



Sermons on the Gospel of Luke (I)

FOR WHOM WAS JESUS CHRIST BORN?



PAUL C. JONG

Sermons on the Gospel of Luke (II)

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Our Lord Actually Came Into Human History

During the reign of Caesar Augustus (27 B.C. to A.D. 14), all the colonial subjects of the Roman Empire were decreed to return to their hometowns and be registered in a census. So, a young man named Joseph also had to make a long journey toward Bethlehem, his ancestors' town, with his pregnant wife, Mary.

Our Lord was thus born in a small town called Bethlehem. It was a historical fact. At that time, out in the surrounding fields, there were shepherds keeping watch over their flock, and "Suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: 'Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!'" Having witnessed this, the shepherds went looking for the Baby Jesus and saw Him lying in a manger, and they returned giving glory to God.

Now I sincerely hope and pray that every reader of this book would become the same witness of the Baby Jesus as the shepherds by listening to the gospel Word from Heaven.



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Preface



The Lord Was Laid in a Manger

It is Jesus Christ who moves the entire history of this world. Our Lord came to this earth to save all humans from the sins of the world, and He has become the bread of new life for those of us who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. In fact, it was to give this new life to us, who were all destined to hell for our sins that our Lord came looking for you and me. The purpose for which our Lord came to us was to give new life to all those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. By this gift of grace, we could be saved. Our Lord did not come to this earth for any other purpose but to save us, who were made in the image of God, from the sins of the world. Indeed, there was only one purpose for which our Lord came to this earth. It was

to give new life to you and me who were all corrupted by sin, and therefore doomed to be condemned and destroyed forever for our sins.

To this end, our Lord was baptized to accept all the sins of the world onto His own body once and for all. By doing so, He fulfilled the remission of sins all at once. By thus accepting all our sins at once, giving up His body to be crucified, shedding His blood, and rising from the dead again, our Lord has become the Shepherd who has brought everlasting salvation to all His believers. Hallelujah!

With Christmas approaching us, we need to thank God with a clear understanding of the spiritual reason as to why Jesus was born in Bethlehem, and why He was laid in a manger wrapped in swaddling clothes. When our Lord was born on this earth, He was born in a dwelling place of livestock, because there was no room at the inn. This demonstrates the merciful love of God and His salvation, desiring to save you and me from our wretched spiritual condition. We can see that even though we were all inevitably doomed to

die for our sins while living in this world, to save such people like us from the sins of the world, our Lord Himself came to this earth looking for us, even unto such a lowly place to give us salvation.

Although our Lord came to this earth in the image of man, in His fundamental essence, He was God Himself. He was not a lowly being like us humans, but He was fundamentally the holy, almighty, and perfect Creator. Jesus Christ is God the Creator who made us, and He is also the only begotten Son of the God the Holy Father. However, even though Jesus Christ was the only begotten Son of God the Father, He came to this earth as the Savior. This was in obedience to the will of God the Father.

The Gospel of Luke writes that when Mary gave birth to her Son, she wrapped Him in swaddling clothes and laid Him in a manger. The swaddling clothes here actually refer to white linen. Having given birth to the Baby Jesus in a stable and cut the umbilical cord, Mary needed to wrap Him in clean linen and lay Him down. But as there was nowhere



else to put Him, she laid Him in a manger, a trough used to feed animals. In fact, it was soaked with the stench of animal waste. This shows us that we are fundamentally such wretched beings before God.

We need to realize here that our Lord, who came looking for such lowly beings like us, is the God of mercy who came to save sinners. Although He came to this earth in the image of man, fundamentally speaking, He was not the same creature as you and me. Rather, He was the Creator and God Himself in His essence. He was the Almighty God who had created this world with His Word. Yet despite this, God Himself came to this earth in obedience to His Father in order to save such lowly beings like us from the sins and iniquities of the world.

In fact, our Lord actually knew all about the weaknesses and inadequacies of every human being, and that is why He personally came to this earth to save everyone from all iniquities. In other words, God is the Savior who came to deliver us from all our sins knowing just how weak and insufficient we all

are, and how we are utterly incapable of keeping His Law. Jesus Christ was the Shepherd of mankind who had compassion for us and was pleased to save us. That is why our Lord bore all our sins on His own body through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, and while bearing all these sins of the world, He was crucified to be offered as our propitiation of atonement.

Now, realizing the purpose for which the Lord came to this earth, all of us should answer His love by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which is His love and His method of salvation. As such, on this Christmas, let us all give thanks to the Lord with the full understanding of its real meaning.



SERMON

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Jesus Who Came to Save the Lowly

< Luke 2:1-14 >

“And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city. Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child. So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in

the inn. Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. Then the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.’ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying:

‘Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!’”

In Whose Heart Can Jesus Be Born?

Christmas is the day that we celebrate the birth of



Jesus Christ. We Christians are celebrating the coming of the Lord by setting apart one day as “Christmas.”

When I was a child, I used to go to church around Christmas. To be honest with you, I went there to get free tasty food. While I was young, people were impoverished with the Korean War. There were times I had to go to an orphanage in town with an empty bag to get some milk powder. At that moment I felt envious of those orphans because they seemed to be being fed better than I was. At the orphanage where I went begging, I saw a cross for the first time in my life. In those days orphanages were being supported by American Christians, so there used to be crosses at any orphanages. I didn't have faith when I first went to church and looked at the cross, but as I got older, I came to put my faith in Jesus; and now I am delivering the Christmas message to you as a pastor.

Brothers and sisters, as I just told you, Christmas is the day for us to commemorate and celebrate the

birth of Jesus Christ. Then where on this earth was He born? I mean, in whose hearts was He born? To find out the answer is to know the real meaning of Christmas celebration.

Human being is frequently called a “small universe.” Jesus, who is God Himself, gave up His Heavenly King's throne and came into this earth, that is, people's hearts. Why did Jesus come to this earth? He was born in our hearts in order that He may be with us. So to speak, He came to this world to adopt us as God's children. When He comes, in whose heart will He arrive? All the accounts of the birth of Jesus are recorded (by being focused) on this point.

When we look at the Bible to find out whose heart can bear God, we can find the fact that Jesus had never come into the heart of those people who were rich. The Lord doesn't come into the hearts of those with powers and wealth, but He comes into the hearts of who are humble and fearful of God.

Our Lord was born in Bethlehem when Caesar Augustus was ruling the Roman Empire. It was not



accidental that God was born in those days. The Lord arrived in time to save humankind from confusion, sins and suppression. Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world; therefore a census was taken in Israel, which was one of the Roman colonies.

Our Lord came to this world during the specific period of time according to His plans. He was conceived in Mary's body, and came out to this world 10 months later. He was born as the Savior to human races. The Son of God clothed in a human body came to this earth as Savior.

Baby Jesus was conceived with the power of God's Word while Mary was still engaged to Joseph. The Roman Emperor issued a timely decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world, and all the Israelites had to go to their hometowns to register. To summarize, God let the world go through a tumultuous situation to send Christ according to His prophecies. Joseph and Mary also went to register in their hometown of Bethlehem, and Mary,

who was very close to the childbirth, started to have contractions. "Joseph, the baby is about to come out." When Joseph saw his wife having contractions, he went to talk to an innkeeper.

"Sir, could you give us a room? My wife is about to have a baby. We need a room immediately." Then the innkeeper said, "Are you out of your mind? This place is full of people from out of town, and we were about to charge people for staying in our yard. At this moment in time, do you want a room of your own?"

There Is No Place for Jesus to Dwell in Your Heart

The Bible says that baby Jesus was born in a stable because there was no room in the inn. Just because the inn did not have room for them, Jesus was born in the stable and placed in a manger. The highest Jesus was born in such a lowly place as stable and he was wrapped with cloths and placed in the



manger.

Brothers and sisters, we need to know God's love and His plans as we celebrate Christmas. It is same as knowing what kind of souls can serve Jesus Christ as Savior. Our Lord Jesus incarnated with human flesh. The highest God came down to this lowly place

Then who can receive Jesus? It is not those whose hearts are filled with worldly things, but those who have empty hearts that can welcome Jesus. People who can conceive Jesus are not those who are full of greed, delusions, and temptations, but those who anticipate God's Kingdom and attend God at the center of their hearts.

I have God in my heart because things in this world do not satisfy my heart. Even though I use materials that are in this world, I am not attached to any of them. The Lord comes into the hearts of such people. Why wasn't Jesus born in a nicer and cleaner place even when He could have? Jesus is the King of Heaven and the Creator of this earth, so it is reasonable to think that He should be born in a clean

and luxurious room. Then why did He come into such a musty and shabby place like that? We can find the answer to this question when we look for reasons why Jesus arrived at that very moment in time. He had a message to tell us by showing how He unfolded the history of this world. He wanted to come into the hearts of those who have poor spirit.

Our Lord also visits people who are inclined to worldly possessions, but He cannot be born in their hearts because there is no room to accommodate Him in their hearts. Our Lord continues visiting the hearts of people even as we speak. He is with us now and He will be with us forever. The Lord wants to reside in our hearts forever.

Jesus has knocked on so many people's hearts this year too. "Let me in. I am your Savior. I have saved you. I will make you prosper. I will adopt you as God's child." He wanted to come inside of people's hearts like this. But sadly many people rejected Jesus. Some people turn Jesus away because they do not have any room for Jesus while they do



for things that are visible such as money, physical pleasure, knowledge and fame. "I have some studying to do. I have to get my doctoral degree, make money and do many other things. I am determined to be famous and rich, so I don't have any room for you. Visit me again when I am about to die, then I will be ready for you." Numerous people turned Him down saying these things this year. Jesus wanted to be born in all people's hearts. However, many of them refused to take Him in. Those who are interested in only the materialistic world rejected Jesus, so He came into the hearts of those who have a poor spirit—a spirit like a stable where only cattle stay. The Lord comes and stays in such empty hearts.

Those who welcomed the Lord are not attached excessively to the things of the world even if they are necessities to them. They do not abandon the Lord just to gain the worldly things. These people place their hopes in Jesus and trust in Him while they live out their faith even in times of troubles. That is why Jesus is born in the hearts of those who have a poor

spirit, a discouraged and humble spirit. This also explains why worldly people and rich people with many possessions hardly receive Jesus as their Savior. Even if they believe in Jesus, they are more interested in the things of this world. People who go to church to be rich and to have more businesses cannot bear Jesus in their hearts.

Some people in the world think very highly of themselves. On the contrary, there are people who underestimate themselves. The Lord goes into the hearts of those who know their own insufficiencies. Only those who realize their lowliness, sinfulness and admit that they are nobody can welcome Jesus and attend Him.

When we go out to preach the gospel, we meet people who greet us superficially and leave in haste. They probably think the counterpart is not compatible to them. They might think they are superior to us, the workers of the genuine gospel. Whenever I see those snotty people, I feel sad even though I understand their ignorance. They treat



evangelists with scorn when they hear, “Believe in Jesus.” Come to think of it, most people with money and authority think light of Jesus.

For this reason, the number of believers is decreasing. It is because people’s financial situations have improved a lot. If you say, “Believe in Jesus. Jesus loves you. Join us in Heaven by believing in Jesus,” to those rich people who have their own luxury cars and houses, they will give you a stare and walk away without saying anything. They are misguided to think they are privileged people just because they have possessions such as luxury cars and lord-like mansions.

Brothers and sisters, can you think of anyone who is richer and nobler than Jesus? We take pity on them and try to help them to have faith in Jesus in order for them to go to Heaven; but we cannot force them if they are not willing to receive Jesus. However, there are some rich people who want to believe in Jesus and be a part of the Church. They couldn’t get satisfaction from their wealth and

reached a conclusion that they needed God. Others feel that they won’t survive a day without Jesus.

Dear beloved saints, as we celebrate Christmas, we need to study who can bear Jesus and who cannot. We should commemorate the meaning of Jesus’ birth and live a life that receives the remission of sins and help from the Christ.

The Lord Comes to the Pitiful

When the Lord was born to this world, His name was Jesus. Jesus means ‘Savior,’ while Christ means Messiah, *Mashiyach* in Hebrew, which means the anointed One. Let’s look at Luke 1:50-55.

“And His mercy is on those who fear Him

From generation to generation.

He has shown strength with His arm;

*He has scattered the proud in the imagination
of their hearts.*

He has put down the mighty from their thrones,



*And exalted the lowly.
He has filled the hungry with good things,
And the rich He has sent away empty.
He has helped His servant Israel,
In remembrance of His mercy,
As He spoke to our fathers,
To Abraham and to his seed forever.”*

The passage that we have just read talks about those who can get compassion from Jesus and receive Jesus into their hearts. God has compassion on those of us who are poor in spirit. He shows His infinite mercy on such people so that it is written, “*His mercy is on those who fear Him from generation to generation.*”

Whose heart does God come into? It is the hearts of those who fear God. God doesn’t come into the hearts of those who do not fear Him. Those who fear God and obey God with an immediate “Yes!” can bear God in their hearts. We can see that the hearts of those who received the remission of sins by faith and became children of God are obedient to God’s Word

even when the Word of God does not make any sense to them. We have observed those hearts bearing Jesus. Our Lord is born into the hearts of those who acknowledge the Word of God just as it is written.

Who Does Our Lord Scatter?

“*He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts*” (Luke 1:51). Our Lord came to this world and did salvation work for us. God has saved those who fear God and removed all their sins. He delivers them from the power of darkness, curses, hell and the Devil.

However, the Lord is not always kind-hearted and loving. One of the things He did was to scatter those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. He did not leave the proud alone, but He turned them all down. Verse 51 that states, “*He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the*



imagination of their hearts." This basically means that God would send those proud people in their inmost thoughts to hell no matter whether they admit their pride or not. The Lord keeps them from coming to Him even if they want to put their faith in Jesus.

Our Lord is not always kind to people. He doesn't always accept people with "Okay, No problem!" He is the God of love but at the same time He doesn't condone those sinful people who would not seek Him or believe in Him. He sends them to hell. But to those who seek Him from the heart and still do not know how to depend on Him, and to those who are disappointed at their lacking, He shows His mercy and kindness. Our Lord is like that. He saves us from all sins and sends us to Heaven as children of God. He is such a loving God. However, He scatters the proud and sends them to hell.

Our Lord has these two different sides to Him. "*He has put down the mighty from their thrones, And exalted the lowly*" (Luke 1:52). He puts the worldly authorities down and feeds the hungry with good

things. God saves and adopts those who thirst and hunger for the righteousness, yearn for the remission of sins, God's nationhood and Heavenly citizenship. To those people, God becomes God of favors.

However, He brings down rulers and the rich. God is God of truth. He never fails to put down those who challenge Him. He still brings down those who try to misuse their worldly authorities in the Church and corrupt God's Church by spreading their own doctrines and offering their money. No matter how much authority they might have, they are never greater than our Lord. When they challenge God with their limited authority, our greater God will bring them down without mercy and send them to hell.

The Bible tells us the following. "*You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the*



iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments” (Exodus 20:3-6).

I haven’t seen anybody prosper from serving their dead ancestors. As a matter of fact, families of first-borns or children of first-borns do not have much success. Most first-borns tend to exercise their authority as the eldest and bring God’s condemnation on themselves. A lot of families of first-borns go bankrupt and have family illness for this reason.

What is the difference between the descendent of righteous people who have fear for God’s Word and the descendent of those who challenge God? The Lord has brought down rulers from their thrones. Brothers and sisters, isn’t it reasonable to expect the descendent of those in authorities to be happier and more successful than others? On the contrary, however, they become nobody. It is because God brings them down from their high positions when they misuse their authority and do not fear God. No

worldly powers are useful before God.

God takes away all the power, wealth, fame and health from those who are not afraid of God. Once God of true power and authority brings them down, who can reclaim their authority? The authority comes from God, and when God takes away the authority, that is the end of it. All authority is from God. All the love and blessings are also in God’s hand. Powers are up to our Lord, who was born as our Savior on Christmas day.

Our Lord has lifted up the humble; He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty. It is said that our Lord lifts up the lowly. Are you lowly or are you proud of your authority? The answer is simple. We human beings are all lowly before God. Only those who realize this fact receive God’s Word.

The almighty God said to Mary through an angel, “Your relative, Elizabeth was barren, but she is now pregnant. God is going to do the miraculous work in you. It is the Word of the almighty God.” Then, Mary



replied, “I am a lowly maidservant of God. Let it be to me according to your word.”

What did Mary, who was the biological mother of Jesus, call herself? She called herself a lowly maidservant. She didn’t call herself “the Queen of Heaven,” but a lowly maidservant. Mary is not the Queen of Heaven. God picked a lowly girl and spoke to her; Mary accepted God’s Word and was able conceive Jesus. The Lord incarnated through Mary’s body to save all human races.

Jesus lifts up the humble. What is the reason we think highly of Mary’s faith? It is because Jesus lifted her up. Mary was as lowly as we are, but she was fully aware of her lowliness. Because she humbled herself, saying, *“I am a lowly maidservant of God. Let it be to me according to God’s Word”*, she could conceive Jesus.

Our Lord Lifts up the Humble and the Lowly

Our Lord lifted a lowly person like me. I was truly lowly. As far as I know, all the famous figures in authority were also lowly. There is not a single person who is not lowly. But people didn’t honestly admit their lowliness before God, so God couldn’t lift them up. I know how lowly I am. If God says so, I think that is the way it should be. I take God’s Word as it is; when God says that He lifted up the humble and filled the hungry with good things, I believe and accept it into my heart. I really want to live a righteous life. I really want to live by God’s Word and be blessed with the promises God made in the Bible.

I wanted to go to Heaven and become God’s child. I also wanted to be a righteous person. I wanted to inherit fertile land and God’s great blessings. I wanted to be like one of the blessed people in the Bible. Then, God has bestowed all these blessings on me abundantly. Our Lord fed the hungry with such wonderful blessings. God filled us with good things because we are lowly.



As we celebrate Christmas, let's come to our senses about who we really are. We are all lowly people before God. Even a president of a country and the richest person in the world are lowly in front of God. Those who know their lowliness can stretch their hands to God saying, "God, I am lowly. Grant me Your blessings. Please remove all my sins. Bless me." Then God will show His favor to them and open the door to Heaven.

