Sabbath approaching the Jews could not just leave Jesus' corpse on the Cross. Because they did not do any work on the Sabbath and if they had not taken down the corpse, the Sabbath day would have been profaned. So they took down Jesus' corpse from the Cross with haste, placed the corpse inside a large tomb and closed the entrance off with a large boulder.

A day passed by and the sun started setting on Saturday. The Sabbath was over. With the end of the Sabbath, a new day was starting. The Lord was resurrected at the dawn of this new day. Because the Lord was resurrected on the morning of Sunday, Sundays are now called the Lord's Day. Like this, Jesus was resurrected. The Lord's resurrection means that He has thoroughly solved mankind's sins, curses and destruction. This also means that He has perfected our salvation 'once and for all.'

Jesus Christ rose up from the dead. Believers in the Lord's righteousness were able to receive their salvation from sin through His resurrection. The faith of believing in the Lord having received His baptism and having been resurrected from the dead after dying on the Cross is the tremendous faith. If Jesus had ended His ministry by having taken on the sins of the world through His baptism and having died on the Cross, then could He have been the true Way, that is, the Path to Life? No, He could not. Because Jesus rose up from the dead, He was then only able to



become our Savior, and regardless of what sort of sinner one may be, everyone has come to be able to obtain salvation from all their sins and obtain new life by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit through Jesus Christ. And so, in your heart and mine there is this faith that professes, “Jesus defeated death and rose up from the dead. Even now He is alive and sits on the right hand side of God the Father.” This faith is the proper Christian faith.

As we go on living in this world, we are at times faced with difficult obstacles that are hard to overcome. However, because our Lord is alive and because we have faith in His resurrection, we get to receive help from Him as we pray amid all our difficulties. In your hearts and mine, there has to be faith of believing in the living Lord.

Faith in the Lord’s resurrection is very important. I believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Do you also believe in it? After having taken on all our sins through His baptism and dying on the Cross, Jesus was resurrected in three days. When we have this

faith of believing in Jesus having risen from the grave, you and I get to be clothed in the blessing of rising up again, not finishing our lives with the death of our flesh. Those who believe in Jesus’ resurrection get to possess this faith that they will also be resurrected after the death of their flesh. This is why it is a tremendously important faith.

We sing to praise His resurrection, “He arose! He arose! Halleluiah! Christ arose!” We rejoice not just because of Jesus’ resurrection but also because of the faith that you and I can arise from the death of our flesh as well. There are many people who simply believe in the resurrection of Jesus’ body blindly without any thinking. However, there is not that many people who believe that they shall also rise again after dying like Jesus did. It is because they have not yet wholly been born again.

It is easy for the truly born-again believers to believe that Jesus arose after having died. However, people who do not believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit doubt their resurrection by saying, “It



is possible because Jesus is the Son of God.” However, they do not have the faith of believing because they cannot understand their resurrection through their darkened thoughts. And they are frustrated because even though they say they shall rise again they cannot believe in it with their hearts. Jesus clearly said that He would return back to this earth and that He would at that time resurrect the flesh of those who have been truly born again who believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. This is the resurrection of the righteous.

There are two cases of the resurrection: The first resurrection is the resurrection of the righteous who have the gospel of the water and the Spirit; the second resurrection is for sinners and it will take place 1,000 years later after the resurrection of the righteous. The resurrection of the sinners is to receive the judgment. Therefore, they will never be partakers of the rapture when the Lord returns to this earth for the second time. However, you and I who believe that the Lord received His baptism from John the

Baptist, died on the Cross and was resurrected from the dead will be brought back to life and taken away to His Kingdom when He returns. I am thankful that I have come to possess this faith in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

After Jesus died on the Cross His disciples were trembling with fear. They were thinking that everything, including following the Lord came to an abrupt end. They locked up doors and windows in fear. They were worried that they would get arrested for having followed Jesus and die because of it. And they were feeling helpless on how to get along in this harsh world for there no longer was Jesus who had been protecting them. Jesus appeared before such disciples. Although they had clearly locked all entrances into their home, Jesus appeared by coming through the wall. It was possible because the resurrected body of Jesus was a divine body that could transcend time and space.

At first the disciples were so surprised, but they recognized that He was Jesus and immediately felt



glad. They worried about everything, but the moment they saw the resurrected Jesus, how joyful do you think they must have been? Jesus appeared before such disciples and said to them, “Peace be with you.” The Lord said, “Peace to you,” when He appeared for the second time as well including the third time. To the disciples who had been helpless on how to lead their life, Jesus gave them the mission of spreading this gospel.

After His resurrection, what did our Lord give us? Peace is exactly what He gave us. In the hearts of those who have been born again by the gospel of the water and the Spirit, in other words, in the hearts of those who believe in all the works Jesus has done and His resurrection, He gave peace. And so we will always find peace inside the hearts of those of us who believe in Jesus Christ. At times, the body feels weary but at least the heart feels calm because of this incredible faith. The world swarms and is drowning in sin, and our flesh is weak. Yet, Jesus said twice that we will have peace. Therefore, your heart and

mine is at peace. The very first thing that our Lord gave us after His resurrection was none other than peace. In the hearts of those who properly know and believe in Jesus Christ, there is peace. Peace arises in their hearts owing to the overflowing joy by professing, “Now, there is no sin in my heart. Jesus has taken it all away! He has solved it completely! My heart feels joyful and good. It is truly good.”

Besides Peace, What Else Did Jesus Give to Us?

That is undoubtedly the Holy Spirit. Let’s take a look at our Scripture reading in the Book of John chapter 20 verse 22: “*And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’*” The resurrected Lord told the disciples to receive the Holy Spirit. This means that the Lord Jesus has given the Holy Spirit as a gift to those who have received the remission of sins by believing that



He came to this earth, took on the sins of all mankind by the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and was resurrected from the dead. The day on which the Holy Spirit came down to the disciples was the day of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit came down into the disciples when they were gathered together after fifty days had past since the death of Jesus Christ through crucifixion as is recorded, *“When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance”* (Acts 2:1-4). Like this, the Lord poured His Holy Spirit on the disciples who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The Lord blotted out the sins of this world with His baptism and His death, and then after having

been resurrected from the dead, He gave His disciples the Holy Spirit. These passages mean that the Lord will give the Holy Spirit, along with the remission of sins, as a gift to all those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Jesus Christ took on all the sins of mankind by receiving His baptism from John the Baptist, and after having died on the Cross and then being resurrected from the dead, He gave the faithful disciples the Holy Spirit as a free gift. What is clear here is the fact that the Lord gave His disciples the Holy Spirit as a gift after having been resurrected from the dead. After completing His salvation with His resurrection, Jesus gave the Holy Spirit as a gift to those who believe in this gospel Truth, that is, those who have received the remission of sins in their hearts.

What were the disciples of Jesus like prior to the resurrection of Jesus? When Jesus was practicing many miracles and showing His powers, they were loyal to Him and displayed a strong will by saying, “I will follow you to your death, Lord. Even when



everyone forsakes you, at least I will not deny you.” But just as Jesus got arrested and taken away by the Roman soldiers, they were all scattered like sheep without a shepherd. There was a disciple who sold Jesus for 30 silver coins, and there was another one who had denied Jesus three times when they asked him about his relationship with Jesus, and then he told them he did not know Him. When the resurrected Jesus appeared in front of this fearful disciple, his own will and rightness had all become broken down.

Jesus received His baptism from John the Baptist, died on the Cross and was resurrected from the dead. When Jesus was resurrected and appeared before the disciples, He told them to receive the Holy Spirit. Jesus was telling the disciples to receive the Holy Spirit as He breathed on them. The Lord had poured the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, onto His disciples. Jesus was born on this earth, and through John the Baptist, He received His baptism with which He took the sins of this world away. Afterwards, He died

vicariously on the Cross in order to pay the full price for those sins. Then He was resurrected in three days and defeated Satan victoriously; He then poured the Holy Spirit onto His disciples. This means that He has sealed us with the Spirit of God. In other words, He has confirmed our salvation from sin.

If anyone wants to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit before God, they must believe in this truth that Jesus Christ took on all the sins of the world ‘once and for all’ through His baptism, and that He died on the Cross for He had taken on the sins of the world; and that He was then resurrected from the dead. The biblical truth is this, only when you receive the remission of your sins by believing in this Truth, can you receive the Holy Spirit from God and not before. Today’s Scripture passage means precisely that. It is a very important to know and have the faith that one gets to receive the Holy Spirit only after having received the cleansing of all your sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. If we don’t believe that Jesus Christ has completely blotted out all our



sins by taking them away ‘once and for all’ by the baptism He received from John the Baptist and dying on the Cross, we cannot receive the cleansing of our sins. If that is the case, then we will never be able to believe in the resurrection of Jesus. We have to believe that Jesus took all our sins by receiving His baptism, that His death on the Cross means my death, and that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is my resurrection. And only those who believe in this truth get to receive the Holy Spirit as a gift. However, those who do not believe in this Truth, in other words, those who still have sins remaining in their hearts for not having received the remission of their sins because they don’t or refuse to believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit despite their faith in Jesus cannot receive the Holy Spirit.

After being resurrection from the dead, what was the very first thing that Jesus said to His disciples when He appeared before them? He said, *“Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you”* (John 20:21). And He then breathed on them by

saying, *“Receive the Holy Spirit,”* and gave them the Holy Spirit personally (John 20:22). This shows us clearly that our Lord has given the Holy Spirit as a gift to those of us who believe in the baptism of Jesus Christ, His blood of the Cross, and the fact that Jesus Christ has become our Savior. Jesus Christ received His baptism from John the Baptist in order to take on all our sins, and He cleansed them away by being hung on the Cross. His flesh was torn apart with the wild unmerciful whipping and He was nailed to the Cross and shed His blood to death all because of our sins. His resurrection was to give us the true resurrection and everlasting new life. New life friends! We had to be put to death because of our sins. But instead Jesus blotted out all our sins by having taken them onto His body personally, and by being resurrecting from the dead was to pour upon us this new life, He gave to us who believed in Him this new life. The Lord has allowed those of us who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit to live forever in the Kingdom of God.



The Lord has given the Holy Spirit to us who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Therefore, whoever has received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the Holy Spirit from the Lord. Do you have the Holy Spirit in your heart? The baptism of the Holy Spirit means to receive the Holy Spirit. The Lord has made it so that those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit receive the Holy Spirit as a gift. However, there are many Christians today who have a misconception about the baptism of the Holy Spirit due to not knowing the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

We can find out how to receive the Holy Spirit according to the Scriptures by looking closely into the meaning of Jesus' resurrection. Jesus Christ received His baptism and was nailed to the Cross because of our sins. He was bruised because of our sins and transgressions. He saved those of us who believe in His love. In other words, He has perfected our salvation with His resurrection. The remission of

sins and the Holy Spirit come down to those who truly believe that the Lord was resurrected to give us new life.

Dear fellow believers, have you received the Holy Spirit by having received the remission of sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit? Do you have the Holy Spirit in you heart? Have you truly received the remission of all your sins? If there is no sin in your heart, then you have received the Holy Spirit for sure. Appearing before His disciples, Jesus told them to receive the Holy Spirit.