On the contrary, those who lift themselves up high before God just because of the worldly authority they have can never receive the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We can be sure of this from His Word that the Lord lifted up the humble and filled the hungry with good things. Can any rich man take his possession with him at death? No. God is the God of justice. If we can take our possession with us when we die, the rich will stay rich and the poor will stay poor even in the coming world; but the Lord doesn't let this happen. Rather, He sends the rich away empty. Rich people are only rich in this world; not in the

next world. Those who receive favor from God become God's heir and rich people; those who refuse God's favor become poor.

Brothers and sisters, do you know how much rich people look down on a small church like us? They are people who have a premodern way of thinking. They only see things according to their external scales. There are people who only look at the scale of a church's building or congregation and despise the small church. These people are slaves to the premodern way of thinking. We shouldn't evaluate people by its outward aspects as these people do.

How unfair would it be if rich people in this world could spend their wealth after death? That's why God sends away people empty handed when they die. God will send those who are rich only in the material sense to hell without fail. Real rich people are not the ones with tangible possessions but those who have rich hearts toward God. Those who are righteous and kind to others are genuinely rich people.



I am telling you over and over again, God doesn't consider us rich no matter how much we have. However, people who misinterpret the Word of God and think to themselves, "Be as good as I am. Do as much good work as I do," will be abandoned by God. How good and kind can we be when we really try? Our Lord is truly a good and kind person. There is nothing good in us.

Then, how can such a wretch like us be saved? It is only by God's goodness. In other words, we receive salvation because Jesus was condemned for us, not because we lived a righteous life that deserved salvation. Jesus came to this earth, was baptized, was condemned for the sins of the world and saved people who believed in the goodness of God. That is the love of God. Our good deeds or kindness doesn't bring us salvation. Only because our Lord is good, does He lift up the lowly and show His mercy to the poor and the hungry. Our Lord gives His gospel and blessings of His Word to the believers and adopts them as His children to inherit

the Kingdom of Heaven. This is God's love and the purpose of His coming to this earth. Let's praise this Lord.

Our God blesses the men of faith. He blesses their children as well. Our God helped Israel. The Lord has promised, "*To perform the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember His holy covenant, the oath which He swore to our father Abraham*" (*Luke 1:72-73*). He had compassion on them and He performed the mercy promised to Abraham and his descendants forever." God was born to this world not because of our righteousness, but because of His compassion for us. We were destined to die because of our sins and go to hell, but God took pity on us and opened a way for us to God's Kingdom. That is why our Lord gave up His heavenly glory and came to this earth to save all the lowly people like you and me. To do so, He even came down to the manger where cattle eat and sleep. That is all because He wanted to save all the lowly people like you and me on this earth.



Our Lord is such a loving God. Man does not treat the lowly with respect, but the lowlier we are, the more our Lord favors and shows His great love and salvation to us. He tells us that we are too pitiful not to have compassion on us and bring us to life and to His nationhood. Out of all His creations, the human race is the lowliest. Animals come and go without worrying about anything as God has designed them. They have no next world. However, we are under unfortunate circumstances because of yielding to Satan's temptation, even though we human beings are born in the image of God and are the head of all creatures. We cannot live as our hearts desire; we are living a lowly life.

God still loves lowly people like us, saves us and wants to give us His glorious Kingdom as a gift. God wants to bless us. Dear fellow believers, the Lord came to this earth to give us eternal life, blessings, salvation, the remission of sins and to make us righteous. I believe that our Lord saved you and me. I trust in this Lord who came to save the lowly, and I

give praise and thanks to our God.

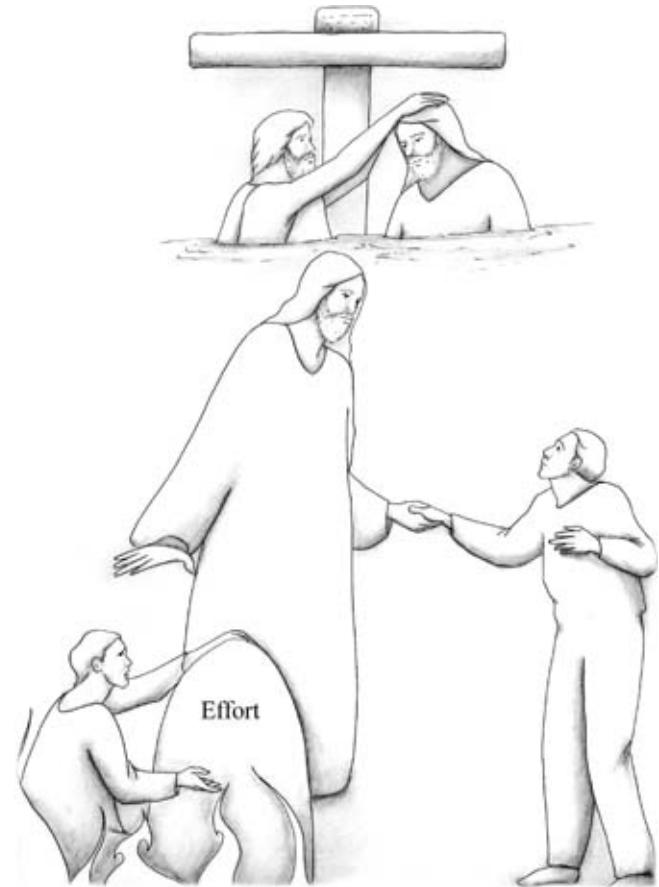
Brothers and sisters, God loves the lowly unlike us who love good-looking people in authority. Isn't this God truly wonderful? Yes, He is. Truly, You are our Savior. Jesus Christ, You are the Messiah. You are truly the Son of God. You are the author of the universe, who created the universe and every one of us.

Praise the Lord! I praise God for sending Jesus to this earth. I give Him true praise for saving us from all sins. I praise Him for looking after the lowly. Thank you, Lord. I give You limitless thanks and glory for taking care of all the lowly people like us.



SERMON

2



CONTENTS



Throw Away Worldly Desires and Meet the Lord

< Luke 2:1-14 >

“And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city. Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child. So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in

the inn. Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. Then the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.’ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: ‘Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!’”

The Greatest Miracle in Human History

That Jesus Christ has come to this world in



human flesh is really the greatest miracle. That God the Creator took on the appearance of His creature and came to dwell among the creatures is really a great miracle.

When our Lord came to this world, the angels appeared to the shepherds and said, “*For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.*” It is written here, “*This will be the sign.*” It means there will be a miracle. The waters dividing as Moses points to the Red Sea is a greater miracle, but the greatest miracle, the greatest work, among the miracles we can find in the Bible, is the event of God coming to this world in human flesh as Baby Jesus. This is the biggest event in the history of this world. There probably was no greater miracle than this in the universe.

Our Lord has come to this world. Jesus Christ came to this world in human flesh as the King of kings and our Savior. When our Lord came to this

world, Baby Jesus was wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger. Here, the angel said this was the great sign. We had to open up the cloth to actually meet Jesus Christ our Lord who was wrapped in the swaddling clothes. Actually, this means that Jesus is God’s secret. God manifested His love to all the people, but at the same time, God also hid it so that not anyone can see this work. We need to understand clearly what God’s Law is saying if we want to meet the Lord. We must understand clearly the Law God has given us if we want to meet the Savior and bow to Him respectfully.

Though they do not know much about the Law, many people point to the Law and say the Law is just a series of laws, or say that we must keep the Law if at all possible since it is God’s Law. However, until Jesus Christ came, the role of the Law was to point out the sin to us with the Word of God, and to teach us what is good and what is evil. That is why the Scriptures tell us in a figure of speech that we must open the wrapping cloths of the Law if we want to



actually meet baby Jesus wrapped in the swaddling clothes. In other words, though our Lord came to this world, we need to know clearly the reason why God gave us the Law if we want to meet Him.

Even now, many people think we need to keep the Law of the Old Testament and this is incorrect thinking. What is greater than the Law is the law of the Spirit of life (Romans 8:2). The Law points out people's sins, but the law of the Spirit is really righteous and beautiful. God gives us the fruit of the Holy Spirit. The Law is God's command that tells us "do's and don'ts," while the law of the Spirit is mercy, love, meekness, self-restraint, and peace. The law of the Spirit asks of more righteous and beautiful things than what the Law demands from us. The law of the Spirit demands love, great mercy, joy, meekness, and peace. It demands things we absolutely need; the things that are absolutely righteous.

But what does the Law say? It only teaches us how evil our human thinking, hearts, and works are

and what our sin is before the presence of God. However, we must also know the Law. The Law of the Old Testament era was fulfilled by coming of Jesus. But because the Law makes us understand sin and know sin, we cannot meet the Lord even though our Savior, Baby Jesus Christ, came to this world if we cannot realize our sin, and if we do not actually know this Law perfectly.

What Must We Know First to Meet the Lord?

We can meet baby Jesus Christ wrapped in swaddling clothes and accept Him in our hearts when we know the Law and its given purpose correctly. People cannot accept the Lord into their hearts, they cannot meet Him, and do not see Jesus Christ who came to us wrapped in swaddling clothes. Even though they say they believe in Jesus, they haven't met Him yet because they do not know God's Law



well. That is why Jesus Christ came to this world and became our Savior. But to some people, that Truth is a really big secret and it is hidden from them.

People question whether God really became a lowly creature and came to this world, and do not believe in this fact. Almost all people do not believe in this fact. They do not believe it because it is unbelievable. But such a miracle really occurred. The Lord is God who created the whole universe; not only this earth, but also the immense world of all the stars. God came to this world through Mary's body clothed in the appearance of a human like you and me. Jesus, who is God, came to this world clothed in human flesh like us. It means God is with us. In other words, God came to this world in human flesh just like us.

This is the greatest miracle among all miracles. However, even though everyone thinks he knows Jesus Christ, no one who does not know the Law properly can meet Him. Our Lord came to this world. He came to this world in a real human body. The

Lord came to this world during the era when Caesar Augustus was ruling the Roman Empire. Based on accurate history, we should date this account 4 B.C. Caesar Augustus commanded, "All the world should be registered." I am sure you understand that the whole world standardized the calendar year based on the time Jesus Christ came to this world. A.D. (*Anno Domini* in Greek) means the years after the birth of Christ. But historians say that there is about 4 years of difference by error in the standardization of the calendar year.

Anyway, from a historical perspective, Jesus Christ was born during the time of Caesar Augustus of Roman Empire. This is a historical fact that can actually be proved; even to people who do not believe in Jesus. Many people debate whether Jesus was a real historical person or not, but history bears out the fact and the time of the coming of Jesus. But there are the people who still do not believe it. Such people disrespect the Bible and persecute those who believe in it.



Many historians and authors challenged to prove that Jesus Christ coming to this world and His salvation of us through 33 years of life was not true and that it was only a myth. They tried to find evidence that Jesus Christ was not an actual person, but they were not able to. People investigated the historicity of Jesus through archaeological studies and scientific studies and so on. Scholars tried to prove that Jesus was a human, not God, but all their efforts failed.

Lewis Wallace, the author of "*Ben Hur*," studied a lot about Jesus to reveal that Jesus was not a real person. He got involved in the investigation and study to prove that Jesus Christ was not a real person. However, the deeper he got into the investigation, the more it revealed through all material evidences, that Jesus clearly was born to this world and that Jesus Christ actually lived the life and did the work as spoken in the Scriptures. Therefore this author, who started the investigation in order to refute against the claims of the historicity of Jesus, eventually knelt

before God and confessed, "Jesus Christ is the true Son of God and He is God who really came to this world as our Savior." Lewis Wallace wrote this book after confessing that Jesus Christ really is God and our Savior who came to this world, and the book was made into a movie called "*Ben Hur*."

In the movie, Divinity of Jesus Christ is revealed clearly in many scenes. In the last scene, we can see that the mother and the sister of the main character were inflicted with leprosy but they are healed cleanly from leprosy when Jesus Christ is nailed to the Cross. The author of "*Ben Hur*," Lewis Wallace, came to know and believe that Jesus Christ was God and that He came to this world, received the baptism, died on the Cross, and blotted out all our sins. Therefore, when we see the movie, we can see that it shows clearly through various aspects that Jesus Christ is our Savior and God.

Without a doubt, even from a historical perspective, Jesus Christ was the Son of God and the Savior of humanity who came to this world clothed



in human flesh. Jesus Christ was laid in a manger when He first came to this world because there was no place for Him to lie down. It means that He lay in a manger that was used to feed animals. Jesus was wrapped in a swaddling clothes and laid in a manger. We must really invite Jesus Christ to our hearts with the faith of exalting the righteousness of God.

But we must get rid of any sort of personal greed in our hearts if we want to invite Jesus Christ to our hearts. We must not have such heart that is satisfied with the worldly things. People who can never be satisfied with worldly things accept Jesus Christ as their Savior and invite Him into their hearts. Jesus Christ is born inside such hearts and such people receive salvation from sin. The Gospel of Matthew chapter 5 says, "*Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*" Our Lord is born inside the souls that really cannot be satisfied with the things of the world.

Human beings are not all alike. There are some people who can be satisfied with things of the world.

However, people cannot really be satisfied with material things of the world. Even so, there are many people who become very satisfied with things of the world; they misunderstand what real satisfaction is like. There are also people who are not like that. There are people who cannot be satisfied no matter how much of the things of the world they have. The Lord comes into the hearts of people who cannot be satisfied with things of the world, and is born to such hearts.

There are some people who become prideful when they attain a little something like pleasure or power or material things of the world. However, there are others whose hearts are troubled and distressed even though they have everything in this world because they still do not have satisfaction in their hearts, and therefore they seek after something to find satisfaction. The thing such people are seeking after is God who has come by the Truth. Our Lord is the Savior and the Shepherd of people who cannot find satisfaction through the things of the



world. He is our Lord who came to save such people from sin.

But there is no place for Jesus Christ in people who find satisfaction in their hearts through the things of the world. Jesus Christ can never come and grow in such people's hearts. Our Lord cannot dwell in the hearts of people who belong to the material things of the world. Our Lord lay in a manger of an animal because there was no place for Him in the inn. Our Lord cannot go inside the hearts of people whose hearts are filled with other visitors and the things of the world like this. There is no way for the Lord to be born in such hearts. How could Jesus be born to such hearts? How can our Lord be born to such people's hearts when He cannot go in and He is not accepted? How can the Lord go into such people's heart when they are satisfied with things of the world even without the Lord? The Lord knocks on the hearts of people who are satisfied even without the Lord, but He cannot go in because they do not accept Him.

What kind of person's heart does the Lord go

into? The Lord goes into the heart of lowly people. The Lord goes into the poor heart that cannot attain satisfaction from worldly things. The Lord goes into the lamenting heart and the heart of the person who yearns for the righteousness of God. Therefore, the Lord is born in such a heart. The Lord came to this world as the Savior, but He cannot be born and dwell in any place. He cannot be conceived in any heart. Our Lord can be born in the heart of the person who really yearns for God and desires to revere the Creator. The Lord is born in the heart of the people who really want to receive the remission of all their sins before the presence of the Lord and the people who lament for their sins and believe that the Lord has fulfilled the work of salvation through the gospel of the water and the Spirit for them.

The Lord Who Meets the Lowly

When I was young, I did not have much. I was



able to get by like average people, but I could not have great satisfaction. Therefore, I spent some money, even though it was not a great sum of money, because I thought I could have satisfaction if I had some money and spent it any way I liked. However, my heart was always empty no matter how much money I had and spent, and no matter how much delicious food I ate or what joyful things of the world I did. My heart was always empty. My heart could not really be filled with anything from this world. I did not have much joy and there was no satisfaction in my heart. Then I came to believe in our Lord one day, even though I did not receive salvation perfectly then, and the emptiness in my heart decreased by about 1/3. What was clear is that I could at least be satisfied a little with the fact that I believed in God the true Creator and that I lived for the Creator.

After 10 years passed since I first believed in Jesus like that, I finally received salvation from sin perfectly by truly meeting the Lord and knowing

Him. Afterwards, there has only been true satisfaction in my heart. My heart is filled with satisfaction and overflowing abundance even now. The Lord became my Savior and my God only after I met the Lord and He was born in my heart. He became my Lord and Savior. The Lord came to this world clothed in human flesh to save me who was like this. God came to this world with both the human nature and the divine nature. Serenity, true satisfaction, and peace like a dove came into my heart when I met Jesus Christ and believed in Him. I no longer wandered with the things of this world and no longer tried to satisfy my heart with anything of this world. I came to have true satisfaction in my heart that believed in Christ. There was satisfaction.

I was joyful even though I did not seem to have joy. Even though I did not seem to have anything to do in this world, I was hungry to do righteous work as the Lord said that people who are hungry and thirsty for the righteousness would be full. To me



who was hungry and thirsty for the righteousness of God, our Lord made me do all the work of righteousness that I wanted and be filled abundantly. After I met the Lord, I was a little hungry even though there was satisfaction in my heart, and our Lord allowed me to give myself to all things for the righteous work of serving the Lord, for preaching the gospel, and for helping souls receive the remission of sins. Therefore, I have come to live abundantly without being hungry.

We become full when we do the Lord's work. The more work of the Lord we do the more we become full spiritually even though our physical body is tired. Our stomach becomes full and our hearts become full and satisfied. After we meet the Lord, the Lord personally becomes the bread of life and a refreshing drink for us and quenches our hunger and thirst.

The baptism of Jesus Christ and the blood of the Cross have become abundant food and the eternal bread of salvation that really makes us live a

righteous life. Our Lord is born to the person who does not fill his heart with worldly things. You must empty your heart if you want to serve Jesus Christ. We must empty our hearts if we want to truly serve Jesus Christ in our hearts, if we want to live the life of dwelling with the Lord after receiving the remission of sins and if we want to live a life of eating and drinking together with the Lord. We must not try to fill our hearts with worldly things. We must instead drive out the things of the world. We must throw them out. Our Lord dwells in our hearts and becomes the King of our hearts and rules over us only when we throw out the things of the world. Then there is nothing to worry about because our Lord becomes our King from that moment. Why is this so? It's because Jesus Christ will protect us when we are in danger because He has become our King, and it's because Jesus Christ will feed us when we do not have anything to eat and because He will defeat us with the power of the Word personally when the enemy appears before us. It is because everything



and every power are in the King.

Therefore, you must drive out the things of the world and acknowledge the fact that such things cannot give satisfaction to you. You must accept the Word of the Lord into your heart with faith. After being born again like this, you must let go of things like worldly desires from your heart. Only then will you be able to walk with the Lord and the Lord can fulfill His will through you.

The Lord has truly become the bread of life for us. Our Lord dwells in our hearts as the Savior and the King and manifests the glory of the Lord by using us as righteous instruments. As we celebrate Christmas, we must think once again why our Lord was born in a manger.

The things of the world are really vain. Satisfaction does not come just because we achieve them. In the Book of Ecclesiastes 12:12, it is written, *“And further, my son, be admonished by these. Of making many books there is no end, and much study is wearisome to the flesh.”* But even so, we

constantly publish mission books to share the most necessary Word that is needed today; the Word necessary for the soul, the Word that is really necessary for the brothers and sisters all over the world. We must publish the next volumes of our mission books, but it is a really endless and tiring work. I would never want to do such work if it was just working for just any worldly books.

But we are writing the mission books that contain the Truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit and sending to them with much effort because everyone in this world must know this gospel. When we publish the mission books one by one like that, our hearts are really at peace even though our body is tired. We would not want to do such a work if it was for any other book, but we do it joyfully because it is the work of sharing the gospel. In worldly works, there is always a next task we must do after we finish a task and then we achieve the next challenge, but there is no satisfaction. They work twice as hard and many times more, but they are never satisfied with



their hearts. But in the case of God's work, we have satisfaction in our hearts even when we put just enough effort to it. Why? There is satisfaction in us because the Lord rejoices over us and it becomes our food.

We must empty our hearts. We must think carefully of the meaning in the Word that our Lord was laid in a manger. Inn means lodging businesses like motels and hotels and there were so many customers in those places. Joseph and his wife Mary returned to his hometown for family registration following the command of the Roman emperor Caesar Augustus who ruled over Israel at that time. However, Mary seemed ready for the delivery of her child. Joseph went to the Inn to get a room, but there was no vacancy. Therefore he went around knocking on this door and that door, but there was no place for them to stay and Mary had to deliver the child in a stable that an owner of the Inn let them use. Jesus was born in such a shabby place. That is not a place where customers stayed; it was instead a place for

animals. Actually, you and I are nothing more than animals before the presence of God. We are actually human beings who are truly lowly and inadequate before the presence of God, but our Lord was born to such people. The people who can serve our Lord in their hearts are these lowly people who have thrown away the things of the world.

People who do not know satisfaction even though they live with worldly things and people who do not have greed in their hearts for things of the world can serve the Lord and walk together with the Lord. We must really pay attention to this Word as we celebrate Christmas. We must ponder clearly and see if you and I are filled with worldly things in our hearts and whether we do not have things of the world in our hearts that we need to throw away. Jesus Christ can come into your heart only when you empty your heart. You can understand the great will of Jesus Christ only when you empty your heart. The spiritual eyes become clear only when you empty your heart. We must accept in our hearts this gospel of grace that



is truly like a miracle. We must serve God who became human, came to us personally, took our sins upon Him through baptism, died on the Cross, was resurrected from death, and became our true Savior, Jesus Christ. We must serve Him in our hearts with faith.

A Person Who Does Not Have Faith in God Cannot Serve Jesus Christ

A person who does not believe in God cannot serve Jesus Christ as his Savior even though Jesus Christ comes to him because his heart is filled with worldly things. Such a person cannot open his heart with joy when Jesus knocks on that door. He has no choice but to say there is no room and throw Him out. Therefore, you must believe that you are a truly lowly person who deserves to go to hell. In addition, you must also believe that Jesus Christ has really come to be the Savior for such a pitiful person like

you.

Our hearts must truly believe in God's Word. The Lord said,

*"Blessed are the poor in spirit,
For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are those who mourn,
For they shall be comforted.
Blessed are the meek,
For they shall inherit the earth.
Blessed are those who hunger and
thirst for righteousness,
For they shall be filled.
Blessed are the merciful,
For they shall obtain mercy"* (Matthew 5:3-7).

We must have the faith that believes in the fact that Jesus Christ is our Lord. We must have such faith. We must believe that way. We must profess, "Jesus Christ is my Lord. He came to this world to save me and He received the baptism for me and died on the Cross in my place." Furthermore, we must also truly believe that He is God who was resurrected



from death and ascended to Heaven and God who shall return to this world as the Judge.

How do we receive salvation from all our sins? We must believe in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. We can serve Jesus Christ with our hearts and receive salvation by believing in the righteousness of God. Baby Jesus can be born in our hearts when we accept Jesus Christ in our hearts by believing in the righteousness of God. The Scriptures say that the just shall live by faith. We receive salvation through the faith of believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The miracle of salvation was fulfilled in us through it. Through this, God came to this world as a human, received the baptism, died on the Cross, was resurrected from death, and saved us.

We must have such faith of believing in God as our Savior. We must receive salvation through the faith of believing in this. We must believe that God came to this world and saved us with the water and the blood, that God helps me, and that we are the Israelites spiritually.

We must live with such faith. Satan the Devil takes hold of us and kills us if we do not live with the faith of believing in the righteousness of God. You must always have the faith of believing in the righteousness of God quickly, even if it has been only a short time since you have received the remission of sin and received salvation. When Jesus came to this world, King Herod tried to kill all the children under the age of two. Even if Satan tried to kill us like this, we can avoid the evil power of Satan if we have the faith of believing in Jesus Christ, if we just have the faith that Jesus is our God and our Savior, if we just have the faith of believing the fact Jesus Christ is our Shepherd and our God. We are protected from our enemies when we believe in the Lord. We can be saved from all dangers and always dwell with God and receive protection from God when we believe in and follow Jesus Christ sincerely.

We must not be proud and live with sincere faith even after receiving the remission of sins. The angels praised here, "*Glory to God in the highest, And on*



earth peace, goodwill toward men!" People who believe in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, the people who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the people who believe in the fact that God saved them with the water and the blood, can hear this good news and run to Jesus and see Him. They believed in the good news. The wise men from the east did not believe in the word of King Herod and instead went against it. Joseph and Mary, who were fleshly parents of Jesus, also were able to escape from the hands of King Herod because they heard God's voice through an angel, and believed it. We must live with such faith even after receiving salvation.

We must empty our hearts and live only with faith. It is difficult to maintain that faith after receiving salvation. Why is this so? It is difficult because we have never tried to live with faith. But we must always empty our hearts and throw away the greed and just live with faith and hold onto the fact that only Jesus Christ is our Lord, our Savior, and our

Shepherd. We can realize how the Lord helps us and how He blesses us when we believe like that. Then, we experience the fact that the Lord is the Shepherd that still lives and guides us even now.

We Must Live by Faith Even after Receiving the Remission of Sins

Now this world is headed toward the end. Even this Christmas is different from that of last year, isn't it? People would have already caused all kinds of commotion if it were like last year. However, it is quiet this year. It seems like it will be even quieter next year. After a few years, people will think of the Christmas as if it was a memory from past. They will think of it like some kind of ritual from the old times. Even though we gather together now for worship and praise, the world will become even darker after time passes and it all becomes deep in the future. We the righteous shall always gather together on this day and



sing, “♪Silent Night, ♪Holy Night” and worship God. But in the future, it will be difficult to see churches worshipping the day of Jesus coming to this world like this.

Anyway, we are people who have received the remission of sins. Then, whom should we follow from then on? We must follow Jesus Christ. We must follow the star. Though we have been born again, the servants of the Devil like King Herod would come and kill us if we just stay still and do not want to be led by the Lord. After you have received the remission of sins, you must listen carefully to the predecessors in faith who have gone before you. Because you have the Holy Spirit in your heart even though you have just been born again, the Holy Spirit agrees with the Lord’s Word and controls your heart. Then you can obey and follow the Lord continuously. Faith grows in you step by step when you follow the Lord like this. Then you come to receive eternal life.

Israel was a vassal country of the Roman Empire at the time Baby Jesus was born to this world. Baby

Jesus probably had to overcome a few life and death situations. Our Lord fulfilled all the works according to the written Word even as He overcame the life-threatening situation from King Herod. He did so even when His relatives came and said He might be insane.

We are saints who believe in Jesus Christ. We are people who follow Jesus Christ with faith. How about the shepherds here? They heard the news the angels told them and went to that place and saw Baby Jesus. People would have just passed it over nonchalantly when they hear that a baby was born to certain family. But these shepherds weren’t like that. They believed the Savior, the Messiah, was born in Israel. They lived all their life with such faith. Most people did not think much of Jesus while baby Jesus was growing up, but these shepherds saw the maturing process of Jesus and the firm faith of believing Jesus Christ as their Savior grew in their hearts. You must have such faith. You must empty your heart of the worldly things. The more the world



becomes chaotic the more you must empty your heart. You must have the heart and faith that can serve Jesus Christ in your heart any time, the heart that can always follow the Lord's Word.

Beloved saints, I am sure you will do this. We must believe in the Lord and follow Him even after receiving the remission of sins. Our Lord gave us the Word that has become our food and personally showed us wonders and miracles. If our Lord was born in a royal palace, then many parts of the Scriptures would have had to be written differently. The wealthy people would have received salvation and the poor would have been treated with contempt. But the people who cannot be satisfied with the things of the world were able to meet Jesus Christ and receive salvation because Jesus Christ was born in a manger like this. On the contrary, the people with stiff necks who have power in this world, the people who are satisfied with the things of the world, will be destroyed.

Our Lord was born in a manger for you and me

who cannot be satisfied in our hearts with the things of the world. Our Lord did this so that He can truly be the Savior for all the sinners whose hearts are confused and empty and are in the depth of darkness, the people who are seeking God. I want you to believe that the body of our Lord was laid first in a feeding trough of an animal.

I want you to live by faith. The Scriptures say that the just shall live by faith. We face many difficult and challenging things while we live in this world. We must have even stronger faith during those times. We must have faith when we are in a happy situation and we must always look to the Lord and follow the Lord even though we are lacking. If we do not waver and we are firm like that, we can go forth step by step with faith. The faith accumulates like that and therefore we can have greater faith.

The faith does not appear suddenly with a "thud" like popcorn. We can experience the Word of blessing Jesus Christ gives in our lives when we empty our hearts and accept the Word of Jesus Christ.



Our faith grows through the experiences that can be expressed, "Ah! It is true. It happened exactly according to the recorded Word. That's correct." Therefore, we need to have faith. We must always look to the Lord who has made us perfect, and believe in and follow Jesus.

Christmas is just around the corner and if I did not speak about the birth of Christ now, it would pass us by without us being able to talk about it. It is amazing how the Christmas season passes by so fast. It seems like the Christmas season just started, but it has almost passed us by already. That is why I am speaking about this ahead of time.

Let us live with the faith of believing in Jesus Christ. Our Lord cannot go into the hearts of the people whose hearts are wealthy or whose hearts are filled with the things of the world. The Lord cannot dwell in such a person. That is what I am speaking of. Even though you have received salvation, the Lord has to turn back in front of your door if your hearts are still filled with the things of the world. Even

though you want to open the door, you tell Him to come back a little later and make Him stand outside because your heart is filled with other customers.

Who incurs the loss if the Lord is stood up outside our hearts? For Jesus Christ, the whole universe is His and His house. Therefore, it would consequently be our loss if we rejected our Lord when He came to our hearts to help us, to discuss with us, and become our shepherd. We need to empty our hearts as often as we can in order not to become like that. Worldly things often come into our hearts in spite of ourselves. Hence, we need to empty our hearts often and think of the Word of Jesus and live with faith like that, and when something goes wrong again, we need to empty our hearts again and live with faith.

Let us follow the way of the Lord like that. I give thanks once again before the presence of Jesus our Lord, our God who came to this world as a human being in order to save all of us. ☩



SERMON

3



Jesus Who Became Our True Savior

< Luke 2:1-14 >

“And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city. Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child. So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in

the inn. Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. Then the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.’ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: ‘Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!’”



The Savior Coming to This World Is the Greatest News

It has been over 2000 years since Jesus came to this world. The dating mechanism of year of the world that we use is based on the birth of Jesus Christ in this world. So the historians have divided it into Before Christ (B.C.) and *Anno Domini* (A.D., the year of the Lord), and it has now been over 2000 years since the birth of Jesus.

There was no vacancy in the inn of Bethlehem when our Lord came to this world. Simply put, He was born in a stable of animals where livestock ate and slept. He lay in a feeding trough of an animal, a manger, wrapped in a rough swaddling cloth. Our Lord the Savior was born in such a shabby place. The Scriptures say, “*And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.*”

Our Lord came to this world to save lowly human

beings who were cast out from the Garden of Eden because of sin. At the time when our Lord came to this world to save lowly humans, an astonishing thing was unfolding in a small village of Bethlehem and its nearby field. Shepherds were tending their sheep in the region of Bethlehem during a pitch-dark night when they heard the angels speak. The Scriptures say, “*And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. Then the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people.’*”

What is the most joyful news in the world? The most joyful news for humans is that Jesus Christ the Savior came to this world. Put differently, the most joyful news for you and me is that our God came personally in human flesh to save lowly human beings, including you and me, from sins of the world. This is the biggest news in this earth. That God became a human and came to us is the biggest event and the most joyful news. How could there be news



greater and more joyful than this? Would it be more joyful to hear that the president of the United States comes to our country, Korea? The whole country would be in commotion to greet him; but who is He that is greater than anyone in the world? God the Creator who created the whole universe as well as us human beings is the greatest. That great God came to this world. That God came to this world in order to save Adam's descendants who were living a pitiful life because Adam and Eve, our common ancestors, were cast out from the Garden of Eden after they had sinned is the most joyful news in this world.

Our Lord came to this world like that. Who is the Savior of all humanity? Who is the One who lifted us out of the sins of the world by giving us the faith of salvation and made us happy? Who is the true Savior for humans who should have received destruction and curse because of the sins of humanity? He is Jesus Christ who shall take all the sins of all humanity by receiving the baptism. There is a meaning in the name Jesus Christ: Jesus means the

Savior of the humanity and Christ means the one anointed with oil. This Jesus became the Savior for us humanity.

Jesus is the King of kings. He is the King of kings, God among gods, and the Creator that created the universe and everything in it. There are many gods in the world, but only Jesus who came as our Savior is the only true God. Christ means the one who has been anointed with oil and it means He is the King. It means the Savior and the Prophet who teaches us properly. Therefore, the One who is the true Savior of our life is Jesus Christ who is the King of kings.

It Is the Most Joyful News for All the People

An angel appeared to the shepherds who were tending sheep out in the fields at night and said, "*I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to*



all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior; who is Christ the Lord." Jesus came to this world for you and me. Jesus came to this world to save you and me from the sins of the world and save us from the judgment and save us from the curse. Jesus did not come to flaunt Himself in this world. Jesus is the Lord who came as the Savior to save us humans who have the image of God from the sins of the world and all the curse and destruction.

What is the sign that our Lord came to this world and became our Savior? It is that He came as Baby Jesus. That Jesus came to this world clothed in human flesh is the proof that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14). It means that our Jesus who created the universe and everything in it was born out of a lowly woman's body. What is the miracle in God saving us and becoming our Savior? It is that He became a human. That is why Baby Jesus was born to this world. The fact that God was born to this world as Baby Jesus is the sign that God has loved us. It is also the sign that God is our Savior.

Then what is the evidence that we have been saved from the sin? That the Lord came to this world clothed in human flesh is the evidence that the Lord saved us from all sins because He loved you and me. You and I have received salvation by believing in the righteousness of God, but what is the evidence that we have received this salvation? It is that our Lord once came to this world. He came to this world and saved us.

Beloved saints, who in this whole world can truly give us peace? The One who can give us true peace is Jesus Christ the Savior of all humanity. Jesus came to the world clothed in human flesh. When He was born to this world as Baby Jesus clothed in human flesh, the angels and a multitude of the heavenly host praised God singing, "*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!*" Jesus is the only One who has given us true and everlasting peace. Jesus is the true Apostle of Peace. Even though some call the Pope of the Catholic Church or other famous people the apostles of peace,



that actually is not the case. Only Jesus has given real peace to you and me.

What did the Lord give to you and me when He came to this world? He gave us salvation. He gave us great joy. He also gave us peace in our hearts. Our Lord came to this world and gave peace to the confused hearts of people who were destined to hell because of sin and destined to die while suffering due to that weakness. Our Lord gave peace to you and me. Our Lord took all our sins upon Him through the baptism and blotted them out by shedding blood on the Cross. Moreover, He became our true Savior by receiving the judgment in our place and saving us from the judgment and curse so that we may not receive the judgment for our sins.

Our Lord has given peace to our hearts. There would be no one on the earth who could enjoy peace if Jesus did not come to this world. Because our Lord came to this world, all humanity who are so lacking, greedy, and selfish can receive true peace by receiving the salvation from sin by believing in the

gospel of the water and the Spirit. People who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit have received the true peace; they have received it by faith and not through their own effort. That is why the angels and the host of heaven came down and sang the praise, *“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!”*

Because God so loved us, He blotted out all our sins, gave us peace, became our Savior, and made us His children. All these things are a glory to God. We creatures who were created by God have received the grace of becoming the children of God, and the grace as the children of God is the glory of God. God has clothed all humanity with such great love and blessing. Do you believe in this fact?

“On Earth Peace, Goodwill toward Men!”

Our Lord said, *“Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!”*



There are so many people living in this world. But, how do all these people live? They live because they cannot die, living in utter hopelessness. Though all things in the world reveal exactly what God has created and praise God, the hearts of humans, the rulers of all things, are filled with lamentation due to worries, concerns, and sins. Humans, the rulers of all things, lament and live in distress. Because humans are born as descendants of Adam and Eve, and because they are born with sin they do not want to have, and because they commit sins they do not want to commit while living in this world, they cannot help but live in distress due to those sins.

But even among so many people like that, there are people that God is pleased with in this world. Who is God really pleased with and who attains peace? Who receives salvation and grace before the presence of God? It is the person who thinks that he really needs the Savior. God has clothed with peace people who admit, "I really need Jesus. Jesus has to blot out all the sins in my heart, the sins of

shortcoming and the sins of my actions. Jesus has to bless me, save me, and take me to the Kingdom of God. Therefore, I absolutely need Jesus."

There is no room for Jesus to stay in the hearts of the people who are satisfied and joyful in the world even without Jesus. The joy without Jesus is not a true joy. Such a person cannot receive the grace of the Lord.

You and I are people who desperately need Jesus. We have received true peace through Jesus. Jesus gave us peace in our hearts by taking all our sins upon Him, receiving the judgment in our place, dying in our place, and being resurrected in our place and becoming the Savior. Who is the true Master of peace of this world? He is Jesus.