God the Father and Jesus, as well as the Holy Spirit are all one. God the Father promised salvation through Christ; Jesus the Holy Son realized the promise of salvation by receiving His baptism from John the Baptist, dying on the Cross and being resurrected; and the Holy Spirit witnesses the work of redemption the Lord has completed through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and He helps us and works in us so that we may believe in this Truth. Hence, the Holy Spirit comes inside a person's heart



the very moment when that person receives salvation from his or her sin by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We need to know that prior to this, the disciples did not have the Holy Spirit. Although they had believed in Jesus, the Holy Spirit was not inside their hearts. Although they had known that they will be given the Holy Spirit for Jesus had told them so, they did not as yet have the Holy Spirit before then.

Actually, when was this Holy Spirit sent down to this earth? The Holy Spirit was given on the first Pentecost and only to those who believe that Jesus was resurrected from the dead after He had received His baptism and died on the Cross. Before this event did the servants of God have the Holy Spirit? No. Before, God at times spoke to the servants of God through the Holy Spirit. God had spoken by touching upon the hearts of the servants of God. To put it more simply, when we were still sinners, God worked on the outside of our hearts. He had spoken outside your hearts, and when the work was finished, He did not

do any more work. But only after Jesus was resurrected from the dead did the Holy Spirit publicly come into the hearts of His disciples, that is, only to those who truly believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Do you understand this?

In the Old Testament we find someone like King Saul, a typical man of the flesh, who prophesied by speaking in tongues amongst the prophets. And so people wondered and said to one another, *“What is this that has come upon the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?”* (1 Samuel 10:11). However, that was an account that God allowed Saul to prophesy by inspiring him for just that moment. Afterwards the Holy Spirit left him. Saul’s heart became empty again. And so by him not believing in God, evil spirits entered into that space, and Saul who had become a king because of God, rose up against Him.

Is the faith those who have received the remission of their sins for all their sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit different from that



of the disciples of Jesus? Is there a difference between the faith of Jesus' disciples and those of us who currently believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit? There is no difference. The way Jesus' disciples had believed back then and the faith that we currently have are exactly the same. Therefore, just as the disciples of Jesus had received the Holy Spirit as a gift, the Lord has also given the Holy Spirit as a gift to those of us who currently believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. He has given the Holy Spirit as a gift to those of us who currently believe in the fact that Jesus has blotted out all our sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

To whom did the Lord give the Holy Spirit too? Can a person who has sin in his heart receive the Holy Spirit? We need to know that the Holy Spirit will not come into a heart of any sinful person. Did Jesus appear before just anyone and told that person to receive the Holy Spirit? Did He just ask anyone who came across His path regardless to receive the Holy Spirit? No, He certainly did not. Jesus appeared

specifically before His disciples and ordered them to receive the Holy Spirit. They had faith in His baptism, death on the Cross and His resurrection. Jesus is the Son of the living God. And the Apostle Peter said that 'the water' is the antitype of our salvation, that is, Jesus' baptism (1 Peter 3:21). The Apostle Paul also said, "*For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ*" (Galatians 3:27). This means that all the disciples of Jesus believed in His baptism. And they had this faith that believed the reason why Jesus died on the Cross, and what gave them this new life in the resurrection of Jesus. For this reason alone, the Lord gives the Holy Spirit to those who have received the remission of sins by faith through the gospel of the water and the Spirit and not before. We can conclude it like this.

In this day and age there are many Christians who say that they have received the Holy Spirit even though they have sins in their hearts. But that is not the case. A person who still has sins in his heart right now can never be regarded as someone who has



received the Holy Spirit. When Jesus was resurrected, He said to His disciples, “Received the Holy Spirit. Peace be with you.” All Words spoken by God are extremely important; but the words spoken by Jesus when He was resurrected are even more important. Therefore, regarding our faith we must think about how we can receive the Holy Spirit first and then to believe accordingly. The Bible tells us exactly what kind of people can receive the Holy Spirit. Through the Word of God we can see clearly how our Lord had saved us from our sin through the gospel of the water and the Spirit and what He had given us after He gives us our salvation.

On the first Pentecost, which is the fiftieth day following the death of Jesus on the Cross, God poured the Holy Spirit on the disciples. At that moment the Holy Spirit came into the disciples of Jesus who were gathered together in a room. Did the disciples believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit? Yes, they surely did. The Holy Spirit came into them when they were all praying together. The

disciples who had received the Holy Spirit started speaking in tongues.

However, there are many people who misunderstand this. To receive the Holy Spirit one must first receive the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and also believe in the resurrection of Jesus, but people think that one can receive the Holy Spirit by gathering together and praying fervently without any qualification. And they go on thinking that speaking in tongues is the proof that the Holy Spirit has come into them. Hence, they put in all their efforts into speaking in tongues by any means possible.

But we need to know that we can never receive the Holy Spirit by exhausting every means. Our Lord did not give the Holy Spirit to those who try to exhaust themselves. In the last days many false miracles will be occurring because of the devil’s schemes, but the work of the Holy Spirit manifests itself through the gospel Words of the water and the Spirit. And so amongst the many tongues spoken by



Christians, many are not the work of the Holy Spirit but of an evil spirit. The church of Corinth was a church abounding in speaking in tongues, but rather than being filled with the Holy Spirit, they were experiencing a number of problems. Speaking in tongues is not the evidence of being filled with the Holy Spirit. I hope you will have no misunderstanding regarding this matter.

Before He was arrested, Jesus said to His disciples, “And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you” (John 14:16-17). He had already promised to give the Holy Spirit to the disciples. The Helper is the same as the Holy Spirit, and this fact is written in detail in John 14:26, “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.” This Holy Spirit resides

in the hearts of all the saints who have been born again in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and He teaches these saints and bears witness of Jesus Christ. Regarding the work of the Holy Spirit, it is spoken in detail in the Gospel of John chapter 16 verses 14 and 15.

Appearing before the disciples for the third time after His resurrections, Jesus showed them evidence of His resurrection. By telling Thomas to put his hand into His side, Jesus proved that it really was Him, and also He shared meals with them. Jesus went to the seashore in search of His disciples who were fishing and helped them to catch much fish by saying, “Have you caught many fish? Cast the net on the other side of the boat where the water is deeper.” Staying on the earth for forty days after His resurrection, He witnessed many things and spoke about the Kingdom of God. Then on the first Pentecost, the fiftieth day since the death of Jesus on the Cross, the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples.

Appearing before those who had received the



remission of their sins, the Lord told them to receive the Holy Spirit. People who have received the remission of sins are those who believe that Jesus came to this world and took all the sins of the world upon His own body through His baptism, died on the Cross because of those sins, was resurrected in three days, and then ascended to the Kingdom of Heaven. Like this, Jesus took on all the sins that we commit in this world—sins due to our weakness, sins due to our arrogance, sins that we commit because we are fleshly and all the sins that we commit with our thoughts or acts. Truly He was bruised because of our transgressions. Our Lord had even taken on all those sins we will be committing in the future. Then He died on the Cross ‘once’ and resurrected from the dead ‘once.’ He thus through this saved us completely. And to those of us who believe in this, the Holy Spirit comes. The Holy Spirit does not come just because you gather together and make a terrible so-called holy noise. Furthermore, He will not come just because you speak in tongues. Do you

understand this? The Holy Spirit comes only to those who realize the gospel of the water and the Spirit and believe in the resurrection of our Lord.

But why do you think God gave the tongues to certain people? In Korean, ‘tongues’ means a regional dialect. In other words, it is a patois. God had given this special gift of speaking in tongues so that the disciples might use it in spreading the gospel to people from other regions who were visitors. And the Book of Acts tells us clearly that when the disciples of Jesus spoke in tongues, the multitude came together, and were confused because everyone heard them speak in his own language (Acts 2:6). After all speaking in tongues was a small miracle used for the purpose of spreading the gospel.

They cannot be considered to have received the Holy Spirit just because they were speaking in tongues on their own. Go to any place where they claim to show this so-called miracle of speaking in tongues. You cannot imagine just how tumultuous they are. Shouting out incomprehensible words from



the top of their voices, they claim that they are speaking in tongues.

However, people who believe in Jesus by having truly attained the enlightenment in the gospel of the water and the Spirit aren't that loud. It is because even if we don't shout out loud, the Lord hears our words. Although I cannot say everything in fine detail here, it is a clear fact that Jesus has given those who have received the remission of sins the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Dear fellow believers, did you receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

People have much interest in the baptism by the Holy Spirit these days. And there are many authors who have written many books on this subject. But we will not find anyone who has written correctly about the Holy Spirit. Because they themselves have never been a true disciple of Jesus, they are unable to properly understand the Holy Spirit. As they hold a pen and start writing this and that with great self-confidence, it may seem as though everything is complete, but when they actually read what they have

written they soon realize that it is nothing but a verbose style full of useless words. Unless one has received the remission of sins in his heart, he cannot receive the Holy Spirit and therefore cannot write about the Holy Spirit.

What else did our Lord give us who have received the remission of sins, besides the Holy Spirit and peace? It is precisely the authority to forgive the sins of others. Let us read together verse 23: *"If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."* Jesus gave His disciples the authority to forgive sins. Following peace and the Holy Spirit, this is the third thing that the Lord gave to His disciples. This authority is none other than power. Clearly the Lord has given the disciples this power to make others receive the remission of their sins.

Authority is something truly mighty. When I was a little boy, the roads in our town were not so grand like we have these days and so rocks as big as pumpkins were all along the roadside. When riding



on a bus, the roads were so bumpy that we would if we did not hold ourselves down properly hit our heads on the roof of the bus. Saints who are young may think, “Could it really have been like that?” But people who are of a generation similar to mine will fully sympathize with me. The driver may notice a boulder and swerve to avoid it, but the rear tire would often get caught on the rock. Should the bus try to pass over a huge stone or a rock, people sitting in the back would float into air, hit their heads on the roof of the bus and be all shaken up. Older saints probably have experienced such an experience of being on an amusement park ride, at least once in their lifetime.

Back then there was a road like that in my neighborhood, and as I rode in a bus, the driver would inevitably say, “Dear passengers, I apologize. I would like for you to please get off and push this bus.” It was because the bus could not get over the hill. Then the passengers, having no choice in the matter would get off the bus and pushed the bus over the hill. And then they would get back on the bus

again and so on.

To a neighborhood like this, President Chung Hee Park, the late president of Korea, came to see the opening ceremony of a thermoelectric power plant. With the news of the president coming, people of the neighborhood swept and polished every corner of the town including the roads, and they made frenzy by moving the rocks from the roads. Also they cut down all the perfectly fine trees in a mountain using saws and planted them along the roadside. Because taking out a tree by its roots was too difficult, they had just taken the trees and planted them as if they were arranging flowers.

After all that fuss, President Chung Hee Park eventually arrived. He rode in on large black car, and tens of motorcycles were escorting it. The neighborhood, able to see the president at close range, came out in droves with national flag in their hands and shouted out, “Welcome, President!” But not too long after the president Chung Hee Park had left our neighborhood after having attended the opening



ceremony of the thermoelectric power plant, this road was upgraded with asphalt and kerbs. It was discovered later that President Chung Hee Park had remarked to his secretary that the car was bumping around because the road was so uneven and that he would like to see a better road. With those few words, the road was upgraded and got paved with asphalt almost immediately. Authority is precisely like that. It is having the power to realize everything possible with just one single word.

Not only did Jesus give us the Holy Spirit, He gave those of us who have the Holy Spirit in our hearts the authority to forgive or not to forgive the sins of others. Therefore, we forgive the sins of those whom we are fond of and preach to them the God given gospel of the water and the Spirit. “Do you have any sins? Jesus has taken away even those sins. In the future you will commit truly many sins. He has taken away even all those sins as well. Jesus came to this earth and received His baptism. At that very moment, He took on all the sins of the world, and He

died on the Cross shouldering all those sins taken on at that time. Like this, He has saved us by solving all our problems of sin.” We spread the gospel like this. As we diligently do this, numerous sins of ours which had existed like thick clouds disappear with the hearing and believing of those words. Sins which had been all so innumerable like dense fog will all disappear.

Yet even though we spread the Word with fervor, there are countless people who are as proud as Lucifer. They are pretentious and frivolous instead of believing in the Word of Truth we preach. When we encounter people like this, we really don’t want to spread the gospel of the water and the Spirit to them any longer. There are people like this whom we don’t wish to share good things with. Instead of thinking about and listening to the Word of God, there are people who say, “That pastor doesn’t have a good educational background, and he doesn’t seem to be outstanding.” When I hear this, my stomach turns, but nevertheless, I must preach the gospel to them.



This is because this is the mission we must carry on despite these hard words.

But in most cases, even though we deliver them the Word of Truth, they still do not believe in it. Even though we meet with them many times and tell them about it, they just go on standing up against it instead of believing in it. God has given us the authority to forgive sins and the authority to send people to hell by leaving them alone. He has given such an authority to those of us who have received the remission of sins. This is the reason why we are spreading the gospel to many people. Because we who have received the remission of sins have this authority to remit the sins of others, if we were to say to a certain person, “You are bound for hell,” that person will surely go to hell. We don’t do so according to our own volition, but rather, that becomes so because we speak out through the Word.

People’s Sins Are Remitted When We Preach the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit by Faith

What would happen if we don’t spread the gospel of the water and the Spirit to them? Those people will most certainly go to hell. No matter how smart they may be and how long they have attended church and even if they have attained many degrees in theology, literature, philosophy and so on, if they don’t know and believe this Truth, they will surely go to hell. No matter how much we may dislike them from a human perspective, we nevertheless encourage them to hear out the gospel at least once more time for we have the authority to forgive the sins of others. God wants everyone to find the knowledge of the Truth. Knowing this we cannot turn our faces away from the work of saving sinners because of our human thinking or preference?

Jesus Christ has given such authority to those of us who have the Holy Spirit by believing in the



gospel of the water and the Spirit and receiving the remission of sins. Dear fellow believers, do you believe in this? Therefore, people who reject this gospel we are preaching and behave frivolously to the end even though we preach it to them so earnestly will be heading for hell.

We shared our English books with some renowned Christian leaders in this world. And they sent us feedback saying that they were quite surprised by them. They said that although they did not know why Jesus Christ was nailed to the Cross, why He was speared, and why He could not but be harmed like that, they were astonished to find out that all of that was due to their sins that Jesus had taken on through His baptism. It showed us that they had come to realize the truth that Jesus was able to die on the Cross because He had taken on the sins of the world through His baptism He had received from John the Baptist. And stating further that they cannot be the only ones to know this amazing truth, they asked us if we could send some English books so that

others may also know this Truth. And so, with a pleased heart we sent bulk books to them.

On the other hand, a certain well known pastor laid out hard words against the gospel of the water and the Spirit. This pastor attacked the gospel of the water and the Spirit by saying that if this was the Truth, then it should appear flat out in the Bible. However, even while he was attacking us, he seemed confused by repeating his absurd words over and over again, and saying that he did not like it, he put an end to his e-mail hastily just with his name but not his nationality.

We are spreading the original gospel of the water and the Spirit for the very first time since it was proclaimed at the end of the Early Church age. Besides the disciples of Jesus written in the Book of Acts, we are the very first ones who are preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Someone who is translating our books into German says that although there are many Christians in Germany, there is no gospel of the water and the Spirit. It means that this



gospel is introduced to Germany for the very first time. As for the one who proofread our French editions he says that he has to re-examine his faith now that he got to know this genuine gospel. It means that this gospel is different from what he has known before and that he must rethink his whole faith again.

Many people feel confused and mixed up, saying that the teaching in our books on the Holy Spirit differs from what they were taught and believe in, but the resurrected Jesus clearly told us to receive the Holy Spirit. And then He said, *“If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained”* (John 20:23). We have received the remission of our sins and the Holy Spirit from God. And we have also received the authority to forgive the sins of others. Is this true or not?

Because we possess this great authority, why should we be using it in sending people to hell? This would not be right? Therefore, we must lower our

hearts and spread the gospel with humility. All we have to do is to tolerate their ignorance by saying, “Oh, is that right?” We have to teach people if they do not know, print more books and send it to them, and to tolerate them by saying, “It’s because you don’t know the Truth yet. If you let me I will teach you,” when they attack this precious gospel.

Most Christians insist that sins will disappear if one believes just in Jesus somehow and the blood of the Cross; they say it is right that they have sins despite having faith in Jesus. All these words are from those who have gone crazy and are on the way to hell. How can they be of the Holy Spirit? How can they be the Words of the Bible? Jesus did not give us the Holy Spirit in such a way. They are all words that deserve rebuke and judgment.

Jesus also told us to believe in His resurrection. A disciple of Jesus named Thomas could not believe even when he saw the resurrected Jesus. And so he said he will not believe unless he puts his hand into Jesus’ side. Understanding such a heart, instead of



rebuking him for not being able to believe, He said, “Come and put your hand into my side. Reach your finger here and feel these nail marks.” Then Thomas put his hand on His side and felt the nail marks. Only then did Thomas believe in the resurrection of Jesus, and then Jesus admonished Thomas by saying, “*Do not be unbelieving, but believing*” (John 20:27).

Thomas was a person of many doubts and had very little faith. As a disciple of Jesus, he had followed Him laboriously for three years, but despite having seen the wonders and power displayed by Jesus, he still could not believe in the resurrection of Jesus. Thomas could not believe the resurrection of Jesus even though the resurrected Jesus came in through the locked door and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. Peace be with you. I bestow on you this authority.” Only when Jesus said, “Come here. Put your hand into My side and become the believing,” Thomas then felt these wounds, and only then did he believe by saying, “Lord, You are my Lord and my God.” To this Jesus said, “*Because you have seen Me,*

you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed” (John 20:29).

This is the Word of blessing that the Lord gives to those of us who are living in this current day and age. Although we cannot see Jesus with our own eyes, we have come to believe in Him by reading the written Scriptures and by faith, to a greater degree than by looking at Him with our own eyes. For this the Lord gives us blessings.

Our Lord told us to become faithful believers, instead of becoming those who cannot believe that He has not blotted out all our sins and had risen from the dead. And He also told us that He had this be recorded so that we may receive the remission of our sins by believing in our Lord and be clothed in new life in His name. The Lord has given us this new life. Prior to believing in Jesus, our hearts were empty and filled with only chaos, and we did not even enjoy life. We who had been like that have come to gain everlasting life after receiving the remission of our sins. Through the gospel of the water and the Spirit,



our Lord has given you and me peace, authority and eternal life. It means that He has given us everlasting life. We must believe in this.

Our hearts must be spiritual. Although our flesh endlessly dashes always into what is fleshly, the thoughts of those who have received the remission of sins must always be filled with what is spiritual. We must possess spiritual thoughts and spiritual hearts. We must be spiritually minded. And by becoming believers of the Word of God, we must follow the Lord by faith, and serve the Lord by faith, and we must become those who will seize all the Lord-given blessings by faith. To have faith like this, we must follow Jesus by believing in Him with all our thoughts and hearts. We must believe in Him.

However, there are many occasions when the flesh runs in the opposite direction of our mind. And there are many occasion when we submit to such fleshly desires. Nevertheless, we must clearly believe in our thoughts and in our hearts that our Lord has saved us completely. We must always think that the Lord has

saved us, be worried about how we can widely spread this gospel, and ponder over what we can do to serve the gospel more. Also we must be thankful for the fact that He has given us eternal life, and we must believe in and wait for our resurrection. Do you understand this?

We must deny our thoughts again and again. We must straighten it continuously so that it does not tilt towards fleshly desires. We must follow the Lord by faith of believing in His Word. If we don't do so, our hearts will rot away in less than a day. We can easily fall into fleshly thoughts and follow the desires of our flesh, and then we will be waiving "Bye, bye" to Jesus in no time.

Did Jesus save you and me completely, or did He not? Did He blot out sins, or did He not? Did He give us peace, or did He not? Did He or did He not give us the authority to forgive the sins of others, the Holy Spirit and everlasting life? Yes, He certainly did. He has given us new life. Pursuing the Word of God by faith is what a faith is all about. If we are to believe



in God and pursue His will with one heart and purpose, then the flesh is bound to follow. But just because the flesh is prone to chase after the world, if our thoughts and hearts were to follow the flesh, then we would surely become faithless Christians and eventually die. Thus, our Lord told us to be faithful to Him. I hope for you to clearly understand in your heart and mind that the Lord has become our Savior, that we are all without sin because of Him, that we must now therefore spread the gospel, and that we must always think about the works of God.

Dear fellow believers, does your flesh not perhaps dash towards the world? Our flesh does indeed dash towards the world. Even if we drag it back, it dashes towards the world again like a rubber band. But instead of trying to solve this matter, we must think about whether or not we believe wholeheartedly in every blessing the Lord has given us—the peace, the remission of sins, the Holy Spirit, everlasting life and this new life. If we were to wholeheartedly believe in that pursue that faith, then we will become the people

of faith and the true workers of the Lord. Having gained new life, we become the workers of righteousness who save souls every day.

It is now Easter. Rituals are not important. Rather I want you to think about what the Lord has given us after His resurrection. He has given us the remission of sins, peace, and the Holy Spirit; and furthermore, He has given us the authority to forgive the sins of others. Also He has unsparingly given us this new and everlasting life. Now all we have to do is to meet the Lord after having led a life of faith believing in this and then to enjoy a life of everlasting riches and glory in Heaven,

I hope you clearly understand and believe that the Lord has risen; and I want you to go on living by faith of believing that you also shall rise again.

Halleluiah! Christ the Lord has risen from the dead! ☒



SERMON

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Contents



Jesus Christ Has Given Us The Hope of Resurrection

< John 20:19-23 >

“Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, ‘Peace be with you.’ When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. So Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.’ And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.’”