People do not have peace even while they are dancing and singing. People who are in the music industry, movie stars, politicians, doctors, college professors, and executives of business who have a lot of money and fame frequently abuse themselves with drugs. Why is this so? It is because they do not have



satisfaction in their hearts.

The person all people and all humanity truly need is only the Lord. Jesus gives peace to the people who need the Lord. Whoever desires Jesus receives peace. The Lord has blotted out such person's sin, blotted out his judgment, gave the blessing of becoming God's child, made him live in the Kingdom of Heaven forever, and resolved all his concerns.

However, so many people have not been clothed with such joyfulness. People are not prepared to meet Jesus even though He has come to this world. People try to taste true peace in material things instead of Jesus. Such people do not know that material things cannot bring true peace to them. They chase after material things with the wishful thinking that they would be really happy if they had more money, and, hence, they do not receive peace in their hearts and instead fall into hopelessness and disappear from this world.

Let us remember once again in our hearts that our Lord came to this world to give true peace and He

indeed did so. Jesus has become the true Savior to you and me. God came to this world as Baby Jesus clothed in human flesh. That is why we celebrate the birth of Jesus as a special day of the year. I congratulate with sincere heart. I congratulate the birth of Jesus who came to this world to save us because He loves us.

In the Gospel of Matthew, we could see that the wise men from the east brought gold, frankincense, and myrrh to Baby Jesus. Gold signifies firm faith. "Jesus is the true King of kings and my Savior. Jesus is the Savior who came to this world to blot out all my sins." Gold refers to such a strong faith.

Frankincense means that only the Lord is the true God who really hears our prayer. It is speaking of such a faith. Myrrh is a medicine that is originally used to keep the dead corpse from decomposing and it signifies the resurrection of the Lord here. It means that only Jesus is the true God and the real Truth and that there is no Truth besides the Lord. I really want you and me to become people who really offer up



faith before the presence of God like these wise men from the east; people who confess before the presence of the Lord that only the Lord is the Truth and people who have hope in the Lord. I want all human beings in the world to become like that.

We are weak and insufficient beings. Even though there is neither peace nor rest in this world, our Lord gave peace and rest to us who are so lacking and become our true Savior. He saved you and me from all the sins. That is how He has made us who believe in Him go to the Kingdom of God. We could not stand before the presence of God if Jesus did not become the Savior for you and me, and if Jesus did not take all our sins upon Him. I would not be able to preach the gospel and I would only be able to talk about routine lessons.

We are able to receive the true rest and comfort even though we live in this world full of sin, because Jesus took all our sins upon Him and resurrected from death in our place. The Lord went up to the Kingdom of God and sits at the right of Father's

throne and gives peace to all the people and gives blessings to them as the true Savior. That is why we can have true rest and comfort in our hearts even in this sinful world.

As we face the Christmas season, we must congratulate the birth of our Lord, and understand once again that we have received salvation and all the blessings because our Lord has come as our Savior, and give thanks to the Lord. We give sincere thanks to the Lord. ☩



SERMON

4



CONTENTS



Jesus in a Manger

< Luke 2-1-20 >

“And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city. Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child. So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch

over their flock by night. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. Then the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying:

‘Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!’

So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, ‘Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us.’ And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. Now when they had seen Him, they



made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child. And all those who heard it marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart. Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them.”

For Whom Did Jesus Come?

We just read Luke chapter 2 as our main Scripture passage for today.

Verse 11 said here, *“For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.”* This means that the King of kings had come to this earth to save us from all our sins and iniquities. This very day, when the King of kings who made the universe came to this earth, is none other than Christmas Day. Take a look at the stars in the sky.

Just how many stars are there? Christmas is the day when God Himself, the Creator who made all such hosts of the heavens and the earth, and who is the King of kings, personally came to this earth incarnated in the flesh of man in order to save us sinners from all sins. I thank the King of kings for coming to this earth. Words cannot express how overwhelming it is that the King of kings personally came to this earth for the lowly human race, for you and me.

To the lowly people living on this earth, a precious visitor came looking for them. When I think about it, I can't give enough thanks for this wonderful blessing. My fellow believers, although we were born on this earth with the God-given life, and God is sovereign in every aspect of our lives including our birth and death, we are exceedingly lowly beings. All of us are like dayflies, little more than insignificant specks in the universe and all its hosts. However, God still came to this earth looking for us for one reason alone; because we were made in



the likeness of His image, because He had planned our salvation even before the foundation of the world in His great plan of salvation. I cannot thank God enough for coming to this earth.

Let's say for a moment that you were visited by someone so noble and exalted, someone whom you never imaged would ever visit your shabby home. What a grateful honor would this be? Yet the most exalted of all, the Son of God, came looking for us to make us exceedingly blessed and prosperous, and He met us through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. So how could we not be thankful then? What a wonderful blessing it is that Jesus Christ came into your heart, and that because of this, your meaningless life has now been completely changed.

It is impossible for us to fully appreciate in our lives what a great blessing it is that Lord Himself came to this earth to save us from the sins of the world. In other words, we can't comprehend the full extent of this infinite grace of God. You and I can't quite grasp that the King of kings came to save us

from sin and condemnation.

What is saddening, however, is the fact that even Christians do not realize the exact meaning of Christmas. Although Christians are singing, "Joy to the world, the Lord is come," they don't realize fully that Jesus took all their sins upon Himself through the baptism He received from John the Baptist at the age of 30, that He died on the Cross, that He rose from the dead, that He has thereby saved them, and that He is therefore their Savior. Put differently, they can't fathom the depth of just how great Jesus Christ is. They only appreciate that Jesus Christ came to this earth.

But it is the majestic Son of God who came to this earth. It's not someone evil who came with an evil intention, but the Son of God, the King of kings, and God Himself who created the universe and all its hosts who came to this earth in order to save us. The name "Christ" in Jesus Christ means the King of kings. It also denotes the anointed One. The Lord is the King of the Kingdom of Heaven, the King of



kings, the Priest of Heaven, and the omniscient Prophet. It's this Lord who came to this earth. What a wonderful blessing it is then. As Christmas is upon us, we give thanks to the God of salvation. We thank Him for the fact that the King of kings came to this earth to save His people from the sins of the world.

Jesus Christ Is the Master of Human History

Our Lord, who is the King of kings, is the Master of the human race. The beginning and the end of this entire universe belongs to the Lord, just as the beginning and the end of all things belong to Him as well. In other words, the Lord is the Master of all the dominion of His creation. Born in Bethlehem, our Lord changed the course of the history of man when He came to this earth. At that time, God had steered the history of Israel to be ruled by the Roman Empire. However, the Roman emperor, seeking to

demonstrate his power, had ordered all his subjects living under the rule of the Roman Empire to submit to a census. He forced the census on them to find out how many people were subject to his rule.

As I said, our Lord is the King of kings, and the Christ who made the universe and all its hosts and moves the history of the world and the history of man. He had made the Roman emperor do such things at that time so that He would be born in a little town called Bethlehem. This was God moving history, so that He would fulfill what He had said in Micah in the Old Testament, the Word that He had promised through the prophets.

At any rate, Mary and Joseph were also forced to go to Bethlehem, their legal domicile, to register in the census. While they were there for the census, the Baby Jesus Christ was born through the body of the Virgin Mary. Referring to the birth of Jesus, the Bible says that Mary gave birth to her "firstborn Son." Why does the Bible say this? It says that the Virgin Mary gave birth to the firstborn Son lest the



people in the following generations might think that she was God's wife. Since Jesus was the firstborn Son, Mary must have given birth to more children.

In fact, Mary did give birth to many more children apart from Jesus Christ. Mary was no more than a maidservant of the Lord who fulfilled her given role. After giving birth to Jesus, she bore more children with Joseph. In obedience to the Word of God, the Virgin Mary had especially given birth to Baby Jesus Christ, and the Bible describes this as giving birth to her firstborn Son, lest the people in the following generation might have misconceptions about Mary and call her "the Queen of Heaven." If this Mary had given birth only to Baby Jesus and bore no more children, then everyone in the following generations would have venerated her even more than Jesus Christ. The whole world would have served a woman, who was never God's wife, as a goddess. It was to prevent this that God had made Mary give birth to more children with her husband Joseph. So in the Bible, there is an account of Jesus'

mother and brothers visiting Him, where Jesus said to the messenger from them, "*'Who is My mother and who are My brothers?'* And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, *'Here are My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother'*" (Matthew 12:48-50).

My fellow believers, God already knew what the ignorant people would do. We should be thankful for the fact the King of kings came to this earth, and we must have the faith to believe this King of kings is the Savior who came to save us from sin through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. In this world there are all kinds of religions. There are as many insignificant things as there is dust in this world, and many times the Devil blows untenable things to our minds and brings countless worries to us. However, for those of us who believe in Jesus Christ, the King of kings came and made it possible to overcome all these challenges by our faith, believing that He has saved us through the gospel of the water and the



Spirit. There are many evil challenges that torment us, make us fall into the weakness of the flesh, and threaten us. We must defeat them all by placing our faith in the righteousness of God and His love.

Satan continues to work in our dreams and in our human minds that have no faith in the Truth. The Devil works in mankind like a roaring lion. In times like this, we must defeat Satan by our faith in the gospel Truth of the water and the Spirit. What kind of people are you and I? We are the ones who have received the remission of sins, who have been completely washed from our sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We are the ones who have become God's sons and daughters. As the King of kings came to this earth and saved us from the sins of the world, we have become God's children by faith. As such, we must defeat the work of Satan in the name of Jesus Christ, and by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the Word of God. We must thus live a spiritual life of faith and win our fight. As you and I carry on with our lives in

this world, there are times when Satan tries to work in our carnal thoughts. Sometimes he also comes in our dreams and brings us worries and anxieties. Sometimes he persecutes us and stands against us through those controlled by evil spirits, and sometimes he brings us worries through various circumstances. In such times, we must overcome the Devil by placing our faith in the Word of Truth.

Mary Was an Instrument of Jesus That Was Used to Fulfill His Will

My fellow believers, you must never venerate the Virgin Mary or exalt her like God just because she gave birth to the Baby Jesus. The Catholic Church calls Mary the Queen of Heaven. This means that Mary is being exalted as though she were the wife of God the Father. Catholics insist that Mary is God's wife, and that Jesus came through this wife of God. So because they think like this, they misled others by



saying, “Through whom should you pray for God to answer your prayers? Would God answer you better if you prayed through His Son, or through His wife Mary?” Catholics pray with such simplistic and fleshly thoughts, and this is how they are misleading their lives of faith. However, all Four Gospels record that the Virgin Mary gave birth to many more children with Joseph after bearing Jesus.

Mary’s only role was giving birth to Jesus Christ, as God had simply borrowed her body for a short while to bring the Lord out into this world. All that she did was lend her body for ten months and nurture the Baby Jesus until He grew up. In other words, God had simply used her as His instrument for a short while in order to save mankind from the sins of the world.

My fellow believers, just as we have found the grace of God by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, Mary had also found the grace of God by believing in His Word. This means that she believed in what God said to her through his angel

exactly as He said. As a result, she came to realize that Jesus, who was to be born through her, was her Savior, and she was saved from sin by believing in this Jesus Christ. Through all the things that Jesus did on this earth, through the baptism He received at the age of 30 and the death He suffered on the Cross in our place despite having committed no sin, Mary realized and believed that although Jesus was her Son, He was the Messiah who had come to save the entire human race from the sins of the world. It is because of this faith that Mary was also saved from her sins.

My fellow believers, Mary, Elizabeth, Zacharias, and all the prophets of the Old Testament as well found the grace of salvation and became God’s people for one reason alone—they all believed in the Word of God. God used them as His instruments because they believed that the Word of the Old Testament would be fulfilled for sure. In other words, Mary became a blessed woman to obtain salvation from God in the same way as we have.

Born on this earth, our Lord was laid in a manger.



He had come for lowly beings like us. Our Lord also became the bread of life for us. Whoever believes in the righteousness of our Lord can now obtain everlasting life. That the Lord was laid in a manger here, where animals were fed, implies that He has become the bread of salvation for us. It means that He has become our eternal Savior. Man had no Truth of salvation. In other words, there had been nothing worthy of believing that could enable the entire human race to be washed from its sins. Only when the Truth is there can anyone be saved by believing in this Truth; but there was no spiritual bread that anyone could eat to live forever.

However, as Jesus Christ came to the human race, the bread of life came into existence. That is why Jesus was laid on a manger as soon as He was born on this earth. As He was born on this earth, the Lord became our true bread of everlasting life, and He showed us the real Truth of salvation. He became our Savior worthy to receive our faith. That's why it was in a manger that our Lord was laid wrapped in

swaddling clothes when He was born on this earth.

The manger here is a trough used to feed livestock. My fellow believers, this implies that the King of kings came to this earth and gave up His body to us to be our bread of life. So, as He was baptized by John the Baptist and crucified, He became the Savior who brought everlasting salvation to us, and we have obtained this salvation by eating His flesh and drinking His blood. As Jesus Christ was born in this way, took upon the sins of mankind once and for all by being baptized by John, carried these sins of the world to the Cross to be crucified to death, and rose from the dead again, He made it possible for us to be saved by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit with our hearts.

The Lord has become the true bread of life for us. That's why the Lord said, "I am the bread of life, and whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood will receive everlasting life." Jesus, this bread of life, said that anyone who eats His flesh and drinks His blood by faith would never thirst again forever. He said that



He would become our living water. Jesus Christ had come to this earth to become the bread of salvation for you and me. That is how you and I can be saved from all sins by believing in Jesus as our Savior who came by the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Like this, the Lord came to this earth as the King of kings.

However, there was no place in the people's hearts to accept Him. Even though Jesus Christ is always here together with the true gospel, in the hearts of people, there is no room to hold Him by faith, who came by the gospel of the water and the Spirit. This is because they already have another Jesus in their hearts different from the Jesus who came by the gospel of the water and the Spirit. When Jesus was born on this earth, there was no room at the inn, so He was born in a shabby place. Now as before, Jesus Christ is still on this earth. However, there is no room for Him in the hearts of people. Because people's hearts are already filled with other things, there is no room for Jesus to enter and dwell. Today's Scripture passage says that Jesus was laid in

a manger, as there was no room at the inn. Like this, in the hearts of people today, there is no room for Jesus Christ to enter. This is because they believe in Jesus as a religious subject rather than as the true God who came by the gospel of the water and the Spirit. In other words, all too often people are trapped in their fleshly notions, their lust of the eye, science, and their private greed. That is why even though the King of king has come looking for them, they are still standing against the gospel of the water and the Spirit, for they have no room in their hearts to accept the Lord who is their bread of life.

Even now, our Lord wants to go into everyone's heart and become the bread of life for all. The Lord truthfully wants to become the Master of life for all, and to become their bread of life. Yet despite this, people's hearts are not ready to accept Jesus. There is no room in their hearts as they are filled with other things. They are full of the things of the world. They are filled with the greed of the world. So there is no room in their hearts for Jesus to dwell. As people



have rejected Jesus Christ and drove Him away to stand outside the door, Jesus has no place to go, and so He instead looks for and is born in the hearts of those who, like the lost sheep before God, cannot find any satisfaction in this world and place no value on the things of the world.

In this way, the Lord was born in the hearts of those of us who now believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Our Lord did this because He was pleased with us. Just as our Lord showed keen interest in the shepherds taking care of the flock in the Bible, even now, He is interested in God's Church, His shepherds, and above all else, His flock. God the Father made the birth of our Lord known through the shepherds. In the surrounding fields near Bethlehem, there were shepherds keeping watch over their flock in the starry night. The heavenly hosts then descended all of a sudden and praised God, singing, "*Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, good will toward men!*" The heavenly hosts appeared and praised God like this.

Our Lord Is Keenly Interested in His Flock and Shepherds

The Bible said, "*Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!*" This is indeed true. It's a miracle for us that the King of kings came, that the Baby Jesus was born on this earth, and that this Baby Jesus was laid in a manger wrapped in swaddling clothes.

A married couple went into a small town called Bethlehem and gave birth to a Baby. But they had no place to lay this Baby Jesus, and so they cleaned out a manger and laid Him there wrapped in white linen. This is a miracle to us and to all mankind. How grateful is it that the King of kings came looking for such lowly people like us? A livestock pen is a dirty and humble place. Who then would have known that this Baby, lying in a manger wrapped in swaddling clothes, was the King of kings? Who would have thought that God Almighty had become Man and was lying in a manger born as the Baby Jesus? This was a



sign. When the angel appeared before the shepherds, it was this sign that he taught them of the birth of the Savior, saying to them, “*Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.*”

My fellow believers, isn’t the birth of the Baby Jesus on this earth itself the sign of salvation? Yes, it is! Jesus’ birth is a miracle for you and me alike, and for all the people of this world as well. The very fact that the Baby Jesus came to this earth looking for the hearts of the lowly is the greatest miracle of all miracles. That is why we sing praise, “Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her King ; Let every heart prepare Him room.” However, my fellow believers, our Lord did not come surrounded in majesty when He was born. He came as a tiny Baby born in the humblest setting of all. How much would this Baby have weighed? That

this Baby Jesus was born in this world and laid in a manger is itself a sign of salvation. It implies salvation for mankind. It means that the Almighty God Himself, the King of kings, was born as the Baby Jesus for us lowly human beings. What else can this be but a miracle? It is a truly astounding event. Isn’t it miraculous that God Himself came to this earth incarnated in the flesh of man for you and me? It’s an amazing miracle.

On the night Jesus was born, countless heavenly hosts—that is, angels and heavenly armies—appeared in the sky and sang, “*Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!*” So just how astounded must the shepherds have been! They were huddled in blankets in the cold of the night, keeping watch over their flock from predators such as wolves. But all of a sudden the heavens lighted up, they saw angels and heavenly hosts, and they heard a beautiful and majestic praise. If it were you and I, we would have passed out in shock. It’s because these shepherds were believers in



the Word of God that they were able to witness this mystery. Imagine what would have happened if such a scene had unfolded before those who didn't believe in God. Shocked by what they saw, they would have died right there from a heart attack.

Having heard the angel's words, the shepherds went to see the Baby Jesus. They were able to meet Mary, Joseph, and the Baby lying in a manger. Having seen the Baby Jesus, these shepherds then told those around them what the angel and the heavenly host had said to them when they appeared before them. Surely, there must have been several people around the place. Since the Baby was born there, there must have been a number of people to prepare hot water and clean linen, and also to clean up the place and give food to the nursing mother. What the shepherds said when they came, Mary and Joseph kept it in their hearts.