As I write this, Easter has come around the corner. By being baptized by John the Baptist, Jesus took upon all the sins of the whole world, and He went to the Cross and died there. His death solved the problem of our own death. And His resurrection has given new life to you and me. When Jesus was crucified, we, too, were crucified with Him. That we were thus crucified and resurrected with Jesus Christ means that we have become one in perfect harmony with our Lord by faith. In our thoughts, minds, bodies, and all things, Jesus Christ and we have become one. That Jesus Christ rose from the dead means that He has given new life to you and me.

Having risen from the dead, Jesus appeared before His disciples and said to them, *“Peace be with you.”* Those who have received the remission of sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit have peace in their hearts. What our Lord has given us by rising from the dead is this remission of sins. Our Lord has given us new life by coming to this world, taking upon all our sins by being baptized by John



the Baptist, bearing all the condemnation of sin by dying on the Cross, and rising from the dead again. This Truth is what has completed our salvation. The resurrection of Jesus means the final completion of our remission of sins and our salvation.

This is why the first thing that the resurrected Jesus said when He appeared before His disciples was, *“Peace be with you.”* This means, “Now that I bore all the condemnation of all your sins, have solved all the problem of your death, and have given you new life, you are able to receive peace. So peace be with you.” Jesus Christ has thus given peace to those of us who believe in Him. The tranquility that is in our hearts is this very peace that comes from the remission of sins we have received.

Because of whom are our hearts tranquil now? It is because of Jesus Christ, and the peace that has been given to us by His remission of sins. In other words, Jesus Christ has given us peace and put our hearts at ease. This is because Jesus Christ came to this earth, was baptized, died on the Cross, rose from

the dead again, and has thereby completed salvation. It is from believing this that the peace given by our Lord has now come into our hearts. This is why we have peace in our hearts. Is there this peace in your heart now, the peace that comes from the remission of sins you’ve received? If you really have such peace, then it is truly marvelous.

On this occasion of Easter, we could be considering other things here, but we must think about the peace and new life that the Lord has given us by rising from the dead again. The most important significance that this resurrection entails for us is the fact that the Lord perfectly completed all His works that completely blotted out all our sins, and that in consequence, He has brought our true salvation and true remission of sins to all of us. This is the most important significance and purpose of commemorating Easter.

After rising from the dead, Jesus appeared before His disciples on three occasions while on this earth. When were they? The first time He appeared was in



the morning of the first day after Sabbath. After the Sabbath Day, at the dawn of this first day of the week, Jesus appeared before His disciples. As John 20:1-2 says, *“Now the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, ‘They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him.’”* This is when Jesus appeared for the first time since His death.

The second appearance of Jesus is recorded in today’s passage, in John 20:19-23. He appeared in the evening of the same day of the week. At that time, fearing Jews, Jesus’ disciples had locked themselves in a house with all its doors shut. Perhaps they had shut the doors as we do, or perhaps they had even nailed them shut and put up barricades on them. Either way, the salient point here is that having lost the Lord Jesus, His disciples were overwhelmed by

fear.

It was under these circumstances that the resurrected Jesus appeared before His disciples. Just imagine: The disciples were gripped by fear, and all of a sudden Jesus appeared in their midst! Making His appearance before His disciples and standing in their midst, Jesus then said to them, *“Peace be with you.”* In their thoughts of the flesh, this was simply mind-boggling for the disciples, but in their spiritual thoughts, it was an amazing miracle. And in another consideration, it was something that left the disciples speechless from their pure joy and happiness. They had continued to follow Jesus throughout His public ministry on this earth, but one day Judas had betrayed Him to the Jewish leaders and the chief priests who were bent on killing Him. The false accusation based on which they seized Jesus and sought to kill Him was that He had brought confusion and unrest to the nation of Israel. To the Romans, the so-called leaders of the Jewish people falsely accused Jesus of inciting rebellion against the Roman Empire



and its emperor, and to the Jewish people, they falsely accused Him of blaspheming God and alienated Him from His own people. Dumping these two crimes on Jesus and ensnaring Him with these false accusations, they killed Him in the end. Jesus' disciples had truly believed in Jesus and followed Him, but now He was killed under such false accusations. They must have felt a great sense of profound loss and fear with nowhere to turn to.

While Jesus was alive, He had brought the dead alive, made the deaf hear, opened the eyes of the blind, and performed the miracle of feeding over 5,000 in men alone and countless women and children with only five loaves of bread and two fish, and still leaving twelve baskets of leftover.

The disciples had witnessed such amazing miracles and works of Jesus and lived under His protection, but one day He was accused of terrible crimes all of a sudden and was crucified to death. All these things, of course, were done for you and me. But for the disciples, how terrified must they have

been on that evening, when they returned home after seeing the body of Jesus being buried in a tomb carved out of rock?

The one who buried the body of Jesus in this tomb of rock was a disciple called Joseph of Arimathea. And Nicodemus, who had come to see Jesus before, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. He is the Jewish leader that appeared in John 3:1-5: *“There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, ‘Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.’ Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.’ Nicodemus said to Him, ‘How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?’ Jesus answered, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.’”*



It was this Nicodemus who took it upon himself to bury Jesus when He died. His status as a Jewish leader enabled him to say, “I am a believer of Jesus. Now that He died, let me bury His body properly.” Actually, this in itself is an indication of Nicodemus’ great faith. He could bring himself to take care of Jesus’ burial because he had met Him before and was born again by His Word of Truth.

Joseph of Arimathea had prepared a luxurious tomb for himself, but he used this new tomb to bury the body of Jesus. And by doing so, the Old Testament’s Word of prophecy was fulfilled (Isaiah 53:9).

It was on the third day since His death that Jesus was resurrected. In today’s term, Friday and Saturday had gone by, and Sunday had come around. When Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early Sunday morning, she met the resurrected Jesus and told the disciples about His resurrection.

Jesus then appeared before His disciples, and He said to them, *“Peace be with you.”* Because Jesus

Himself was baptized, died on the Cross, and even rose from the dead again, He has not only remitted us from all our sins and condemnation, but He has also given us new life. There is therefore peace in the hearts of all who believe in the Lord. In other words, because Jesus has washed away all our sins from our hearts and remitted us from all our iniquities, the true remission of sins and peace have now come into the hearts of all His believers.

Our Lord Has Entrusted His Work to Those Who Have Received Peace

We have received peace because of our Lord. Verses 20-21 in today’s Scripture passage say, *“When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. So Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.’”* Put differently, Jesus was saying, “I have now solved



all the problem of your sins. There is nothing for your hearts to fear or to cower. You are now sinless. I have blotted out all your sins.” This peace is what our Lord has implanted in our hearts.

Just as God has revealed His providence to us and saved us by sending Jesus Christ to this earth as the Father’s ambassador, so, too, has Jesus sent us to this world, saying to us His disciples, “As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.” The disciples actually fulfilled the work entrusted to them by the Lord, and today, this work has been passed onto us, and God has given us the strength to fulfill it all.

Our Lord then said to His disciples, “*Receive the Holy Spirit.*” Because the Lord came to this earth and completed all His work to blot out all our sins, each and every person who believes in this Truth can now receive the Holy Spirit. This is why Jesus said here that His believers should receive the Holy Spirit.

In fact, when Jesus turned 30 on this earth, He bore all the sins of mankind by being baptized by John the Baptist, and three years later, He ended all

our condemnation by dying on the Cross. However, had Jesus not risen from the dead again, there could have been no peace for us, we could not have become God’s workers, nor would it have been possible for us to have the Holy Spirit. Because the Lord completed our salvation from all the sins of mankind not only by being baptized and shedding His blood, but also by rising from the dead again, anyone can now receive the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

When people misunderstand what Jesus meant by saying to His disciples here to receive the Holy Spirit, they tend to think that the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit are received separately. But this actually is not the case. See what the Lord said to His disciples after His resurrection. He said to them, “Peace be with you. Receive the Holy Spirit.” In other words, because He had completed every work necessary to blot out all our sins, He could now give us true peace of mind and the Holy Spirit. And we can receive the Holy Spirit simultaneously when we



receive the remission of sins by our faith. It is because the Lord has given them to us that we are able to receive them.

The Master of this salvation is not we, but Jesus Christ. It is because our Jesus is the Master of salvation that He has done all these things for us. Any given party always has a host and invited guests. Just as the person who is throwing the party is the host overseeing the party, our salvation was planned and given to us by the Lord. It is because the Lord has blotted out all our sins that He could have brought peace to our hearts and given us the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit. This is why the Lord is telling us to receive them.

Seeing the resurrection of Jesus Christ, those who truly know and believe in Him profess, “Jesus is truly the Son of God as He said, and He is our Savior. Just as He said, He is indeed our Savior who has delivered us from sin and given us new life by rising from the dead again.” All who know this and believe it have been saved and received the Holy Spirit. This

is why Acts 2:38 says, “*Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*” In other words, when we receive the remission of sins, we also receive the gift of the Holy Spirit as well.

All the Apostles believed in Jesus Christ as their Savior, and they all believed that the Lord had accepted all their sins by being baptized and died on the Cross for them. And it is with this faith that they spread the gospel. They preached that because Jesus had accepted everyone’s sins by being baptized, died on the Cross, and thereby saved every sinner, whoever believed in this gospel of salvation given by our Lord could now receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

My fellow believers, the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit are not received separately. It was because our Lord was baptized, crucified to death, and resurrected that He told us to receive the Holy Spirit by faith. The resurrection of the Lord means the final completion of our salvation. It was because



the Lord thus completed our salvation that He told us to receive the Holy Spirit. And the Lord has actually given us this gift of the Holy Spirit, and by receiving the remission of sins, we have indeed received the Holy Spirit.

Have you received the Holy Spirit? Is there anyone who thinks, “I think I have received the remission of sins, but I’m not sure that I have received the Holy Spirit”? Do you truly believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit? Do you believe that only this gospel of the water and the Spirit is the Truth? Do you really believe in this Truth from the depth of your heart? If so, then have you been washed from all the sins of your heart, and is your heart now absolutely clean? That your heart is now perfectly clean is the very evidence testifying that you have received the Holy Spirit into your heart. Unless your heart is clean, the Holy Spirit cannot dwell in you. This is why the Lord told us to receive the Holy Spirit.

This Truth Was Spoken to Those Who Believed in the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

In verse 23, our Lord continued to say, “*If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.*” This is the privilege that God has given to only those who have received the remission of sins. Having received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, it is our privilege and duty to spread this gospel to others. These people will then also come to receive the remission of sins by believing in this true gospel. But there is a precondition for this to come about: People can be remitted from their sins only if we spread the gospel of the remission of sins to them. If we do not spread this gospel, then there is no way for them to receive the remission of sins. Their remission of sins therefore depends on us.

That the gospel that can remit sin has been given



to us does not mean, however, that we can wield it in our own carnal ways. This privilege is not a right for our flesh, but it is a spiritual right. If we have received the remission of sins through the Truth of the water and the Spirit by believing in this God who has saved us, then it has now been proven that others can also receive the remission of sins through this gospel of the water and the Spirit that we are spreading. And by believing in this gospel, people throughout the world who are suffering from their sins will infallibly receive the remission of their sins. Because you and I have received the remission of sins, if we spread this faith that has brought us this remission of sins to others, then they, too, will clearly be remitted from their sins also. Because our faith is flawlessly correct, so would others definitely receive the remission of sins.

The resurrection of Jesus written in the Bible holds a profound spiritual significance. But if not approached carefully, it is possible for people to misunderstand it, and when this happens, it will bring

grave fallacies to their faith. Also, if one finds it hard to believe Jesus' resurrection, even as he finds other aspects quite believable, then this is also a serious problem. Such people must believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit all over again from the very beginning. That Jesus rose from the dead again means that He has given us new life and brought us alive again. His death on the Cross, on the other hand, means that He died vicariously in our place. That Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist means that He accepted all our sins passed onto Him through John. That the Lord was born unto this earth means that He came to this earth to save us as our own Savior. And that Jesus Christ is God Himself, finally, means that He is the Creator who made us all.

As such, there can be no speculation on this gospel of the water and the Spirit. When we spread the gospel of the water and the Spirit, people will surely receive the remission of sins by hearing and believing in this gospel that we are preaching. From Cambodia to France, England, Nigeria, Brazil, and



Russia, people throughout this world are receiving the remission of sins. Through our books and our website, this gospel is being spread all over the world, in all its five continents and six oceans, from Europe to Africa, Asia, Americas, and Oceania, and now if only people would believe in this gospel with their hearts, they will receive the remission of sins invariably and surely. They will also receive the Holy Spirit without fail, and they will truly attain peace in their hearts. All who return from the false gospel will receive the genuine Truth.

Yet today's people of this world are only trying to aggrandize their own power by interpreting this passage from John 20:23 on their own. For instance, the Catholic Church believes that the Pope has the authority to remit sin. Its priests teach their congregations to make confessions to them, believing that they have the authority to forgive their sins. "Confess your sins to me," says the priest, sitting across a dividing wall that separates him from the confessor to ensure his anonymity. "I will hear you

from here with my ears; you should confess from there with your lips what sins you have committed." The Catholic believer then makes his confession. Hearing this confession, the priest says, "I forgive you your sins. Now do your proper penance and sin no more." The confessor then thinks that he has somehow received the remission of sins. It is said that this priest, in turn, is supposed to receive the remission of his sins from another priest senior to him, this senior priest from a bishop, the bishop from an archbishop, and the archbishop from the Pope. From whom, then, must the Pope receive the remission of his sins?

I am raising this issue not to criticize another religion, but to remind you to be spiritually discerning. The remission of sins does not depend on man, but it depends entirely on God. The Lord accepted all our sins by being baptized, was crucified to death to bear the condemnation of sin, and rose from the dead again in three days. This is the gist of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It is by



believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that we can receive the remission of sins, not by any other man-made methods. If one cannot discern this clearly with his faith, then it can only mean that this person is spiritually blind.

My fellow believers, Jesus has risen from the dead again. His resurrection is a marvelous event that has brought new life to us. If we had died with Christ and yet there had been no resurrection that brought us alive again, we would indeed be the most pitiable. If all that our faith can reach is just dying with Jesus for our sins, then we can only be pitiful, for with this dead faith we can do no spiritual work whatsoever. We can move freely only when we rise from the dead again, and it is indeed only with our living faith that we can do all God's works.

Metaphorically referring us to the seed, the Apostle Paul said that the body of the grain is determined by the seed that the farmer sowed. Also, speaking of the glory of resurrection, He said, "*There are also celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies*" (1

Corinthians 15:40). He also said we are sown in weakness, but we are raised in power. It is not only the Lord who has risen from the dead again, but you and I have also risen. Our bodies will live again. Just as Jesus died on the Cross, but His body rose from the dead again, our bodies will also live again. As the Lord is sinless in His heart and is the perfect Son of God, we, too, are the perfected souls who are sinless in our hearts, who have become God's children. Our bodies will not live again as they are now. Instead, we will be transformed into a new body. If everything were to end with our physical death, then our faith would all be meaningless. If you and I are not to live again, then it makes no difference whether we believe in Jesus or not.

But as there is an order in everything, so is there an order for our resurrection. There are two resurrections: the first resurrection and the second resurrection. And the first one is the good resurrection that we will partake in. The Bible tells us that Jesus Christ has become the first fruit of



resurrection by rising from the dead again. Those who have received the remission of sins and new life by believing in Jesus Christ, and who believe in His resurrection, have been brought to life again. And as the Bible also tells us that our bodies will be resurrected when the Lord returns to this earth, you and I will indeed be raised again. This is the first resurrection of the saints.

The second resurrection follows after a thousand years from the first resurrection. Having taken part in the first resurrection, the righteous will reign in glory for a thousand years, and when this Millennial Kingdom is over, God will raise sinners with the second resurrection. In other words, the Lord will bring alive again those who died without believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and without being saved. Raising these sinners for the second time, the Lord will then cast them into the everlasting fire of hell. This is the second resurrection for the sinners.

Many non-Christians also believe that there will

be resurrection after death. So what is critically important for us is whether or not we are able to participate in the first resurrection. This question is as important as the resurrection itself, for those who participate in the first resurrection are the blessed who will live forever with God, but those who participate in the second resurrection are the accursed who will be punished forever with the judgment of fire.

My fellow believers, the fact that we have received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, that God is using us as His workers despite our insufficiencies, that He has given us the gift of the Holy Spirit, and that He has given us the right to decide whether people have eternal life or not, to send their souls to Heaven or hell—all these things entail grave responsibility, as well as great authority and blessings at the same time. So we have indeed been blessed greatly, so much so that there is no one else on this earth who is as blessed as we are.



Our Lord has already given us salvation. By rising from the dead again, our Lord achieved the final completion of our salvation, and by doing so He has given us the gift of the Holy Spirit, made us God's own people and His workers, and bestowed on us the right to save other souls. This is why when Jesus appeared before His disciples the second time after His resurrection, He said, "Peace be with you; receive the Holy Spirit."

Our Lord has risen from the dead again. Have you received new life by believing in this resurrection? Do you really believe in the resurrection of Jesus? Our Lord's resurrection is not something that should just end with our Easter celebration, but it is a profoundly significant event that has actually brought new life to us. In one way or another, our bodies will surely die. But when we so die, the Lord will bring us alive again. Our souls have already been brought back to life, but the Lord will also raise our bodies again. Therefore, we must have a clear understanding of the true significance of Easter, and we must be

able to discern the spiritual meanings that it holds. And we must believe in the gospel Truth with our hearts and thank the Lord. "The Lord has given us new life"—this is what we should be thinking when Easter comes around the corner.

I have received everlasting life from God. Before I came to know the gospel of the water and the Spirit, I had found it hard to believe in the resurrection of Jesus. But now I believe it. I believe that I was crucified with Christ and was brought back to life again with Christ, and I believe that Jesus gave me new life when He rose from the dead. I also believe that the Lord will raise my terrestrial body into a celestial body. What about you then? Do you also believe this?

This is the power of God that is found in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Because God has come to us and dwells in us as the Holy Spirit, and because God Himself is the Lord of life, He will surely fulfill everything that He has told us. We can believe this because the Lord has given us faith. At



the beginning of this sermon, I spoke of Jesus as the Lord of salvation. Jesus is the Lord and Creator of not just you and me, but of this world and the entire universe. Insofar as our salvation is concerned, and as far as our new life is concerned also, Jesus is the Master of resurrection. It is because He is mighty that such works of salvation were all made possible. And it is because He is so powerful that we are able to believe in this Truth with our hearts.

What would it be like if we were not to live again? It's all well and fine to receive the everlasting remission of sins, but if there is neither new life and nor everlasting life for us, then how pitiable would we all be? There are so many things in this world that we would like to do, yet we have forsaken them all to follow Jesus and have instead done all things only for Jesus Christ. When this is the case, how resentful would we be if there were no resurrection waiting for us? While it may not be such a big deal to do the things of the world, we would still be truly pitiful if there were no way for us to be compensated for

forsaking them all.

My fellow believers, if there is no way for us to be brought back to life again after our physical death, then we would indeed be pitiable. No matter how much wealth and splendor one might have enjoyed while in this world, it would all be utterly futile and completely meaningless, since everything he enjoyed would end with his death. Even you and I, who are helping other souls to receive the remission of sins, will also die once. If our bodies were not to be brought back to life again in celestial bodies and live forever in glory, and if we were to believe and spread the gospel to others only to see our lives ending with our death and withering away forever, then from a carnal point of view, you and I would be truly wretched.

To be sure, even if there were no glory awaiting us, the fact that we have lived on this earth for the Lord is enough reason for us to be thankful. But because we will surely live again, reign for a thousand years, enter the eternal Kingdom of God,



and enjoy His splendor and glory forever, we are even more thankful for our lives. The condition for us to enjoy all these God-given glory and splendor has all been met, for you and I have been saved by God. Because God has brought our souls back to life again, our bodies also will live again. It is because we will live with God forever that the resurrection of Jesus is so important and profoundly significant.

Resurrection is not just a religious doctrine. Christians generally tend to think of resurrection merely as a doctrine and remember it only when Easter is around the corner, but for the true believers, the resurrection of everlasting life will come to them without fail.

Our Lord shouldered all the sins of the world by being baptized, died on the Cross, and was brought down and buried in a tomb. But after all these things, He rose from the dead again in three days, ascended to Heaven, and now sits on the right hand of the throne of God the Father. This is why Jesus appeared before us and told us, “Peace be with you. Receive

the Holy Spirit. Anyone whose sins you forgive will be forgiven. I, too, send you out to this world.” Our Lord has indeed brought the final completion of salvation and all its blessings to us.

Our faith must not end with death. Rather, it must begin with the fact that we have received the remission of sins and new life, and that we have become new creations. Faith must begin from this. As 2 Corinthians 5:17 states, “*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new,*” we have become new. Our Lord has given us new life, and He will raise our dead bodies back to life again as well. He will let us live in the everlasting Kingdom of God and enjoy all its glory and splendor. I, for one, believe this. But what about you? Do you also believe?

How meaningful was this year’s Easter for you? Was it as profound as it should have been? Perhaps some of you have heard of a famous actor from Hong Kong who killed himself not long ago. Having died



once, he is now waiting for the second resurrection. Regardless of how popular and world-famous he might have been, he will not be able to take part in the first resurrection but only in the second resurrection, for he had not received the remission of his sins while he was still alive.

But what about us? In which resurrection will we participate? We will take part in the good resurrection—that is, the first resurrection. What is the difference, then, between one who participates in the first resurrection and one who participates in the second resurrection? The difference lies in whether they have received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit or still remain as sinners from not believing in this gospel Truth. Because of this difference, one will enjoy glory and splendor forever, while the other will be accursed and destroyed forever. By whom is this fate determined? It is determined by God.

The fact that I believe in this gospel of the water and the Spirit is truly amazing even for myself. Does

it not also amaze you that you believe in this Truth of resurrection? You, too, are probably amazed by this. When did we ever think that we would live forever? Who among us ever thought that we would come to believe in this Truth? Did we even desire this, know this, or seek after it? We were only tormented by our sins. Yet not only have we been remitted from these sins, but just when we thought that everything was over with our remission of sins, there were still more blessings to come. The remission of sins was only a beginning. We have not only become God's own children and received all the rights that accrue to our new-found status, but the glory of the Kingdom of God also awaits us.