How shocked must Mary have been to hear this? She had also been astounded when an angel appeared before her and told her that she would give birth to a

Baby, and when she accepted this Word, she got pregnant and ten months later the Baby was born. These things that happened to Mary must have been astonishing enough already. Yet she now heard from the shepherds that the heavenly hosts had descended and praised the birth of her Child, and she kept the message of angels in her heart.

The Baby Jesus was born on this earth in this way. When this Baby grew up, He took all the sins of mankind by being baptized at the age of 30, and He was crucified to death. He then rose from the dead again, and He is now sitting at the right hand of the throne of God the Father, reigning over the Kingdom of Heaven as the omnipotent King of kings. He has sent the Holy Spirit to all those who believe in Him. He has thereby made the Holy Spirit dwell with you always. This Holy Spirit in your heart is holding you steadfastly, and He renews your strength whenever you feel lonely or are struggling. He has also made it possible for you to have fellowship with God at all times.



My fellow believers, like the shepherds here in today's Scripture passage, we have also seen and understood what our Lord achieved when He came to this earth. We have also come to believe in it. Just like the shepherds, we also have seen and believed in God's work. We have thereby received the remission of sins. These are the common bonds that we share with the shepherds here in today's Scripture passage. In other words, though we are living in the 21st century, we too believe in the Word of God, we bow before God's amazing and marvelous work of salvation in thanksgiving, and we give all glory and praise to Him.

In this year also, we have spread the gospel of the water and the Spirit far and wide. Though we are living now in the 21st century, we have proclaimed to all the people in this world the purpose for which Jesus came to this earth. We are spreading the gospel of the water and the Spirit, preaching that Jesus has saved us and made us His own people by coming to this earth. My fellow believers, let us all thank God

with our faith for protecting us through this whole year, and let us give thanks to our Lord who will continue to protect us in this coming new year, be with us, and work with us.

Although our Lord came as the Baby Jesus wrapped in swaddling clothes when He first came to this earth, our Lord will soon come again for the second time and appear before us. He has promised that He will return to this earth in the same way as He ascended to Heaven, exactly as He was at the age of 33, riding the clouds in majesty with the trumpet sound of the heavenly hosts.

Hoping for this day when our Lord returns again, let us not be shocked to see such things on this day but receive Him in joy. Since this is all written in the Bible, all we have to do is just receive the Lord in faith, neither surprised nor too astounded like these shepherds.

However, until this day comes, we must live today diligently, preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Let us then all lead such a life.



Hallelujah! May God bless you all! 



SERMON

5



The Birth of Our Lord

< Luke 2-1-20 >

“And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city. Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child. So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch

over their flock by night. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. Then the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying:

‘Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!’

So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, ‘Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us.’ And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. Now when they had seen Him, they



made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child. And all those who heard it marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart. Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them.”

Jesus Is Born in the Hearts of Those Who Believe in the Word of God

When we look at the genealogy of Jesus Christ, we see that such Gentile women as the harlot Rahab and the Moabite woman Ruth were among His ancestors. The word Gentile implies a sinner. But these Gentile women were the ones who had put on the grace of God by their faith. They believed in God’s Word and His servants. In short, Jesus’ genealogy shows the succession of faith.

Likewise, Mary was also a woman of faith. An angel had said to Mary that she would conceive in her womb and bring forth a Son, and that she should name Him Jesus. So Mary had said to the angel, “*How can this be, since I do not know a man?*”

In those days, if an unmarried woman got pregnant, she was stoned to death as punishment for her fornication. The man with whom she slept was also stoned to death. Despite this, Mary accepted into her heart what the angel said. So by the time Mary went to Bethlehem with Joseph to register for the census, Jesus was already conceived in her womb. As the delivery day was imminent, she gave birth to Him there in Bethlehem.

There were shepherds in the nearby fields tending their flock, and when these shepherds heard the news of Jesus’ birth from an angel, they went looking for Him and worshiped Him. Elsewhere in Matthew 2:4-5, it is written that King Herod asked the Pharisees and the scribes where Jesus would be born. They told him that He would be born in Bethlehem of Judea.



My fellow believers, you can be blessed only when you actually practice your faith. Just as James 2:17 says that faith without works is dead, without practicing your faith, you cannot defend your faith, nor is such faith a living faith. Although these Pharisees and scribes knew that the Baby Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, they did not go there to worship Him. This shows that they were not the children of faith.

My fellow believers, God's mind is different from ours. In our human minds, it's easy to think that Jesus would be born as a prince in a palace or in a rich, aristocratic family. But Jesus, God Himself, was actually born in a shabby stable of livestock and was laid in a manger, a trough used to feed the livestock. Here in this town called Bethlehem, He was born not even in a room at the inn, but in a stable of livestock, and he was laid in a manger. Like this, against our human expectations, God had laid the Baby Jesus in a manger in a shabby stable.

It's written in Isaiah 55:8-9, "*For My thoughts*

are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,' says the LORD. 'For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.'" As this passage says, it was God's idea to lay Jesus in a manger used to feed animals. In our thoughts we may think that it would have been more honorable and respectable if Jesus was born as a prince or in an aristocratic family, but God's thoughts were far different from ours.

It's written, "*Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!*" The hearts of those who have received the remission of sins are filled with joy, and these hearts are at peace. Romans 4:8 says, "*Blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin.*" Who then, are such blessed people? They are the ones who have accepted the righteousness of God, and therefore whose sins are not recognized by the Lord no matter how many sins they commit.

The shepherds here went to Bethlehem as told by



the angel and found the Baby Jesus Christ. These shepherds had emptied their hearts of greed. The wise men from the east who had seen a brilliant star and followed it were also able to see the Baby Jesus. In contrast, the chief priests, the scribes, and the Pharisees did not come looking for the Baby Jesus Christ even though they knew that He was born in Bethlehem. This means that even though they knew of the birth of the Savior, they did not accept this as their practical faith. The shepherds had run to Bethlehem in haste and there they had found Mary, Joseph, and the Baby lying in a manger. They told what the angel had said to them, and all those who heard it marveled at the things that the shepherds said, but Mary kept them all and pondered them in her heart.

It's written, "*Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them.*" This passage means that the glory of God has come to us who have accepted the Word of God, as it is written

in Isaiah 60:1, "*Arise, shine; For your light has come! And the glory of the LORD is risen upon you.*" It means that we are the light. Since we ourselves are the light, it also means that we must shine this light to all those who still are in darkness. Unless we shine our light, everyone will perish. In other words, those of us who have received the remission of sins from Jesus must preach this gospel of the remission of sins to everyone.

A while ago I read in the newspaper that an elderly woman donated all her life savings, amounting \$3 million, to be used for some good cause in this world. Although this may seem like a good deed from a worldly point of view, in God's sight, such acts are never good deeds. This elderly woman would have found some self-satisfaction from her deed. But when viewed based on God's standard, it ultimately was not a good deed. There is absolutely no good deed in this world. This world itself is completely devoid of any virtue.



The Lord Was Born on This Earth as the Savior

The Lord came to this earth exactly as promised in the Old Testament. God had said in Isaiah 62:6-7, *"I have set watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem; They shall never hold their peace day or night. You who make mention of the LORD, do not keep silent, And give Him no rest till He establishes And till He makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth."* This means that those who have become the children of light must shine the light ceaselessly.

Whenever I meet anyone, I always preach the gospel without ceasing. Here, "you who make mention of the LORD," refers to none other than God's servants. God has made them never hold their peace day and night. I, too, am trying my best to preach the gospel always. It is through the lips of God's servants who have received the remission of sins that the gospel of Truth is spread, proclaiming that Jesus Christ took upon all our sins by being

baptized and blotted them all out by shedding His blood on the Cross, and that He has given us everlasting life by being resurrected from death. The Bible also says that we should give the Lord no rest till He establishes and makes Jerusalem a praise on the earth (Isaiah 62:7). This passage means that we should pray to God incessantly lest He should stop working for the salvation of the lost.

My fellow believers, the Savior was born on this earth. "Merry Christmas!" Merry Christmas! Say it with me: Merry Christmas!

My fellow believers, it is entirely by God Himself that our salvation has been achieved, not by any of our own efforts. Romans 4:5 says, *"But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness."*

Are you godly? No, you are not. It's not because we are godly, because we have done some good deeds, that we have been saved, but it is only by faith that we've been saved. The Bible says, *"The just shall live by faith"* (Romans 1:17). It is by faith that



you enter the everlasting Heaven of glory. It is by faith that you receive eternal life. It is not by doing something on your own, by adding your own merits, that you are saved and made righteous. As Ephesians 2:8 says, "*For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,*" our salvation is indeed a gift from God. A gift is something given freely. A reward, in contrast, is something that you receive for doing something good, and so it is not a gift. It is by faith that we have received salvation. It is by faith that we have obtained everlasting life.

Obtaining everlasting life by faith is so simple and easy. It is written, "*And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life*" (John 3:14-15). When the Israelites were bitten by serpents in the wildernesses in their long journey to the land of Canaan, whoever looked at the bronze serpent on the pole was cured, just by looking at it by faith

(Numbers 21:9). It was that easy.

So what happened then? Today, there are many people who, after receiving the remission of sins and being born again by listening to the gospel of the water and the Spirit, return to the world again. It's because salvation is so easy to obtain that they don't take it seriously and return to their own thoughts, their own acts, or to the things of the world. So when we look at Christmas cards congratulating the birth of our Lord, we see so many cards depicting the manger in a romantic and artistic light, showing the Baby Jesus as a well-groomed aristocratic offspring clothed in such luxurious garments as silk, with pink, chubby angels sitting next to Him.

The birth of Jesus, however, was not such a luxurious event like a fairy tale. It's because people view it according to their own thoughts that the birth of Jesus looks so fantastic and His salvation seems so easy. In reality, the Lord was born in a manger, not a palace, for the lowly. He also bore all the sins of this world by being baptized by John the Baptist and



made us sinless. All these things are real, and it is also undeniably true that Jesus was crucified to death to bear the condemnation of the sins of mankind, rose from the dead again in three days, and has given us everlasting life.

Let's turn to Philippians 2:8 here: "*And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.*" Though the Lord had asked God the Father to take away His cup of affliction, He still submitted Himself to the Father to do His will, and in this obedience He was crucified to shed His water and blood (John 19:34). That is how He has saved us from all our sins and our eternal death.

However, those who reject this salvation, taking it trivially, sing Christmas carols to congratulate the birth of Christ without even realizing its true meaning. Whenever Christmas comes around, all the religious groups and worldly people are suddenly interested in charitable works, launching all kinds of campaigns to help the poor. This means that even

Christianity has turned into a religion of merits that seeks salvation by one's own effort. Christians say, "Still, I can be saved only if I do good deeds. So I need to do as many good deeds as possible." This, however, is nothing more than man's own thought, and God's thoughts are completely different.

Let's turn to Titus 3:3-7 here: "*For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*"

My fellow believers, the Bible makes it clear here that we have been saved by faith, not by our own works, good deeds, or abilities. Ephesians 2:8 also



says, “*For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.*” Like this, our salvation is a gift that the Lord has given us freely.

Let me use an analogy to explain it better. Let’s say that it snowed all night long, but your little son cleared the driveway in the morning for you. So you gave him a watch to reward him. This watch then is a compensation for your son’s work, not a gift. It’s not something that you gave him for free. In contrast, God has given us our salvation as a gift. In other words, salvation is received for free. Yet despite this, in our own minds we think, “But still, I have to do some good deeds.” Such minds and thoughts of our own belong to the Devil.

When Jesus came to this earth, the Bible says that there was no room for Him. This points out that the hearts of people were filled with the things of the world, with the virtues and vices of the world. In His parable of sowing the seeds, the Lord said that some fell on the road and the birds came and ate them up,

as the surface of the road was so hard with all the people traveling on it. In other words, there was no soft ground where the seeds could be planted. That’s why the birds came and picked them up clean in no time.

Why did this happen? It was because no seed could root into the soil. Like this, if one’s heart is filled with the trivial things of the world, such people cannot accept the gospel of the remission of sins. They can’t receive the gospel of the remission of sins into their hearts. But the Lord also said that some seeds fell into a rich field and produced a crop by a hundredfold or sixty fold.

What Is True Faith?

Matthew 2:11 says, “*And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented*



gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh." It's said here that the wise men from the East "fell down and worshiped Him." This clearly shows that it's not Mary or Joseph whom they worshiped, but it is the Baby Jesus whom they bowed before and worshiped, and it is to Him that they opened their treasures and presented gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

The gold here denotes king, implying that Jesus is the King of kings. When we turn to Exodus 25:6, we see that incense was used when sacrifices were offered in the Tabernacle of God, as the verse says, "*Oil for the light, and spices for the anointing oil and for the sweet incense.*" When incense was burnt like this, God accepted it in pleasure as a sweet aroma as the burning incense ascended to Heaven. Put differently, this means that God is pleased to listen to our prayers.

Myrrh, on the other hand, was used to treat a dead body. It symbolizes the unchanging Truth. My fellow believers, Jesus Christ was baptized to bear all the sins of this world, and because of these sins, He shed His blood on the Cross and died there, and

thereby saved us all. This, according to 1 Corinthians 1:23, is a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles. Why is it then a stumbling block to the Jews? The Jews were full of themselves as the rightful heirs of Abraham. They could not tolerate that Jesus, a Man who had little to show in His outside appearance, was preaching the gospel to them, claiming that He had the authority to remit away their sins, and that because of Him everyone would be sinless. For the Jews who were rich in their hearts and filled with their own righteousness, Jesus' gospel of the remission of sins became an unacceptable stumbling block. It was foolishness to the Gentiles. Whenever I open my mouth to preach the Word of God, a lot of people just laugh at me. It's because they don't understand the Word of God. In the days of Jesus, people at that time used to think that nothing good could ever come out of Nazareth.

Yet despite this, God had begun His great work of salvation through a lowly body. Jesus said in John 6:38, "*For I have come down from heaven, not to do*



My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me." It's precisely because Jesus had come to this earth incarnated in the flesh of man that just before He was crucified, He said to God the Father, "*Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will*" (Mark 14:36). In other words, because the Lord had put on the flesh of man at that time, He also felt all the pain and suffering that ordinary people felt. So you can imagine just how terribly painful His crucifixion was. That is why He had asked God the Father to take away His cup. Yet even so, He still fulfilled the will of the Father in obedience, saying, "*Not what I will, but what You will.*"

It's also written in Philippians 2:8, "*And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.*" Although the Lord is God Himself, because He was incarnated in the weak flesh of man, He had to suffer the pain of death. Despite this, He still asked God the Father to do the

Father's will rather than the Son's will, and in obedience to this will of the Father, Jesus died on the Cross, and by rising from the dead again, He fulfilled the will of God the Father.

The revelation of God was fulfilled. The Divine Incarnation means that the Lord Himself appeared in the image of man and obeyed the Father to the point of death by crucifixion. Jesus Christ is God Incarnate. God Incarnate obeyed the Father to the point of His death on the Cross, and so this Divine Incarnation, when it's seen just from a carnal point of view, is a gross humiliation. That God Himself was incarnated in the flesh of man and appeared in the image of man means that He humbled Himself to the lowest of all. In this way, by being baptized, the Lord accepted all the sins of the world onto His own body, died on the Cross, and thereby blotted out all the sins of the lowly. That is how the glory of Heaven descended upon the earth. Like this, the purpose for which Jesus was born on this earth as a Baby was to solve the problem of our sins and the concomitant problem of destruction.



Let's turn to Isaiah 53:2-6 here:

*"For He shall grow up before Him
as a tender plant,
And as a root out of dry ground.
He has no form or comeliness;
And when we see Him,
There is no beauty that we should desire Him.
He is despised and rejected by men,
A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.
And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him;
He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.
Surely He has borne our griefs
And carried our sorrows;
Yet we esteemed Him stricken,
Smitten by God, and afflicted.
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.
All we like sheep have gone astray;
We have turned, every one, to his own way;*

*And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity
of us all."*

My fellow believers, the grief and sorrow here were surely ours to bear. Yet for our sake, God Himself bore this grief and sorrow and died in our place. Romans 5:7-8 says, *"For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."*

My fellow believers, as all of us were like sheep, we had gone astray each in his own way. Sheep's sight is myopic. Because they are myopic, they can't see anything else except what's right in front of them. So when they are grazing, they follow the grass that's in front of them, sometimes right up to the edge of the cliff to fall to their death. Like this, we human beings also follow what our eyes can see in this world. But all the things we see in this world are corruptible, and so we can't help but perish if we follow them. This is ingrained in our human nature.



The Word of God says, “*We do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal*” (2 Corinthians 4:18). That is why, to those who passed away long ago and those living in the present alike, and both Christians and non-Christians, God has planted everyone’s heart with a yearning for what is eternal. While living in this world, everyone wonders at least once in his life, “Where did I come from, and where am I heading?” In other words, the human heart is also mindful of eternal things.

Jesus Christ has opened the way to Heaven by tearing down the veil that separated us from God. It is written in the Scriptures, “*Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh*” (Hebrews 10:19-20). Now, we have come to enter the Kingdom of eternal life thanks to the atoning salvation of Jesus Christ. We are now able to abide in Jesus always. Do

you understand this?

Let’s turn to Matthew 27:51 here: “*Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.*” My fellow believers, the veil of the Temple was indeed torn in two from top to bottom. This means that we are now able to come boldly to the throne of God’s grace, just as it’s written in Hebrews 4:16, “*Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*”

Such a miracle unfolded when the Lord passed away on the Cross, saying, “It is finished!” (John 19:30) At that very moment, the veil of the Temple was torn into two from top to bottom. In the age of the Old Testament, only the High Priest could step inside this veil once a year with golden bells attached to the hem of his garment, and in there he offered a sacrifice to obtain the remission of sins for his people. But now, with the death of Jesus, this veil of the Temple was torn into two. This means that our salvation was completely fulfilled.



My fellow believers, on this Christmas, let us all realize why the Lord came to this earth incarnated in the lowly flesh of man, and why the Baby Jesus was laid in a manger; and let us all accept this grace into our hearts. Jesus is our true Savior. Let all of us then confess that He is indeed our Lord.