Having received the remission of sins, you and I are now serving the gospel on this earth. Do you think anyone else can do this? This is not something that just anyone can do. Do you think anyone can receive the remission of sins and serve this gospel? Not everyone who hears the gospel can serve it. Those who seek after their own small desires and



leave God only as their secondary concern will all drift away, and only those who truly follow God can be used by Him as His precious vessels and serve the gospel. This work that has been entrusted to us and we are doing now is of utmost importance.

The Bible tells us that for us to enjoy the glory of Christ to come, we must spread the gospel with Christ and we must also suffer with Him. The suffering that you and I are now enduring is a suffering that we bear for others. Before, our suffering was only for ourselves and our own survival, but now, it is as the servants of God that we are suffering, and this suffering is a beautiful suffering that we bear for others. It is truly blessed that God has entrusted this work to no one else but us.

This work is indeed a glorious work. Why? Because this work will be rewarded when the Millennial Kingdom comes. Some people might say, "I'd rather live comfortably in this world now than be rewarded in the Millennial Kingdom later." But do not think like this. I beseech you to not to take this

path. To not live for the gospel and the Father is to disobey Jesus. Telling us, "*As the Father has sent Me, I also send you,*" our Lord has placed us in different parts of the Church and sent us to work for His gospel. But if we refuse this work and say, "No, I don't want to," where would we end up? Such people are bound to end up not in this Church, but in a place of sin. They can never serve the Lord's work, for as they are increasingly tainted with sin, they will become distanced from God more and more. This work of the Lord is not something that can be done by just anyone.

My fellow believers, are you happy to do God's work? Of course you are happy! We are all so happy to serve our God. Though there might be times when we get bound by the weaknesses of the flesh, and as a result forget our happiness and walk back and forth restlessly outside our proper places where we belong, fundamentally speaking, we have already been born again and become God's laborers to serve His cherished work. It is an extremely high honor for us



to serve the gospel. The Lord has given us even more strength, power, and faith to enable us to bear more fruit than our labor, and so we are now winning many souls for Him and leading them to everlasting life. Whenever Easter comes around the corner, let us all remember that we have been born again as God's servants, and, being filled with the Holy Spirit, let us all exercise this right to forgive anyone's sins. And let us remember that it is because we are doing the Lord's work and serving His gospel that all these things are being accomplished.

From each of our assigned places, we are all serving the gospel. From our elders to our Sunday school teachers, there is no one in our Church who is not a servant of God. All of us are faithfully carrying out every work that has been assigned to each of us by God. From what place and with what entrusted task are you now working? What task has been assigned to you to carry out the Lord's work? Whatever your task may be, brothers and sisters, be faithful to it. Only then will the Lord entrust you with

even more precious work.

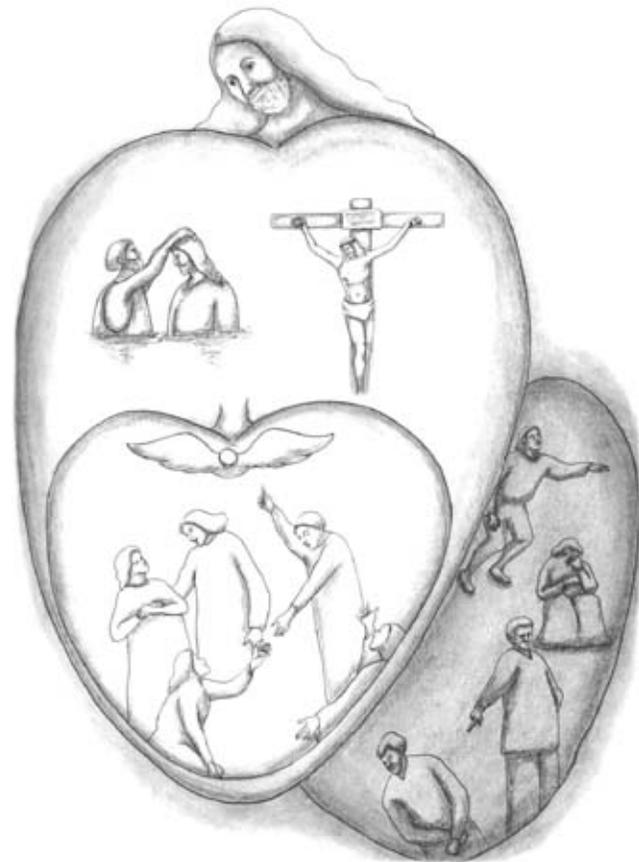
Do not think to yourself, "I am going to quit this work. I don't want to do it anymore. I want to do something else better than this." Rather, be faithful to what the Lord has assigned to you and work diligently, and it is then that your harvest can be even more abundant and more fruit of joy can be shared. The next time Easter comes around, let us all remember that we have been born again, and with this remembrance let us all renew our hearts. We will then be able to live our lives with the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

I give all my thanks to God. Halleluiah! ☒



SERMON

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Contents



The Lord Loves Us

< John 21:1-20 >

“After these things Jesus showed Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, and in this way He showed Himself: Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples were together. Simon Peter said to them, ‘I am going fishing.’ They said to him, ‘We are going with you also.’ They went out and immediately got into the boat, and that night they caught nothing. But when the morning had now come, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Then Jesus said to them, ‘Children, have you any food?’ They answered Him, ‘No.’ and He said to them, ‘Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some.’ So they cast, and now they were not able to draw it in because of the multitude of fish. Therefore that

disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, ‘It is the Lord!’ Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment (for he had removed it), and plunged into the sea. But the other disciples came in the little boat (for they were not far from land, but about two hundred cubits), dragging the net with fish. Then, as soon as they had come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, ‘Bring some of the fish which you have just caught.’ Simon Peter went up and dragged the net to land, full of large fish, one hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not broken. Jesus said to them, ‘Come and eat breakfast.’ Yet none of the disciples dared ask Him, ‘Who are you?’—knowing that it was the Lord. Jesus then came and took the bread and gave it to them, and likewise the fish. This is now the third time Jesus showed Himself to His disciples after He was raised from the dead. So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to



Simon Peter, ‘Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?’ He said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.’ He said to him, ‘Feed My lambs.’ He said to him again a second time, ‘Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?’ He said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.’ He said to him, ‘Tend My sheep.’ He said to him the third time, ‘Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?’ Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, ‘Do you love Me?’ And he said to Him, ‘Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Feed My sheep. Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish.’ This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, ‘Follow Me.’ Then Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also had

leaned on His breast at the supper, and said, ‘Lord, who is the one who betrays You?’”

God So Loved Us

God created the universe and everything in it, and then only did He created human beings according to His own image. He had created human beings only after having firstly created a safe and comfortable environment for them to live in. He had granted the entire creation of the universe to human beings and said, *“Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth”* (Genesis 1:28).

Why do you think the omniscient and omnipotent God created all things of this universe first before He created human beings? He did this because He knew people would interfere with His work. And why do you think He granted all things to people? It was



because He loves us humankind that much. If this be so, why do you think God loves us so much?

Let us take a look at the Book of Genesis chapter 1 verse 27. *“So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”* If we read this passage carefully, we will see that God created human beings in accordance with His own image. Just because He had made us in His own image, we must not think that had created our outer appearance to look like Him. The Bible does say that, “God is Spirit” (John 4:24), God having created us in His own image really means that He created us as spiritual beings. A spiritual being means that it can enjoy glory forever along with God for such a being is divine like God and can live eternally. And this is clearly the purpose why God created human beings. In other words, God created human beings as beings who can live together with God forever. Also, therein lies the important and profound secret in the fact that God had created human beings in His own image.

People are the happiest when they give birth to children who look exactly like themselves. You must have seen parents all so happy when they are told, “The baby looks exactly like his father.” If one were to look at the baby and say, “That baby looks just like the man next door,” would parents like such a remark? They will most certainly not like a remark like that. If this did happen they will never let that person to enter into their home again due to their anger. Like this, to parents a child is their offspring and very precious and valuable because its life is linked with theirs. So we see a parent’s love towards their own children is endless, and even if they were to give everything they own to them, they will not feel any regret. Does God love people for this very reason? No, not at all. We need to know that it is because God made us in His image in all aspects. God wants all human beings who were made in His image, to live together with Him in Heaven for all eternity; knowing this can you imagine just how great His love is?



There are times when people are unable to give things to their children, but for our God, He is able to give anything He wants to His people. Do you truly know why God made human beings in His image? He did so in order to give them everything that is in Heaven. It was to allow people to live eternally like God and to enjoy everything and all the glory of Heaven together with Him forever. Like this, human beings had been created in God's image to receive all God's blessings; but how foolish would that be if they only sought out for fleshly things by just say living for some tens of years in this world?

We should always be thinking about of the origin and the goal of our lives. Sadly, there are many people who go on living without understanding why they have been created, where they come from, and where they are going. People like this must meet God through the gospel of the water and the Spirit by faith without fail. And they must clearly know why they have been created, why God created them, and also where they will be going in the future. Once answers

to these questions are found, they will be able to feel the unfathomable warm love of God.

People Continue to Wander Aimlessly Around for They Do not Know the Righteousness of God

A life of faith without the knowledge that God loves them has no meaning at all. This also applies those who have been born again by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Even though they lead a life of faith, there can be no satisfaction and something will always be lacking. Also they will find themselves leading a life of religion based on its formalities. In short, they will become pew warmers. For this reason we must without fail know that God loves us. We must know without fail that God has given us we who are living in this desert-like world, His great and overflowing love through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and that He has loved us



from the very beginning; and He still loves us. That is what God also wants all of us to know. He has told us about His love throughout the Bible.

God loves human beings His creation we who are less worthy than bugs, so much that the writer of the Psalm 144 sang this song:

“LORD, what is man, that you take knowledge of him?

Or the son of man, that you are mindful of him?

Man is like a breath;

His days are like a passing shadow”

(Psalm 144:3-4).

Because God loves each and every one of us, He had His only begotten Son receive His baptism from John the Baptist and gave Him up on the Cross so that our souls will not suffer destruction but rather gain eternal life. The Scripture passage which says that God loved the world means what it says that God loved every single person in this world. Even if there was nobody else in this world except me, Jesus probably would have come to save me. We must

understand that God loves equally, whether He loves just one person or the entire population of this world. A single human being cannot love hundreds, thousands or even tens of thousands of people the same. Because human beings are imperfect, no one can even remember them all.

But with God, loving a single person and loving the entire population of this world which numbers over six billion is the same to Him. In the universe, there is nothing God does not know, for God counts the number of the stars and calls them all by name (Psalm 147:4), and the very hairs of our head are all numbered by God (Matthew 10:30).

Even before we were even born into this world, God knew everything about us. He sent His only begotten Son so that we may attain everlasting life rather than suffer destruction because He knew what kind of sin we would commit by being born into this world, and because He knew that we were destined to go to hell because of this terrible sin. For this reason, God has bestowed everlasting life to those who



realize and believe in His grace. And that is precisely what God's love is all about.

Parents love their children even when they are still inside the womb. "Honey, when we have the baby, what shall we name it? If it is a son let's name him so and so, but if it is a daughter, let's name her so and so. Let's prepare clothes and quilts for the baby, and when the baby grows up, which college shall we sent it to? I believe raising the baby in such and such way would be best." They go on planning and preparing the baby's future. But the baby inside the womb does not know who its parents are, and it does not know how much they love it. But despite this, the parents still love the baby.

Likewise, even when we did not know God, He loved us. No matter how much sin we may have, God's love will always be greater than all our sins. The reason why God loved us so much is because inside every one of us is a soul which was created according to God's sacred plan and purpose. There is no other reason.

Even if children are not as good looking as other people's children and are troublemakers, their parents still love them. When a child is on the verge of death with a serious illness, they worry lest the child should die. Even if a child is physically handicapped, the parents still love the child and take pity on it. No matter how much sin we may have, God does not want any souls to go to hell. He despises sin, but He loves human beings. Even though human beings may be unavailing and their whole lives may be like a passing shadow, but nevertheless in this shadow-like life, is a soul. In the eyes of God, any soul is precious. "*I shall be glorious in the eyes of the Lord*" (Isaiah 49:5). When I see myself, I am not that special and in the eyes of others I may seem less special than ever. But God sees me as someone glorious.

However, if we do not know the purpose for which God has created us is the soul in each and every one of us, and that God loves our souls very much, we will be destroyed for become misfortunate and lowly like an animal. We must therefore make



every effort to find God amidst our busy lives without fail by clearly realizing this truth.

It is the same with our lives of faith. Even after being born again we need to continue to know God's love. It is because our faith is not just some absurd and empty religious faith created by people. God whom we believe in is the actual living and working God. It is true that He has made us from the dusts of the earth and of the breath of life, and even now He stands next to us and looks over us. For this reason, we must lead a real life of faith instead of leading a life of religion blindly.

At times, as we go about our things we become tied up in certain work, our hearts fall into it, and there might be occasions when we go on living forgetting that God is amidst our lives, that God is alive, and that we stand before God. When this happens we start leading a lukewarm life of faith as if we have not received any love while forgetting how God has loved us. God had warned us against this. In the Book of Revelation chapter 3 verse 16, He talks

about this, *“So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.”* Therefore while we lead a life of faith we must always feel God's love, and through His Word we must listen to that love. And when we meditate on what kind of love God has given us every day, we will not ever be able to lead a lukewarm life of faith.

Our Life of Faith Is Actual and Real

You and I are right now are offering our worship to God. We are living and working before God. Like this we are actually serving God and also spreading the gospel before God. This isn't just a futile argument but an actual fact. You must clearly realize this fact.

When we stand before God and see ourselves as we are, we get to think about what we are doing before God and also what sort of grace and love we have been clothed with by Him. It means that we get



to think about what kind of being we ourselves are and also and what sort of love and grace we go on living with. Then we get to realize that we are standing right now before God because of that grace and that we are living all so peacefully before Him. If we reflect on our lives just a little, we get to fully recognize that God loves us. As we retrace our lives from the time when we were sinners by not having met the Lord, we can see how much God loves us and how much He has led us all throughout the course of our lives. And also we get to realize that we have become glorious before God and that He loves us.

At times we forget that we are leading our lives before God. The Hellenic words '*coram deo*' means 'before the face of God,' and this signifies that it is actually all before the face of God that we receive our salvation from our sins and live out our faith. But despite this we forget about this fact so often. The disciples of Jesus also found out that God had loved them. That is why they led a life of spreading the

gospel of the water and the Spirit all throughout the known world by becoming the servants of God only after Jesus had ascended to Heaven. The disciples who had led such a life went up to the Kingdom of Heaven prior to us, and right now they reside in Heaven with the Lord.

After having completed the work of taking on the sins of all mankind by receiving His baptism from John the Baptist in the Jordan River, Jesus was crucified to death. But before dying Jesus told His disciples that He would be resurrected in three days. Having witnessed the Jesus' death, all they had to do then was to wait for three days by faith. But even though His disciples had heard these words about Jesus' resurrection often times, "*For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead*" (John 20:9), they were not able to fully understand its true meaning. And so as it is shown in the Gospel of Mark chapter 16 when Mary Magdalene having witnessed Jesus' resurrection first told the disciples about it, but the disciples did not



believe this news at first even though they were told about it. Only after having met the resurrected Jesus physically later on they then only believed in His resurrection, and as for Thomas who had doubted this resurrection for not having been there, believed in the end only after Jesus had personally shown him the spear mark to His side and the nail marks on His hands. Whereupon Jesus said, *“Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed”* (John 20:29).

These are the very Words given to us by Jesus. Although we are unable to meet Jesus right now in this world, but nevertheless we believe in His existence. We get to meet Him through the Bible, by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and also we go on living with the hope of Heaven where we will soon actually meet Him face to face. It is very easy to believe in things we can see smell and touch, but it is difficult to believe in things we cannot see. And this is why Jesus said that we are more

blessed than those who would only believe in Jesus only after seeing Him with their own eyes. Jesus is giving us infinite blessing we who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Having taken on the sins of this world by receiving His baptism from John the Baptist and having shed His blood before dying on the Cross; Jesus is pouring upon us much greater love.

Jesus’ Disciples Met Jesus Once Again

Today’s Scripture reading tells us about the event where Jesus met the seven disciples, including Peter at the Sea of Tiberias. The Bible says that our bodies will be changed into spiritual bodies that is different from the one we now have when we meet the returning Jesus Christ. Through the appearance of the resurrected Jesus shown to His disciples, we are able to imagine just what our spiritual bodies will be like.



As we can see from Thomas having seen and touched Jesus, this resurrected body will have flesh and bones, and it will be seen and be touchable. Also when Jesus met the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias He ate food with them, and on His body the scars of having been crucified were all there to see. So we will be able to see a resurrected body that is not different from our current fleshly bodies. However, although the disciples did not having recognized Jesus and although Jesus walked through walls and having moved transcending space, we are able to infer through this that the resurrected body would be a spiritual one, differing from the one we are clothed in right now.

Like this, a body and a soul are resurrected as an existence that can live eternally. For those who have been truly born again for having received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, this resurrection is something that is waited upon with anticipation. It is because to live eternally together with Jesus in Heaven is

something that is joyful and heart-pounding, and cannot be compared to anything else in this world.

Even for those of us who have become the righteous like Jesus, there is this resurrection that awaits us. But the resurrection of the wicked is different from that of the righteous. For those who have not as yet been truly born again, this resurrection is something that is greatly feared. As I mentioned previously, the resurrection of the righteous is something joyous and wonderful for they will live forever together with the Lord in the Paradise, but for the wicked who have not been born again, their resurrection is all so agonizing and fearful for their body and soul will fall into hell fire that shall never be quenched. Which resurrection are you then a partaker of? Is it the resurrection of the righteous? Or is it the resurrection of the wicked?

The disciples toiled all through the night to catch fish, but they did not even catch one. But Jesus appeared to them at early dawn and told them to cast the net on the other side of the boat, and when they



did as was told them, they caught 153 large fish. You might think that this scene is familiar. You are right. When Peter and his fellow fishermen, Jacob and John met Jesus for the first time something similar happened. Also back then they toiled all through the night unable to catch any fish, but with a single word from Jesus they were able to catch numerous fish. Just as Peter said, *“Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net”* (Luke 5:5), when Jesus told them to cast the net on the other side of the boat; salvation is something that human beings cannot attain despite having toiled all through the night but instead it can easily be gained with a single Word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit from the Lord. This is why we must lead our lives by relying on the Word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, rather than one’s own efforts or one’s own thoughts. Only by doing so, we the born-again people will be able to catch much fish.

Jesus Appeared for the Third Time and Questioned Peter

The Gospel of John chapter 21 shows us the resurrection of Jesus and it also shows Jesus’ conversation with Peter, which isn’t shown in any other Gospel, therefore we can say that it is an important chapter. The content of the conversation is comprised of Jesus asking Peter, who had denied Him three times, and then giving him a new mission and telling him to follow the Lord.

Peter was passionate more than anyone else. He was always at the forefront of the Lord’s work, and he spoke bombastically that he would never forsake Jesus. But we see Peter who had been over confident was more concerned with his own welfare. And as prophesied by Jesus he agonized after having realized that he had denied Jesus three times. *“A second time the rooster crowed. Then Peter called to mind the word that Jesus had said to him, ‘Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times.’ And*



when he thought about it, he wept” (Mark 14:72). He had denied the Lord three times who professed earlier that he would never betray Him, his self-remorse and agony must have been unbearable.

Jesus appeared to such Peter. If Jesus had been just an ordinary person He would have become angry all of a sudden by saying, “Did you not betray me?” and He would have at least seized him by the collar. But Jesus did not do that. Instead He said, “*Simon, son of Jonah, do you love me more than these?*” He confirmed that there was a great love for the Lord in Peter’s heart. Peter answers, “*Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.*” This statement is the same as saying, “How can I stand before you and say that I do not love You Lord, for You have loved me?” To this answer the Lord replied, “Feed My Lambs,” and He then entrusts His lambs to him.

And then He asks once again. “*Simon, son of Jonah, do you love me?*” Peter then answers with the same answer he had said the first time. Then Jesus entrusts His lambs to him by saying, “*Tend to My*

sheep.” And then He asks again. “*Simon, son of Jonah, do you love me?*”

It is recorded in the Bible that Peter was grieved because Jesus had asked again although he had thought that Jesus would not ask him any more. Peter’s heart must have been very uncomfortable, just like any man who has done wrong and feeling sorry not knowing what to do when the other person treats him nicely, instead of showing anger. Perhaps he might have wanted Jesus to get angry and strike him instead. And so Peter answers Jesus with intense feeling. “*Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.*”

So then Jesus entrusts him with the work by saying, “*Feed My sheep,*” and develops an intimate relationship with him spiritually. Peter had no choice but answer in the same way for each of the three questions asked by Jesus. It is because Peter had meditated on the fact that Jesus had accepted and cleansed all his sins with His baptism and the shedding of His blood, which is the unequivocally



great Truth of salvation. After this Peter went on spreading the righteousness of Jesus rather than his own righteousness. And after having spread the gospel of the water and the Spirit he suffered his martyrdom as prophesied by Jesus, and then was embraced into the Lord's bosom.

By questioning Peter like this who had denied Jesus three times, Jesus confirmed His love for Peter. Before, Peter followed Jesus only with fervor. But after experiencing such great love of Jesus on in a personal way; with the strength of this love he was able to spread the gospel even embracing his own martyrdom. We are also those who have realized the love of Jesus through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Therefore we don't have any other choice by to bear witness of Jesus until we die with the strength of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The questions that Jesus had asked Peter are exactly the same questions that He now asks us.

God Has Given You and Me the Same Confession as That of Peter

Peter professed, *“Lord, You know all things; you know that I love you.”* He has given us such a confession in our hearts by the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We have become those who cannot but love the Lord not because we have loved the Lord first but because the Lord has loved us first by the water and the blood and has shown us that love personally. Therefore more than all the people in this world, we also love the Lord. It is because the Lord has loved us first by the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Because the Lord has given us love, we have become those who love the Lord more than anything or anyone in this world.