Finally, to wrap up this sermon, let us together read the passage from Luke 2:29-32:

*“Lord, now You are letting
Your servant depart in peace,
According to Your word;
For my eyes have seen Your salvation
Which You have prepared before the face
of all peoples,
A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles,
And the glory of Your people Israel.” Amen! ☐*



SERMON

6



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The Savior of Those Who Are Poor in Spirit

< Luke 2:1-20 >

“And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city. Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child. So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in

the inn. Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. Then the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying:

‘Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!’

So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, ‘Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us.’ And they came with haste



and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. Now when they had seen Him, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child. And all those who heard it marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart. Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them.”

Jesus Who Came into the History of Mankind

At the time of Jesus' birth, the Roman Empire was ruled by Caesar Augustus (63 B.C.~ A.D. 14), and it was expanding its territory throughout the whole known world. It was no exaggeration to say that Rome was ruling over the entire known world at the time. It is against this background that Emperor

Augustus ordered a population census in all the colonies of Rome. This occurred on the first year in the Western calendar. Since this is when Jesus Christ was born, it is 1 AD. Like this, Jesus Christ is an actual historical figure and our Lord.

Our Lord was born during the reign of Roman Emperor Augustus. Through the Prophet Isaiah, God had prophesied about His birth some 700 years before this, and when these 700 years had gone by, our Lord was indeed born. He was born through the body of the Virgin Mary.

At the time the Virgin Mary conceived Jesus, she was engaged to a man named Joseph. Here in today's Scripture passage, it's said that these two went to Bethlehem according to the decree requiring everyone in the Roman territory to be registered, and as Mary neared her delivery day, she gave birth to Her Baby in Bethlehem. With Mary going into labor, they needed to find a place for her to give birth. So they knocked on inns looking for a room, but as they were all filled with travelers who had come for the



census, in the end, Jesus was born in a stable and laid in a manger used to feed animals.

Around that time, there were shepherds keeping watch over their flock in the fields, and an angel of the Lord appeared before them and said, “*Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people.*” So God’s angel made the birth of Jesus Christ known to the shepherds. When the angel said, “*For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger,*” suddenly a multitude of the heavenly hosts appeared in the sky and praised God, singing, “*Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!*” After praising, the angel and the heavenly hosts ascended back to Heaven.

The shepherds went to Bethlehem and found the Baby Jesus, and they delivered to Mary and Joseph what the angel and the heavenly hosts of the Lord had told them. They had heard them sing, “*Glory to*

God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!” Put differently, as our Lord had come to this earth, He was to bring peace to everyone who would rejoice over the good new of the Lord’s coming.

Just as the shepherds here and all those who rejoiced at the coming of the Baby Jesus and believed in Him found the peace given by the Lord, in this present age also, there are some people who have found peace from the Lord and goodwill from God. Who are they? As Christmas is upon us, we should take this opportunity to ponder on this issue. There are many people living in this world, but who among them has found peace and goodwill before God? The Bible says that this grace is found by those who honor God, those who fear Him with their hearts and want to venerate Him, love Him, and worship Him, and those who want to praise Him and believe in Him. It is such people in whom God is pleased and to whom He gives peace. In other words, the Lord blots out all the sins of such people and blesses them with



the fertility of the earth.

Indeed, it is actually for sinners that our Lord came to this earth. Those who find goodwill before this Lord, and who put on His love, are none other than those who love God, fear Him, and want to serve Him in their lives. Although their acts are lacking, in their hearts they yearn to find God and serve Him, and although they may be arrogant and proud before the world, they humble their hearts before God and honor Him, desiring to serve Him in obedience to His Word. It is in such people's hearts that our Lord dwells and blesses them.

Christmas Is for Those Who Are Looking for God

My fellow believers, why did Jesus Christ come to this earth? It's for those who yearn to find God and go to Him that Christ came to this earth incarnated in the flesh of man through the body of a virgin. All of

us are utterly inadequate. But despite our insufficiencies, we still love God truthfully, we want to serve Him, and we want to praise Him together with the heavenly hosts, singing, "*Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!*"

Many people have found this grace. Those who have found goodwill from God have all been saved. When our Lord was born and laid in a manger wrapped in swaddling clothes, it was the shepherds tending the flock who heard this blessed news for the very first time. While these shepherds were keeping watch over their flock, a messenger of the Lord appeared before them and spoke to them, and as the glory of the Lord shone around them, the angel said to them, "*Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.*"

The Lord had come. God Himself, the Prophet, the High Priest, and the King of kings had come to



this earth incarnated in the flesh of man. Just as it had been promised in the Old Testament, the Savior was indeed born in the land of David, in a town called Bethlehem. The angel then said to the shepherds, “*And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.*” That God Himself became a Man and came to this earth, and that He was wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger—this itself is the greatest event of all. It is the greatest miracle of all miracles.

When our Lord came to this earth, God brought this news to the shepherds tending their flock prior to anyone else. The shepherds saw the heavenly hosts descending from Heaven and praising Jesus Christ. They were the first to hear with their own ears what the heavenly hosts were saying. Here we need to ponder on the significance of this event. Other than Mary and Joseph, God had announced the birth of our Lord to these shepherds first. This means that just as the shepherds were the first to know about the

birth of Jesus, even now, God reveals what will happen to this world to His servants first. We all need to grasp here that God speaks to His servants first, teaches them first, and makes them prepare first.

Soon, the whole world will be engulfed in conflict. Nations will rise against nations, and war after war will erupt everywhere. Just as it is written in the Bible, the Lord speaks and shows everything to the servants of God. Just as our Lord had announced the birth of the Baby Jesus to the shepherds first, today He will also let God’s shepherds know what will happen to this world first.

As such, we need to think about the coming Jesus Christ who will return to this earth again. Soon, the Lord will return to this earth again, but exactly when and how will He return? No one knows the time and the way of our Lord’s return. However, God said that He would reveal the return of the Lord at least to the children of the light (1 Thessalonians 5:4-5). He said that when the Lord returns to this earth, He will take away all those who have nothing to do with sin.



When the Lord comes to this earth again, He will take away those who have received the remission of sins from Him, who fear God, and who have thereby received God's love and His blessings.

My fellow believers, we must all remember that God had announced the coming of our Lord to the shepherds first. We need to have a proper understanding of its significance and live in this world by faith. We must remember that God is our Savior who brings peace to all who find goodwill from Him.

Because of our inherent limits as human beings, we are always lacking. Because we are all too human, there are also many times when we can't do everything we want to do. We were all inadequate people, being always sinful. That's why we needed Jesus Christ. Thanks to Him we could realize our weaknesses and recognize that we were sinners. For those who know that Jesus Christ is God, it's inevitable that they should be in absolute need of Jesus Christ. Such people also come to believe with

thanksgiving that Jesus has truly blotted out all their sins with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Grateful for this salvation, they are compelled to praise the Lord and give all glory to Him. Moreover, God brings joy and peace to all such people who worship Him.

I had various thoughts as I meditated on today's Scripture passage. In the night of the first Christmas, God had appeared before the shepherds and spoken to them. What is Jesus Christ saying to us now? I also pondered on who it is that finds goodwill from God. Those who can't be satisfied by the things of this earth, who yearn to find God, who want to serve Him despite their insufficiencies, and who want be remitted from all their sins and stand boldly before the presence God—it is for these people that the Lord came to this earth. As I pondered on this passage, I gave thanks to the Lord God for making me one of these people yearning for the Lord.

My fellow believers, on this Christmas also, there were some people who were truly looking for God.



According to our gospel newspaper, some of them came to our Church in Deajeon City. They said that they were coming to our Church as they heard the Word of the Lord and realized the Truth. The Lord blesses those who obey the Word of God even if it does not quite fit into their own understanding and logic. Rather than saying, "Well, that's not how I think, and that's not what I learned," these people contemplate on what the Word of God actually says and believe in Jesus according to this Word, and God meets with them and blesses them.

I am sure there are such people in this world. Those who don't insist on their own thoughts before God, who are able to submit themselves to the Word of God in obedience, and who recognize this Word as the Truth—it is these people for whom the Lord becomes their Savior. How many people do you suppose are like these people? How many can we expect to find in this depraved world overflowing with so many sins? There probably aren't that many. However, regardless of their number, whether there

are only dozens of them or millions, the Lord gives the law of peace and the law of salvation to all such people.

We are preaching the gospel to many people, both in Korea and abroad. However, there aren't that many people who are truly sincere enough to find goodwill from God. Pastor Kim had run a branch mission center for a couple of years in New York, and he told me that most Christians there believed in the Lord like fanatics. Countless people profess to believe in Jesus like that, but how does the Lord come looking for them? Does He appear with thundering, performing miracles and wonders when He meets with them? No, our Lord meets with those who accept the Word into their hearts quietly and silently. He doesn't meet with those who are just loud with their mouths, but those who sincerely surrender themselves to the Word of God.

It's absolutely important for us to really grasp the significance of the fact that Jesus was laid in a manger wrapped in swaddling clothes. We must



admit that we are lowly people. We must also realize and believe with thanksgiving that our Savior Jesus Christ, who came as the Baby Jesus, came to this earth in order to give us the bread of life, and that He shared His flesh and blood freely with us.

Of all things, why was the Lord laid in a manger wrapped in swaddling clothes? It was to give life to us lowly people, to become our Savior. Wrapped in white linen, the Baby Jesus was laid in the middle of a manger carved out of a trunk. The Lord had come to save such lowly people as you and me and give us life.

That Jesus Christ, the King of kings, was born in a dwelling place of animals and incarnated in the flesh of man was to teach us that He is the Lord who came to save the lowly in this world. That is why the Lord, the King of kings, was born in this way. Therefore, those who seek the glory of this world and its riches cannot find Jesus Christ. No matter how hard they may look for Jesus and how fervently they may believe in Him, they cannot actually meet the

Savior who was born in a manger, who has blotted out all their sins with the water and the Spirit, and who has saved them from destruction, death, and curses. Those whose hearts are set on this world rather than on God cannot really encounter Jesus. Why is that so? That's because our Lord came to this earth for those who are truly looking for God and for the Truth rather than the things of this world, and because He came to bring peace to such people.

This is why so many people have been unable to find Jesus Christ so far. Countless people are still trying to find Jesus in a big palace. They try to find and meet Jesus in the high places of churches, or from the learned. But Jesus is not there. Our Lord was not born in a royal family in a palace, nor was He born in a rich family. Instead, our Lord came looking for those who realize that they are nothing, and that their lives mean nothing. Our Lord met with such spirits who yearn to find God, the true Savior of life, and who, like Nathaniel, are waiting for Jesus under the fig tree longing for the Messiah.



The Bible says in Matthew chapter 5, “*Blessed are the poor in spirit.*” There are those in this world whose hearts are poor even though they are materially rich and prosperous and lack nothing. Those who are poor in their hearts cannot be satisfied with the things of this world. Such people who can’t be satisfied with the things of this world are none other than the poor in spirit. Our Lord becomes the Savior of such people who are satisfied only with the things of God and never with the things of the world,

On the other hand, some people are rich in their hearts even though they have nothing in this world and no possessions at all. In other words, there are some people who are satisfied just with the things of this world regardless of how much they own. Our Lord never becomes the Savior to such people. No matter how our Lord goes to them and knocks on their door, these people absolutely refuse to receive Him. Even when they are told that Jesus Christ has blotted out all their sins, they just won’t accept it. They may be able to receive Jesus Christ if He were

to make them rich and prosperous, but when Jesus says, “I have blotted out all your sins with the gospel of the water and the Spirit and made you righteous,” they can’t accept this spiritual news of joy. Such people are not the poor in spirit. They are not the ones who can find goodwill from God.

Jesus Christ can be found only by those who, regardless of whether they are rich or not in this world, and whether they are meritorious or not, are never satisfied by the things of the world. He is found by those who are mindful of God the Creator of all things, who look for this God, who yearn to find Him, who want to believe in His Word that He has remitted away all their sins, and who long to receive this remission of sins. It is such people whom Jesus Christ meets. Like this, it is the poor in spirit whom Jesus Christ meets. That is what it means when the Bible says in today’s Scripture passage, “*On earth peace, goodwill toward men!*” God meets those who are looking for Him earnestly. He saves those who are searching for Him.



Many Christians in this world also think that this notion is elementary, but they really need to grasp it properly rather than just thinking. Even now, those who are really searching for God, those who yearn to find the satisfaction of their hearts from Him and to be remitted from all their remaining sins, are still looking for God. Even at this hour, our Lord finds and meets such people. In this Church and throughout the entire world, our Lord is finding such people and saying to them, "Do you need Me?" Most people answer this question by saying that they either don't need Him or are too busy to bother. However, some people do say, "Yes, Lord, I need You more than anything else in this world." It's these people who put on the Lord's goodwill.

My fellow believers, when the Baby Jesus was born on this earth, it was the shepherds who first learned of it. In this present age also, there are servants of Jesus Christ and His people who have met God before anyone else. Who are these people then? Those who believe in and spread the blessed news

that the Baby Jesus Christ came to this earth, that upon growing up He bore all the sins of mankind by being baptized by John the Baptist at the age of 30, that He was crucified to death at the age of 33, that He rose from the dead again and ascended to Heaven, and that He has thereby saved us — these are today's people of God and His shepherds.

Through such people who have received the remission of sins, whose spiritual faith grows, and who live with Jesus Christ, countless people in this world can hear this joyful news, that the Savior was born in the city of David. This is the good tidings of great joy for all this world. Therefore, we must all realize exactly how Jesus Christ has blotted out all the sins of the entire human race. We must also understand how He has enabled us to be born again of water and the Spirit. With the water and the Spirit, the Lord has made us God's own people. The Savior was born in the city of David, and this is the good tidings of great joy for all this world. My fellow believers, through those who have become God's



people first, through His shepherds, everyone in this world will hear this news of great joy.

Over 2,000 years have passed by since Jesus Christ was born on this earth. This Jesus Christ, having come to this earth, blotted out all the sins of mankind through His 33 years of life. Yet despite this, there still are many people drowning, not knowing how Jesus Christ has blotted out their sins. To all such people, we must preach in detail what God has spoken to us exactly as it is. Like the heavenly host here in today's Scripture passage, we, too, must fulfill this ministry of spreading the good news and praising our Lord with thanksgiving. This is the responsibility of all those who have become God's people prior to everyone else.

Since I haven't seen any heavenly host, I can't describe it in detail, but the word heavenly host refers to the army of Heaven and its workers. This means that there clearly is a heavenly dominion apart from this earthly dominion. The Gospel of Matthew says that God has assigned an angel to each righteous

person, and that these angels report to God. As such, we must realize that our lives on this earth are not all there is, and that there is the dominion of Heaven waiting for us. All of us must remember without fail that as those who have become sinless by believing in the baptism of Jesus and His blood on the Cross, there indeed is another world waiting for us. It is the domination of the righteous people born again through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, that is, the Kingdom of Heaven where the people of God shall live. We must never forget that our lives on this earth is not all there is. Remembering that the gospel of the water and Spirit is preached through God's Church, that God works in His Church, let us all give thanks to God.

Just as it's written here in today's Scripture passage, you and I have found God's goodwill on this earth, and for this, I give all my thanks to God once again. Let us then now think about what it is that we should do. The answer is clear: We should preach to everyone this wonderful gospel



proclaiming that Jesus accepted and bore all the sins of this world by being baptized by John the Baptist, that He has thereby made us sinless, that He was condemned in our place on the Cross even though it was we who had to die, and that He has thus brought everlasting life to all of us.

As Christmas is upon us, it's good that we are breaking bread together and enjoying the occasion. But as the children of faith, let us also gather together in peace and praise God. On this Christmas Eve, there will be a theatrical presentation in the Church, as well as Christmas caroling at dawn. Like the heavenly host here in today's Scripture passage, we will also praise the Lord in our Christmas caroling. Singing Christmas carols at dawn is a really wonderful experience. While people are still in bed, they can still hear through beautiful music the gospel message that the Baby Jesus was born, that the Messiah had come, and that He has saved them. Through all these things, we can truly thank God and glorify Him. It's not with our emotion that we thank

God only vaguely, but above all else, it is from the depth of our hearts that we thank Jesus Christ for coming to this earth to save us.

I am eagerly waiting for the return of our Lord. When this day comes, the Lord will lift us up to the air, and together with the heavenly host, we will praise the Lord and live in the Millennial Kingdom and then in the glorious Kingdom of Heaven. Although we do not know when this day will come, as long as we are living in this world, we must all spread the good news that the Baby Jesus Christ was born on this earth, and that He has saved us from all our sins, destruction, curses, and condemnation.

I give all thanks to God one more time for coming to earth like this to deliver us from all our sins, for finding us, meeting us, and for saving us all.



SERMON

7



CONTENTS



The Lord Who Came Into Human History to Save Sinners

< Luke 2:1-21 >

“And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city. Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child. So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a

manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. Then the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying:

‘Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!’

So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, ‘Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord



has made known to us.' And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. Now when they had seen Him, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child. And all those who heard it marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart. Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them. And when eight days were completed for the circumcision of the Child, His name was called JESUS, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb."

Is Jesus Christ the Master of Human History?

Historians determined the Western calendar based on the year when our Lord came to this earth,

calling it AD (Anno Domini, in the year of the Lord) and referring to the years before the coming of our Lord as BC (before Christ). Almost all countries of the world are now using this standard. Before the adoption of this calendar, each country in the world had its own calendar. So someone mentioned, "History is His story." This implies that for this world also, our Lord is its Master. This world was made by Jesus Christ the Creator, and it is also being run and completed by Jesus Christ.

During the reign of Caesar Augustus as the emperor of the Roman Empire, a decree was issued throughout all the nations under the Roman colonial rule requiring all its subjects, men and women alike, to return to each of their hometowns and register for a census. This decree was issued because a census was necessary to enhance the Roman rule and collect taxes more efficiently. In terms of world history, when Caesar August was the emperor of Rome, a young man in Israel named Joseph was engaged to a virgin named Mary. Our Lord had already told



Joseph and Mary of the birth of Jesus, and He had also foretold Elizabeth of the birth of John the Baptist. It came to pass that in those days everyone had to go to his hometown to be registered according to the Roman emperor's decree. So Joseph and Mary went to Bethlehem, the hometown of Joseph, to be registered. Jesus was then born in Bethlehem just as it had been prophesied in the Book of Micah:

*"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
Though you are little among the thousands
of Judah,
Yet out of you shall come forth to Me,
The One to be Ruler in Israel
Whose goings forth are from of old,
From everlasting" (Micah 5:2).*

By the time Mary and Joseph arrived at Bethlehem to be registered, the Baby Jesus was already conceived in the womb of Mary and the day of delivery was nearing. So Joseph and Mary looked for a place to give birth to the Baby Jesus. But they couldn't find any place, as all the inns were filled

with the people who had come to their hometown to be registered. They had no recourse but to find shelter in a stable, and there Mary gave birth to her Baby.

When the Baby Jesus was born on this earth, there were some shepherds out in the field tending their flock. As it's written in today's Scripture passage: "*Behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. Then the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.' Then suddenly, there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: 'Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!'"*" The shepherds then went to Bethlehem and indeed found the Baby Jesus lying in a manger just as the



angel had told them, and they returned glorifying God.

With Christmas just around the corner, it is timely that we should find out the reason why Jesus was born in Bethlehem, and why He was laid in a manger wrapped in swaddling clothes. With this understanding we should thank God. When our Lord was born on this earth, there was no room for Him at the inn, and He was born in a stable instead. This implies that Our Lord came to this earth to save such lowly people like you and me who were destined to die for our sins, and that is also the reason why He was born in the stable. We all should realize this and believe it.

Our Lord is the King of kings. He is the holy God. Although our Lord came to this earth in the appearance of man, in His fundamental essence He is the holy God, having nothing to do with sin at all. Our Lord is not a lowly being like us humans, but He is the holy, omnipotent, and perfect God of creation. The Lord is the Son of God the Father, and our

Savior who came to this earth to save us. In His essence He is the holy God.

Here it's said that the Baby Jesus was laid in a manger wrapped in swaddling clothes, and these swaddling clothes refer to white linen. After Mary gave birth to the Baby Jesus in the stable, she cut off the umbilical cord, wrapped Him in white swaddling clothes, and as she couldn't find anywhere else to lay Him, she laid Him in a manger, a trough used to feed animals. Indeed, a stable is littered with animal waste. No matter how hard you try to clean it, it stinks with the smell of animals. My fellow believers, it is absolutely critical for all of us to realize the significance of the fact that the Baby Jesus was laid in a manger wrapped in swaddling clothes, as there was no other place to lay Him.



Our Lord Came to Save Us Who Were Sinners

My fellow believers, although our Lord came to this earth in the appearance of man, by no means was He a creature like you and me. He was fundamentally God Himself. He is the very God who spoke, "*Let there be light,*" and made the light with this Word of power. Yet despite this, our Lord came to this earth in the appearance of man and was laid in a manger, all in obedience to the will of the Father. Our Lord actually experienced everything human, from our weaknesses to our insufficiencies. He knew just how weak and insufficient we humans were, and He knew how we were simply incapable of keeping the Law. Through His 33 years of life on this earth, the Lord had actually experienced all the things that human beings go through. That is why, knowing our insufficiencies, He had shouldered all our sins through His baptism and offered Himself up as the propitiation of atonement in our place. From today's

Scripture passage, we all need to understand clearly why the Lord came to this earth, the purpose of His coming.

It Is Jesus Christ Who Moves All the History of This World

This God, the Master of all history, came to this earth to save mankind and was laid in a manger. We need to grasp here that it was to become our bread of life that the Lord came to this earth and was laid in the manger. A manger is a trough used to feed animals, and they find nourishment to grow from the food that's put in this trough. The Lord was laid in this manger, a feeding trough for animals, in order to teach us that He had come to this earth to become the bread of life for you and me. In other words, the Lord was born on this earth in order to give Himself up for you and me, so that we would obtain new life. Like this, the purpose for which our Lord came to this



earth was to give new life to everyone throughout the entire world. He didn't come just to manifest that He was God Himself and full of mercy. He came to save us from our sins, who were made in the likeness of the image of God, and to make our dead souls be born again, so that we would all live with God forever with new life. All of us must remember clearly that the only purpose for which our Lord came to this earth was to give new life to you and me. It's for this reason that the Lord was laid in a manger. He was laid in the manger to give us the bread of new life, to give us His flesh and His blood of life.

From John the Baptist, the Lord received the baptism through which He accepted all the sins of the world to His body. By being baptized by John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, our Lord accepted all the sins of the human race onto His own body once and for all, and giving up His body to be crucified, He shed His blood for us and died in our place. He then rose from the dead again, thus becoming the bread of life for all those who believe

in Him as their Savior.

John chapter 6 explains the purpose for which the Lord came to this earth. Let's turn to John 6:35 here: "*And Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.'*" Further down in verses 47-58, it is also written: "*'Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.'* The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, '*How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?*' Then Jesus said to them, '*'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise*



him up at the last day. For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. This is the bread which came down from heaven—not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever.’’ It is for this reason, to give us the bread of life, that our Lord was laid in a manger when He was born on this earth.

Perhaps those living in cities don’t know what a manger is. A manger is a trough dug out of a trunk; a device where food is put in for animals to eat. It is, in short, a feeder. Yet when our Lord was born on this earth, He was laid in this manger wrapped in swaddling clothes. This scene speaks volumes about what it is that our Lord wants to give us that He was born on this earth. The reason why our Lord came to this earth was to give new life to you and me. He had come to this earth to give us His flesh and His blood,

so that all those who eat them would receive new life.

Our Lord said, ‘The bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world. Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.’’

How, then, can we eat the flesh of Jesus and drink His blood? After living on this earth for 33 years, and just before going to the Cross, our Lord gathered together all His disciples for the Last Supper of the Passover Day and performed the rite of Holy Communion. At that time, the Lord broke the bread and gave it to His disciples, telling them to take and eat this bread, for it was His body. Likewise, when He gave the wine to them, He said, ‘Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of



sins" (*Matthew 26:27-28*).

How Can We Really Eat the Flesh of Jesus and Drink His Blood?

Does one eat the flesh of Jesus literally? No. It is by grace that Jesus has given us His flesh and blood and enabled us to have them, the most precious things. The Lord clearly said that those who eat His flesh and drink His blood have eternal life. It is therefore clear that we must eat the flesh of Jesus and drink His blood. Anyone who believes in Jesus must eat His flesh and drink His blood.

What, then, is the way to eat the flesh of Jesus and drink His blood? When our Lord came to this earth for the first time, He was born in Bethlehem, and the name of this town meant bakery. Put differently, the Lord was born in a town called bakery and laid in a manger. He gave us new life. He had come to this earth to give us His flesh and blood,

so that we may receive new life. The Lord, the Creator and the Savior, came to this earth to feed us His flesh and blood, and we must have this flesh and blood of Jesus. The Bible clearly tells us to eat the flesh of Jesus and drink His blood. Through His 33 years of life on this earth, the Lord gave us His flesh and blood.

The Lord gave us His flesh and blood, that is, the bread of life. That He gave us His flesh means that He gave us His body, but what does this mean exactly? Jesus said that He gave His flesh for the sake of all those who believe in Him. But how did He give this flesh? The Lord came to this earth to save from sin all those oppressed by it under the Law. When He turned 30, He was baptized by John the Baptist.

The Bible writes in *Matthew 3:13-15*: "*Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. And John tried to prevent Him, saying, 'I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?' But Jesus answered and said to him,*



'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him." This passage means that from John the Baptist, Jesus received the baptism that fulfilled the righteousness of God. When Jesus came out of the water after thus receiving the baptism that fulfilled the righteousness of God from John, the heavens were opened to Him and God said, *"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."*

Just before being baptized by John, our Lord had said, *"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness"* (*Matthew 3:15*). Here, the word "thus" is "οὕτως" (*hutos*) in Greek, which means "just in this way," "most fitting," or "there is no other way besides this." This word shows that Jesus took the sins of humankind unto Himself irreversibly and most properly through the baptism He received from John the Baptist. The phrase "all righteousness" is "πάσαν δικαιοσύνην" (*pasan dikaiosunen*) in Greek, means the fairest state that has no defect at all. By this, Jesus meant that it was

fitting for Him to bear all the sins of everyone and blot them out by the most appropriate method, by receiving the baptism given by John. In other words, our Lord bore all our sins on His own body by accepting them through the baptism He received from John the Baptist. You need to grasp the significance of this event from the original text of the Scriptures.

At the Last Supper also, just before His crucifixion, the Lord broke bread and gave it to His disciples, saying, *"Take, eat; this is My body"* (*Matthew 26:26*). When Jesus was born on this earth, the Lord was laid in a manger, which also implies that He had come to this earth to give us life. How did our Jesus then give us His flesh? He didn't say that we should cut and eat His flesh as though we were eating some steak. Rather, He told us to eat His flesh by believing that He bore the sins of mankind on His own body by being baptized by John the Baptist. In other words, Jesus is saying to us that He accepted all the sins of the world onto His body by



being baptized by John the Baptist, the last prophet of the Old Testament and the representative of mankind.

That the Lord gave us His flesh means that He bore all your sins and mine once and for all by being baptized by John the Baptist, and that He was condemned on the Cross. It's when we realize this fact that we can eat the flesh of the Lord by faith. To save you and me from sin, the Lord accepted all the sins of this world once and for all by being baptized. Only when we accept this into our hearts can we eat the flesh of the Lord by faith. Only when we eat the true Word of God by faith do we eat the flesh of Jesus.

Have you had the flesh of Jesus by faith? Do you believe that Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan River in order to blot out all your sins and mine? In John chapter 6 also, our Lord said, *"Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink*

indeed. The bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world."

Our Lord was born on this earth in the likeness of man in order to blot out our sins. The Bible says that the Word became flesh and came to dwell among us. At the age of 30, He received from John the Baptist the baptism that blotted out all our sins. My fellow believers, you must realize clearly the meaning of this baptism that Jesus received from John the Baptist and believe in it. You shouldn't interpret it all on your own, thinking that Jesus was baptized just to show His humility or because He was too humble, nor should you believe mistakenly like this.

To fulfill all righteousness, the Lord was baptized by John the Baptist, the greatest of all those born of women, and He thereby accepted the sins of mankind once and for all. By baptizing Jesus, John the Baptist passed all the sins of mankind to Jesus, and by receiving this baptism from John, Jesus bore them all and made everyone sinless. This is the evidence of the fact that the Lord took upon all our sins once and



for all through His baptism.

To this day, I've been preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit to everyone, including Christians all over the world. When some people hear my sermons or read my sermon books, they wonder why I've published so many books when there isn't that much content, thinking that just one book should be enough. In reality, however, all these books are necessary. That's because all of us must eat the spiritual bread of the Lord at all times. I have never left out the baptism of Jesus from any of my sermons to this very day. The reason is simple: It's because Jesus accepted all your sins and mine when He was baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan River. I am always preaching about the baptism of Jesus by faith because it's my duty to preach this Truth, that not just my sins but also all the sins of the world were passed onto Jesus. Through His baptism, Jesus Himself bore all the sins that you and I commit constantly out of our insufficiencies, and that is why I am preaching this Word all the time by faith.

Salvation That Came by the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

My fellow believers, you must not interpret the Bible all on your own. Every Scripture was written by people of faith who were inspired by the Holy Spirit. As such, you should listen to those who have been remitted from their sins and received the Holy Spirit into their hearts. The Bible should be interpreted as it was recorded. You should make the connection between the New Testament and the Old Testament. It is a mistake to interpret the Bible based on just one passage. In short, you should read the Bible under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

God gave the Law to the people of Israel. Knowing that they would not be able to keep it, He also gave them the sacrificial system of the Tabernacle that enabled them to receive the remission of sins. In this God-given sacrificial system, the Israelites were to pass their sins to the sacrificial animals by laying their hands on the



animals' heads, and the priests were to slaughter the animals, draw their blood, put the blood on the horns of the altar of burnt offering, cut their flesh, and offer them to God on the altar of burnt offering. This was done for daily and yearly sacrifices.

As the Lamb of God, Jesus was the sacrificial propitiation offered in order to save everyone in this world from sin. He was the Savior sent by God the Father to give us new life. Jesus is Christ, the only begotten Son of God the Father sent to save you and me, who were destined to die for our sins. He had come to this earth as our own propitiation. Instead of us being condemned to death for our sins, God passed all our sins to His Son through baptism, He let the Son be crucified to shed His blood, and He raised the Son back from the dead, thus restoring everlasting life to us. We have received the remission of sins by believing in this love of God, who took His own Son to be the propitiation for all our sins. In other words, as the Lord Himself became this propitiation for our sins and bore all our sins, He was

crucified to bear the condemnation of sin instead of us, thus remitting away all our sins once and for all.

Therefore, whoever wants to believe in Jesus Christ must believe in the baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist, and only then can this person be washed from all his sins. When Jesus said in the Bible, "*Thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness*" (*Matthew 3:15*), it means that Jesus bore all your sins and mine on His own body once and for all by being baptized by John the Baptist. Only once did Jesus receive the Baptism. By receiving this baptism in a form of the laying on of hands, He accepted all the sins of mankind, and He went into the water and came out of it. Baptism is "βάπτισμα" (*baptisma*) in Greek, which means "being immersed." The spiritual meaning of baptism is to wash, to be buried, and to pass on. Put differently, the purpose for which Jesus was baptized was to bear all your sins and mine and wash them all away.

Having accepted all your sins and mine through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, Jesus



then shed His blood on the Cross in our place and paid off the wages of our sins with His life. It was to save you and me from sin that Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist, and our sins were indeed passed onto Jesus once and for all. This baptism that Jesus received is the same as the laying on of hands done in the Old Testament, whereby a sinner brought an unblemished animal to the Tabernacle and passed his sins onto this sacrificial offering by laying his hands on its head. This laying on of hands in the Old Testament was the method by which one's sins were passed onto his sacrificial animal.

I'm not advocating Baptist doctrines here. Nor am I saying that one is baptized properly only if he is completely submerged in water. There are many Christian denominations in the world, but all of them are just man-made. Regardless of whether believing in Jesus or not, there are only two types of people—those who have been born again and those who have not. I admonish you all to realize that it was to accept all our sins that our Lord was baptized.

Why Did Jesus Have to Die on the Cross?

John, who baptized Jesus, is the greatest of those born of women. Matthew 11:11 says that the Kingdom of Heaven suffered violence since the day of John the Baptist, and the violent take it by force. Because the Lord accepted all the sins of mankind by being baptized by John the Baptist, He had to die on the Cross. The precious blood of Jesus, who became our propitiation in God the Father's eyes, was to give life to you and me. Jesus was punished for our sins because your salvation and mine could be fulfilled only by such atonement.

Therefore, if you and I believe in Jesus Christ, who came by the gospel of the water and the Spirit, then we will be saved from all our sins. The Lord has given us His flesh. This means that He was baptized by John the Baptist on this earth. Jesus had to die on the Cross because He had accepted all your sins and mine through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, and it is because of these sins that He was



crucified to shed His blood and die in our place. It's because the blood He shed on the Cross atoned for our sins.

Some people receive baptism as a sign to indicate that they've joined the church, but one should not be baptized for this purpose. This is nothing more than a religious ritual. When you are baptized, you are testifying your belief that Jesus bore all your sins when He was baptized; when you go into the water, you are testifying your belief that Jesus shed His blood to death on the Cross; and when you come out of the water, you are testifying your belief that Jesus rose from the dead again to become your Savior. In short, with your baptism you are testifying that the Lord is your Savior.

When we receive baptism, we profess our faith as follows: "Jesus bore all my sins and the sins of mankind once and for all when He was baptized by John the Baptist. Spiritually, that He went into the water implies the vicarious death He suffered instead of sinners. This means that the Lord became the

propitiation for my sins and died in my place. That Jesus came out of the water implies resurrection. To give me new life, Jesus bore all my sins, died, and rose from the dead again. This is how I believe in the Son sent by God the Father. I believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. I thus believe that the Son of God whom the Father sent is my Savior." We are baptized as a sign of our faith to show that we believe in Jesus as our Savior and in His flesh and blood. It is by this faith that we are baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

We also declare our faith before Satan, saying to him, "Look, Devil. As you see, I believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit Jesus has given to me. When Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist, He accepted all my sins; He was punished to death on the Cross for my sins; and He rose from the dead again. This is how I believe, you who stood against the righteousness of God! So I have no sin. I belong to God." This is the faith that we declare before Satan.

Moreover, by being baptized, we also declare our



faith before our fellow saints who share the same faith: "Fellow believers, like you, I also believe that the gospel of the water and the Spirit is my salvation. I believe that Jesus bore all my sins when He was baptized. I also believe that the baptized Lord died in my place on the Cross for my sins." Like this, we bear witness of our faith before the other saints, too.

The Apostle Paul said, "*For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ*" (*Galatians 3:27*). 1 John chapter 5:6-8 states, "*This is He who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ; not only by water, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one.*" The Spirit here refers to the holy God, the water that this God speaks of refers to the baptism that Jesus received when He came to this earth incarnated in the flesh of man, and

the blood refers to the blood that Christ shed on the Cross. These passages imply that all the disciples and Apostles of Jesus believed that Jesus had washed away all the sins of the world with His baptism and blood once and for all.

In the Old Testament, it's written that General Naaman was cleansed from his leprosy by dipping his body in the Jordan River seven times. In the Book of Joshua, the people of Israel had to cross the Jordan River in order to enter the land of Canaan. It's written that for the people of Israel to cross the Jordan, the priests stepped into the river first while bearing the Ark of the Covenant, and when they did so, the flooded river ceased to flow and the Israelites were able to cross it on bare ground. All these biblical events occurring at the Jordan River imply that the Jordan River is the place where Jesus would be baptized by John the Baptist.

This indicates that Jesus is the Son of God who would fulfill all righteousness by bearing our sins on His own body. Our Lord has become true bread for



those who sincerely believe in His baptism with their hearts. The blood that Jesus shed on the Cross has become true drink for our souls. That's because the very fact that Jesus was condemned for our sins gives peace and rest to our hearts. Because Jesus bore all our sins through His baptism, He also had to be condemned for them, and He bore this condemnation of sins in our place. How wonderful it is! The flesh of Jesus has given us new life. That's because Jesus took upon Himself all the sins of this world by being baptized by John the Baptist. That is why we have received true life by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

What about you then? Do you believe in the flesh and blood of Jesus? Have you had the flesh and blood of Jesus by faith? Do you accept the will of the Lord to be born in this world and become the bread of life for us? It is to give you and me the remission of sins and new life that our Lord came to this earth. He had come to be laid in a manger—that is, to become the true bread of life for us. Having come to

this earth, Jesus lived 33 years, and by being baptized on His body, He shouldered all the sins of the world that mankind commits out of its insufficiencies and flaws.