Dear fellow believers our Lord has made us people who knows what the true gospel really is; He has also made us practitioners of His love. We are believers of the gospel of the water and the Spirit who love the Lord more than any other person in this



world. No one in this world is more lovable than the Lord. Is this not true? Yes, even though there are innumerable people in this world, no one is more lovable than Jesus. It is so because we have been clothed with God's love by the gospel of the water and the Spirit. There are times when we love the world and those close to us, but we come back under the faith of believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit each and every time because of that love Jesus first bestowed upon us.

Just as Peter confessed, "*Yes, Lord; you know that I love you,*" when Jesus had asked him, "*Do you love me more than these people?*" we also make such a confession to God. And we thank Jesus for having loved us after having received the baptism from John the Baptist for us and then died on the Cross. His love toward us continues even now inside the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It is a salvation and a kind of love that will never end.

Human beings are selfish. People love only if they themselves are loved. People do not love just because

someone has told them to love. People love because they like it in their heart.

But we truly love God. We don't love Him reluctantly. And we do not love Him just because we are commanded to do so. We love God also simply because He has loved us first by the gospel of the water and the Spirit. If God had not loved us by the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we also would not have loved God in turn. Even if we want to love Him, we would not be able to love Him because of the sins which are still intact in our heart. Is this true, or not? It is most certainly true.

Jesus had given salvation to Peter as well as to the disciples through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. By receiving His baptism from John the Baptist and carrying the Cross on His back, Jesus willingly paid the price of death, which is the full price of sins, which included all the sins of Peter who had denied Jesus by saying he never knew Him. So the disciples of Jesus were also able to love Him. The confession of Peter where he said, "*You know that I*



love you more than these people,” must also become your confession as well as mine. We must understand as such and love the Lord. Also we must lead our lives abiding by the request and the command given by the Lord.

When God created us mankind in the very beginning, He also created us with love. He created us so that He may love us for all eternity, and through Jesus Christ He witnessed this vast love personally. We have received the remission of sins by realizing this love through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. In other words, we have received the remission of our sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

How can we, who are like this, not love Jesus? If the Lord had not saved us by the gospel of the water and the Spirit and if He had not blotted out all our sins, how then would we have been able to love the Lord? We could not love the Lord. Because God loved us first, we can now love the Lord more than all the peoples of this world.

The Reason We Love the Lord More Is That the Lord Had Loved Us First

We cannot but love the Lord because the Lord had given us salvation by the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Because the Lord had remitted all our sins by the gospel of the water and the Spirit once and for all, we cannot refrain from loving such a Lord. Therefore, we also can confess, “Lord, You know that I love you.” Our hearts are filled with this love of salvation God had poured upon us, and so with this love, we love the Lord by professing, “Lord, I love you more than all these people.”

We truly are able to love the Lord because He has given His infinite love to us. We have received the Lord’s love. We were able to receive the love like this because God has given us this love of mercy first. Right now we are living out our lives with the strength of love where He gave the remission of sins. If the Lord did not love us, we could not go on living.

God said that man shall not live by bread alone,



but by every Word that proceeds from the mouth of God. The Word of God is the Word spoken by none other than God. God said, “I have given you eternal life, and I have instilled my love in your hearts.” Because God instilled His love into our hearts, we have been able to receive this love, and we get to live out our faith by keeping faith through the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

We Are Wearing God’s Love

If we do not know God’s love which came to us by the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we will not have the strength to go on living. God saved us from all our sins by the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and not only that He has given us all spiritual grace because He loved us. And when we do realize and believe in this, we begin feeling in our hearts God’s love in action. Also as we cherish the grace of God which came inside our hearts, we are able to go on

living in this world by the strength of that love. Like this you and I get to go on living by the strength of God-given love. We do not go on living by any other kind of strength.

When we go into the fields, we find nameless flowers growing there without anyone taking care of them. This is all possible because God provides rain according to its seasons and grows them with appropriate sunlight and temperature. God raises even such little flowers with His own hands like that. If this be so, how about us human beings? God gives us everything in abundance, sparing nothing out of His great love for us. For we reside in such a love of God, we receive the good rain of grace given by God, get to grow as the possessors of health and strong faith, and then bear many fruits of faith. God has given us His true love so that we can go on living by such faith right now. And so, we can confess exactly the same kind of faith as that of Peter. We can say, “There is someone that I love more than all these people. He is the Lord. Because you gave me the



love through the water and the Spirit, therefore I cannot but love you.”

The Lord knows every thing about us in detail. Even before Peter admitted his love for the Lord, the Lord already knew that Peter loved Him. Because the Lord loved me like that, the Lord knows that His love is in my heart and also that I cannot but love the Lord more than any other person. No one knows this, but the Lord knows. Didn't the Lord love me even though He knew every kind of sins I would ever commit in the future? Did He not pour His love upon me? I know that the Lord loves me to the very end; He loved me thus far, and He will continue to love me in the future. Therefore, I cannot throw away my love for the Lord. I also love the Lord. And the Lord knows that I love Him.

Jesus knew Peter's heart like this also. He knew that Peter loved Him. Although His disciples were catching fish right now, Jesus knew that His disciples also loved Him. Peter as well as all the other disciples knew that Jesus came to them because He

loved them. Because the Lord loved His disciples, He came to see them when they were shivering with fear inside their home, and also when they were wrangling with Thomas, He also came to see them. Even though the disciples were disheartened as if they had never experienced His love, and they departed to catch fish bound by the need for food, clothing and shelter and acting just like worldly people, the Lord nevertheless loved them to the very end. Peter knew that Jesus came to see them because He loved them. The other disciples also knew this.

“You know that I love you more than these people.”

“Feed My sheep.”

Jesus entrusts God's lambs to those who loves Jesus more than anyone else, knows Jesus' love and have received His love through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It means that Jesus entrusts His work to those who love Jesus more than anything else in this world. That is why when Peter said, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you,” Jesus replied three



times, “Feed My lambs. Tend to My sheep. Lead them.” Peter knew that God came to see him because He loved him. He knew that there was no reason for Jesus to come to see the disciples if He had not loved them. He knew that because the Lord God loved them, He came to see them again and that God would love them to the very end. For this reason Peter believed in Him.

God Loves All Those Who Have Received the Remission of Sins

God gives His love to every single human being. God continues to give His love ceaselessly. Because God loves us He granted to us everlasting life and the love that enabled us not to suffer destruction for all eternity. As it is written in Psalm, “*What is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you visit him?*” (Psalm 8:4), God pours upon us such great love that we cannot but truly be thankful to

Him.

Jesus also has given to us God’s love. And even now He continues pouring His love on us. He will never ever forsake us. No matter how weak and lacking we may be, He will never forsake us. At the time when our Lord was receiving His baptism from John the Baptist, He wrote off all our trespasses. And after having taken onto Himself all our sins and trespasses, our Lord saved us completely from our sins by being crucified. There are occasions when someone dies by accident in the attempt by trying to save someone else, but it is uncommon to find anyone who is willing to die for someone else’s sake. To that extent, to die for someone else is never an easy thing to do. Yet our Jesus gave to us such a great love through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Instead of resenting us, Jesus carried on His back all the sins of the world by receiving His baptism from John the Baptist, and acquiescently took on the task amidst the extreme pain of His skin and flesh getting torn apart by the whipping with a



whip embedded with sharp piercing nails which punctured His skin and tore His flesh. No other love in this world can be compared to such a love of Jesus.

God gave us true love of salvation. We have received God's true and genuine love by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. God loves us, and because we have received His unconditional love, we can love God. This is clearly the relationship between God and us. This is precisely what a relationship of love is all about; our faith is standing on this relationship. Also this is a perfect love. Therefore, we can neither lose nor forsake God's love. Even though we can be defeated by our own self at times, we have become those who can confess despite all things, "We love the Lord more than anyone else in this world." This became possible because the Lord had given us His love of salvation through the gospel of the water and the Spirit first. We are doing the work of the Lord because the Lord entrusted us with His work. It is because feeding the Lord's sheep all the while following Him is also the

love given by the Lord.

Dear fellow believers, we must realize just how great a love God has given us. From the time God created mankind for the very first time; He formed man from the dust of the earth with sincerity so that He may eternally live together with us. It means that He created us as objects upon which He could bestow His love. From the time God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, He had in His heart the plan to give us His love.

God came down to this earth in a form of a human being in order to save us who had no choice but to commit sins due to our weaknesses and to go to hell because of all our sins. He had known all too well that we would never be able to cleanse away those sins by ourselves. The very 'One' who had come by the gospel of the water and the Spirit was Jesus Christ. As our Savior, Jesus came and took on all the sins of humankind by receiving His baptism from John the Baptist, paid the full price for all those sins on the



Cross, and cleansed us from the sins of the world. Like this, God cleansed all our sins with His great love, and furthermore He gave us everlasting life. He made us the objects of His love. We who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit are ‘the called ones’ of Christ (Romans 1:6). Those who are clothed with God’s love become one with Christ, having received grace from God.

God showed His love by poured over us His great love through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. God cleansed us ‘those who are of Christ’ by saving us who cannot but sin due to our lacking and weaknesses through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit have truly become God’s children who are clothed in His love. You and I who are the truly born-again have become those who are of God. Only those who believe in God’s love can become Gods very own people. Dear fellow believers, through God’s love we have become one with Christ. Because God has given to us such a great love, we

now are able to lead a life of faith by believing in our hearts with this love.

We Give Thanks to God of the Truth

More than anything else we must be thankful that God loves us. Just as God came to His disciples because He loved them, He intervenes in our lives because He loves us even now. Although we are truly weak and lacking, the Lord comes to us again and asks us, “Do you love me more than all these people?” He repeatedly tells us that He loves us through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Therefore, we truly give thanks to our Lord.

Dear fellow believers, let us all together answer Jesus’ question.

Jesus right now is asking you, “*Do you love me more than all these people?*”

“You know that I love You, Lord. Did you not give me love? So, I cannot but love You, Lord.”



“Feed My sheep.”

Let us all make confession again to the question,
“Do you love me more than all these people?”

“Lord, you know that I love you.”

Having denied Jesus, Peter turned around before Jesus once more, and later on he became the highest leader amongst the disciples. He then witnessed to people God’s salvation, grace and love by the gospel of the water and the Spirit (1 Peter 3:21). Just as Peter had gone before God after having lived as a precious servant of God, you and I must likewise also go before God. We must confidently confess our faith by saying, “Yes, Lord, You know that I love you more than all these people,” and we must spread the Lord’s love far and wide. Because we have the gospel of the water and the Spirit in our hearts, we have the heart that loves the Savior Lord more than anyone else. I give thanks to the Lord who has given us such a heart.

We give thanks to God. I am also thankful and joyful by what great love He has given us. Truly we

don’t even realize just how lacking we are and what a lacking life we lead. We are so lacking that we cannot but fall down and break down so often. However, because of such a great love of God that came to us by the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we are able to stand up firmly again, and with the power of God’s love we are able to amply overcome and go on living. I am just thankful to God that I am following the Lord by the God-given gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Hallelujah! I love You, Lord. ☒





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