John the Baptist, a Servant of Jesus

Six months prior to coming to this earth, the Lord had sent John the Baptist to this earth as the representative of mankind, and He Himself came six months later. The Lord came to this earth in order to save you and me from the curses of the Law, the persecution of Satan, and all the punishments of sin. He has saved you and me from all our sins. It is to blot out all your sins and mine that the Lord came. Without the flesh and blood of Jesus, we can never become completely sinless people. How can anyone become a sinless person when all people are so lacking that they cannot help but sin everyday? However, Jesus the Lord of life came to this earth



incarnated in the flesh of man, accepted all your sins and mine onto His body all at once by being baptized, and bore the punishment of all these sins in our place. Thus the Lord completely took away your sins and mine, washed them away once and for all, bore all our condemnation, and thereby saved us all. By taking away all our sins through His baptism, the Lord fulfilled the righteousness of God to us. It is because God has fulfilled all the righteousness that blots out all our sins that we have become sinless by believing in this righteousness of God accomplished by Jesus.

For three years after being baptized until His death on the Cross, Jesus traveled wide and far to preach the gospel of Heaven. In other words, Jesus did not begin to preach the gospel of Heaven until after He was baptized. After being baptized by John, Jesus Christ ministered on this earth for three years: He brought the good news of the remission of sins to countless people, from the woman caught in adultery on the spot to the lepers, and the woman who was

suffering from hemorrhage. He declared that He is the Way and the Light, saying, “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one can come to the Father except through Me. Believe in Me, for I am the way to Heaven. I am the Truth. I am God. I am the Savior who gives you life.”

The Lord gave us everlasting life. He has given new life to you and me. He has blotted out all your sins and mine. It is by being baptized that Jesus fulfilled all righteousness, thus making everyone sinless. In John 1:29, when John the Baptist saw Jesus on the next day after His baptism, he bore witness of Him, saying, *“Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”* Since Jesus accepted all the sins of this world from John the Baptist when He was baptized, all the sins of this world were now placed on Jesus. That is why later on Jesus went to the Cross while shouldering all our sins on His body. That is why John the Baptist bore witness of Jesus by saying, *“Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”* (John 1:29)



What You Need to Become a True Disciple of Jesus

According to the Book of Acts, after Judas hung himself, the eleven Apostles and the other disciples selected Matthias as the Apostle who would take the place of Judas Iscariot. The Apostle Peter said, regarding the eligibility of the Apostleship, “*Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection*” (Acts 1:21-22).

What’s the standard that qualifies one as a disciple of Jesus? Two candidates were selected to replace Judas among those who had witnessed Jesus’ ministry from His baptism to His death on the Cross, His resurrection, and His ascension. In other words, only those who believed that Jesus bore all the sins of this world by being baptized, dying on the Cross,

rising from the dead again in three days, and ascending to the Kingdom of Heaven were eligible for the Apostleship. To become a true disciple of Jesus, one had to believe in His baptism, His death on the Cross, His resurrection in three days, and His status as the Son of God and God Himself. Only such people could be selected as the true disciples of Jesus. Only those who know so and believe so can become Jesus’ disciples. It’s those who believe like this that can become witnesses preaching the righteousness of God. Those who know and believe so can receive the Holy Spirit by grace.

The Bible 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*” (Acts 2:38). My fellow believers, the baptism of Jesus washes away all our sins. Without realizing this fact, our sins are not washed away just because we are baptized in the name of Jesus Christ; they are washed away only if we know and believe in the reason why Jesus was baptized by John the



Baptist and why He died on the Cross. That's because it is such people's faith that God approves and it is such people's sins that God washes away. In short, it's because Jesus is the Savior of those who believe that when He came to this earth, He washed away all their sins by being baptized by John the Baptist, was punished to death in their place, and rose from the dead again. It is to those who believe in this that Jesus has become their Savior and given them new life.

That is why we call our Lord our Savior. Our Lord is Christ the Lord. The word 'Christ' here means the anointed One. Who is then anointed? Kings, priests, and prophets were anointed in the Old Testament era. Jesus held these three offices while on this earth, and the Lord is also the Son of God and our Savior. The Lord is the King of kings, the Priest of Heaven, and the Prophet to come. As the High Priest, He took away all the sins of mankind and was condemned in our place. It is those who believe in the baptism of Jesus and His blood on the Cross like

this that can become His true disciples.

To Become a Disciple of Jesus, You Must Pass All Your Sins to Him

Jesus said in John 6:53, "*Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you.*" Yet many Christians today say that they believe only in the blood of Jesus. Can they then have life just by drinking the blood of Jesus alone by faith? No, that is not the case. They have no life. No matter how ardently they may believe in the blood of Jesus on the Cross, their hearts still have sin. Even if they confess to believe in Jesus and thank the Lord, their hearts still remain sinful. The Lord said, "*Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you*" (John 6:53). If one just drinks the blood of Jesus and does not eat His flesh, then there is no



Holy Spirit in his heart. He cannot receive new life. You must therefore believe in both these two things.

Having come to this earth as the Savior, Jesus accepted all our sins through His baptism. He accepted all our sins onto His own body through this baptism. Therefore, we must also believe in the baptism of Jesus. We must believe in all these things, that Jesus personally accepted all the sins of the world through His baptism, and that He was condemned for them on the Cross once and for all. Unless you believe like this, you have no life in you even if you believe in Jesus. In other words, there is no Holy Spirit in your heart even as you wholeheartedly believe that Jesus is your Savior.

The Bible says, “*Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? — unless indeed you are disqualified*” (2 Corinthians 13:5). And it is also written, “*But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit*

of Christ, he is not His” (Romans 8:9). Jesus came to this earth to give us true life, and He was baptized to become our true Savior. To become our true Savior, Jesus was punished on the Cross in our place. By doing so, He has washed us from all sins and enabled us to escape from the condemnation of our sins.

You and I must believe in the baptism of Jesus Christ and His blood without fail. It is by this faith that eternal life is received. Only then can you go to Heaven by believing in Jesus. You become God’s child only if you believe in the flesh and blood of Jesus, in His baptism and His blood on the Cross. The life of Jesus comes into you only if you believe in His baptism and His blood on the Cross; in His water and blood. Only when you believe like this are you made relevant to Jesus Christ. Our Lord took away all the sins of this world. He Himself shouldered them all by being baptized.

However, there are many Christians who, deceived by the Devil, believe that when the Bible says, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the



sin of the world,” it means that Jesus is the Lamb of God who took away only their original sin. They interpret the Bible on their own, thinking to themselves, “I commit sin everyday in this world, today and tomorrow, and so how could Jesus have taken away all these sins? That’s just too unbelievable! Jesus took away only my original sin. All the personal sins that I commit are remitted away every time I offer prayers of repentance and beg for the Lord’s forgiveness. I will then be sanctified eventually and enter Heaven.”

Such people, however, have been deceived by the Devil. One is born again of water and the Spirit not in a series of steps, but it is done all at once. As our Lord Himself was baptized, died on the Cross, rose from the dead again, and is now sitting at the right hand of the throne of God, through His 33 years of life on this earth Jesus has become the everlasting Savior of all those who believe in this salvation fulfilled by Him. However, having learned erroneous theology, many Christians try to change the Bible by

interpreting, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away original sin!”

My fellow believers, would you rather corrupt the Word of God with denominationalism? Would you dismantle it and rewrite it all over? We must believe in the written Word exactly as it is. If the Bible says that Jesus took away the sins of the world, then Jesus indeed took away the sins of the world. Is there then any sin left in this world? No, there is none! Since Jesus took away all the sins of the world and blotted them out, there is no more sin. Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River for sinners, and He was punished on the Cross in their place. This means that Jesus has blotted out all the sins that you and I commit throughout our entire lifetime.

The Bible says that Jesus is the Lamb of God who took away the sins of the world. What is the coverage of these sins of the world then? They cover each and every sin ever committed from the beginning of mankind to its end. No one knows when this world will disappear. We don’t know when new



heavens and a new earth will arrive. In other words, we don't know exactly when our Lord will return. However, what is clear is that Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, and it is our Lord who made this earth, created mankind, and blotted out all the sins of this earth. Hebrews chapter 9 says that when the Lord returns, He will take away all those who have nothing to do with sin (Hebrew 9:28). The Lord will come for the second time to take us away, who are apart from sin, for we believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The Bible writes clearly that Jesus took away the sins of the world.

However, in their carnal minds many people interpret this to mean that Jesus took away only their past sins, not their future sins, wondering, "How could Jesus have taken away all the sins of the world when I commit so many sins like this?" But this is a carnal interpretation. The Bible should be interpreted spiritually from God's perspective.

God Himself came to this earth to blot out all your sins and mine. Would Jesus then take upon

Himself our sins and die on the Cross again every time you and I commit sin? Dying just once was terrible enough that Jesus asked God the Father to take His cup away if possible. Would He then die again and again? The Bible says that the wages of sin is death, and that without the shedding of blood, there is no remission. Through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, Jesus bore all the sins of this world once and for all, including all the future sins you and I will commit until we die. He was condemned once, and He has saved us once and for all. He doesn't wait until we commit sin and then say to us, "So you've committed sin. I'll blot it out again for you." If this were true, Jesus would have to die for our sins every day. So those who believe in Jesus but not in His baptism and His blood on the Cross—that is, those who don't believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit—bow down every day and ask the Lord to wash away their sins. This, however, is akin to crucifying Jesus again.

Let's say that your son sacrificed himself for



someone else. How would you feel if this person undervalues your son's sacrifice and keeps on asking him to die one more time, saying that dying once is not enough? My fellow believers, do not underestimate the righteousness of God who has saved us, His love, and the just salvation of His water and blood. Do not despise them. For you to ask God to forgive your sins every day is akin to asking Jesus to come down to this cruel world again for your sins, be baptized again in the Jordan River, die on the Cross again, rise from the dead again, ascend to Heaven, and then return to do all these things all over again every time you commit sin. My fellow believers, the Lord says that He has made you perfect once and for all. The correct knowledge and faith are indispensable to hearing any sermons, understanding the Bible, and studying theology. A half-baked approach is not acceptable. Those who really know what theology is all about do not speak of it much, because they know that theology is good for nothing when it comes to the truth-seekers.

The Bible itself says that there are matches in the Old and New Testaments, as it is written, "*Search from the book of the LORD, and read:*

*Not one of these shall fail;
Not one shall lack her mate.*

For My mouth has commanded it, and His Spirit has gathered them" (*Isaiah 34:16*). As you know, God gave the sacrificial system to the people of Israel through Moses. They had to lay their hands on their sacrificial animals to be remitted of their sins in the Old Testament age. In the New Testament, Jesus bore all our sins by being baptized. In other words, Jesus has saved us according to the sacrificial system established by God. In the Old Testament, sin was passed onto a sacrificial animal by laying one's hands on its head. Then the throat of the burnt offering was slit, its blood was drawn and sprinkled, and its flesh was cut and burnt to be offered to God. In the New Testament, Jesus accepted our sins by being baptized, and He was condemned on the Cross in our place. Jesus came to give us new life through



His baptism and the shedding of His blood. Don't these two sacrifices match each other?

Jesus is the Savior who has delivered His people from their sins. He came to this earth to blot out all our sins by being baptized and by shedding His blood. In this way He has indeed eradicated all our sins. As Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River, bore the punishment of sin on the Cross, died and rose from the dead again, He has become the God of salvation for all those who believe in Him. No passage in the Bible should be read on its own divorced from the rest of the Scriptures. The whole Bible is all about salvation. The New Testament and the Old Testament are all connected to each other.

Do you believe that the Gospel of John is the Word of God? In John chapter 6, Jesus says that whoever eats His flesh will receive everlasting life. He says that whoever eats His flesh and drinks His blood will receive eternal life, but those who don't do so have no life in them. When one believes in Jesus, it is when he believes in His flesh that this person is

saved—that is, you must believe that Jesus bore all your sins when He was baptized. Those who don't believe in both the baptism of Jesus and His blood cannot be saved no matter how ardently they may believe in Jesus. Jesus rose from the dead again in three days, and He is now sitting at the right hand of the throne of God the Father. If anyone believes in Jesus while leaving out either His flesh or blood, then his faith is false. It's a fake faith.

Born on this earth, our Lord was laid in a manger. Why was He laid in a manger used for animals? The Lord was born as the Baby Jesus and laid in a manger in order to become the bread of life for His believers. Jesus taught the chief priests of Israel and the great scholars of the Law when He was only 12 years old. On one occasion, when Joseph and Mary, Jesus' parents in the flesh, went to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover, they returned home without Jesus, thinking that He was following them somewhere in the traveling group. When they discovered that He wasn't in the group, they went back to Jerusalem



looking for Him and found Him sitting with the chief priests and discussing the Law of God with them. The chief priests were marveled by Jesus' teaching. This means that Jesus is the Savior of those who believe in the will of God the Father in obedience. He has become everlasting salvation and eternal life for you and me. By coming to this earth incarnated in the flesh of man and being baptized, Jesus accepted all our sins and washed them all away. By giving up His body on the Cross to be punished in our place, and by rising from the dead again in three days, He has become the true Savior of all who believe in Him.

Do You Believe That Jesus Bore the Sins of the World When He Was Baptized?

My fellow believers, do you believe in the salvation of Jesus who has come by the water and the Spirit? There are many biblical scholars and theologians in this world, and on this Christmas, the

Lord is asking them whether they really believe in Him or not, how many of them actually believe in Him, and if they have indeed had eaten His flesh and drank His blood. When Jesus came to this earth, the chief priests, the scribes, and King Herod all knew that Jesus was born in Bethlehem. But none of them believed that the Lord was born in a lowly stable.

Who believed this then? It was the lowly shepherds and the wise men from the distant countries in the east who believed in this. What kinds of offerings did the wise men from the east bring to Jesus? They offered frankincense, myrrh, and gold. The gold here symbolizes the belief that Jesus is our Savior and that He took upon all our sins through His baptism, and the frankincense means that we pray to Jesus, God Himself, believing that He is our Savior. The myrrh here symbolizes the forever-unchanging and immutable Truth that has come by the water and the Spirit. Jesus is the God of the real Truth. It was with this faith that the wise men, who were actually Gentiles, believed in Jesus as their Savior.



However, when it actually came to the people of Israel, neither the biblical scholars, nor the Pharisees, nor the chief priests believed in Jesus. The same is true in this present age also. In this age, it is pastors, ministry workers, and theologians who don't believe in the baptism and blood of Jesus. They refuse to believe that Jesus bore all the sins of the world by being baptized. Theologians do not believe that all the sins of this world were passed onto the head of Jesus when He was baptized. They interpret Jesus' baptism on their own, saying that He was baptized because He was humble, and in doing so, they deny the baptism of the remission of sins that Jesus received.

The Bible is the written Word of God. Jesus Himself fulfilled all righteousness through the baptism He received in the Jordan River. So what else and what other interpretations are needed? Nowhere in the Bible does it say that Jesus was baptized to show His humility. What does "all righteousness" mean? It means "everything that is

right." You need to realize here that even though Jesus is our Lord who has become the bread of life for us, in this present age, it is actually pastors, church officers, and theologians professing to believe in Jesus that are rejecting His baptism, the water that enables everyone to be born again. Although this gospel is being preached everywhere, it is actually those who are completely ignorant, rather than theologians, that are being saved by hearing and believing in the Word of Truth proclaiming that Jesus bore the sins of mankind by being baptized.

However, the so-called "good" Christians who have believed in Jesus for a long time do not believe in His baptism and the gospel that enables them to be born again. This is nothing less than rejecting Jesus. In contrast, those who do not know the Bible well actually believe in the Word exactly as it is, and it is these people who are saved. However, those who have learned the Word of God mistakenly through man-made doctrines, and those who are steeped in the leaven of man, do not know what Jesus has really



done for them, although they may be able to speak of Him in doctrinal terms. So they can't really believe in Him. The Bible is the Truth. The baptism of Jesus is the Truth of salvation. There is no truth apart from this Word. Just because you've believed in Jesus for a long time, you shouldn't think that you know all about His baptism.

The Bible says that when Peter preached the Word of the Scriptures to those around him, the Holy Spirit descended on them. Likewise, if people today hear the gospel and believe in this Word, then the Holy Spirit will also descend on them and their faces will light up in joy. These people confess with their tongues that there is no more sin in their hearts. When they are asked after a long time if they have kept the gospel, they say that they still have this precious treasure. They say that they can't remember all the things that they had learned before, but only this precious gospel. Even though Jesus came to this earth as the Savior of all people, extremely few people actually accept the gospel of the baptism of

Jesus that enables everyone to be born again. Scholars, the powerful, and the arrogant have rejected Jesus. However, the lowly who know their own inadequacy accept the Word of the Lord and thereby reach their salvation.

In God's sight, everyone is the same no matter how meritorious or wretched one may seem. When Jesus came to this earth, it was the lowly shepherds who met Him. The Lord is now saying to you, "Do you believe that I have saved you by coming to this earth incarnated in the flesh of man, being baptized, dying on the Cross, and rising from the dead again, all for your sake?" If you indeed believe in the gospel of the baptism of Jesus and His blood, the gospel of being born again, then the Lord will be pleased with you. God the Father will be glorified.

It's written, "*Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!*" Peace comes to those who have received the remission of sins into their hearts. This means that you will become a sinless child of God by believing in Jesus. The Holy



Spirit will come into your heart. Our Lord was laid in a trough. He has given new life to you and me. Our Jesus has become the bread of life for you and me, for all of us who believe in Him. I give Him all my thanks. It's because the Lord loved you and me that He came to this earth in the lowly body of man, so that He may save us all, give us new life, and prevent us from going to hell. How could we ever thank God enough for His grace? Despite His holiness, the Lord was wrapped in swaddling cloths and humbly laid in a manger. The holy God Himself personally came to this earth in the image of man in order to save us lowly people. How could we ever repay Him for this grace? I give all my thanks to Him! 



SERMON

8



CONTENTS



Live out Your Faith By Believing That Jesus Is God Himself

< Luke 2:1-21 >

“And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city. Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child. So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a

manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. Then the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying:

‘Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!’

So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, ‘Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord



has made known to us.' And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. Now when they had seen Him, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child. And all those who heard it marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart. Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them. And when eight days were completed for the circumcision of the Child, His name was called JESUS, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb."

I've already spoken on many occasions about the meaning of Christmas, but I still want to continue to preach about the significance of Christmas. It's probably because Christmas hasn't gone by yet. I took some rest yesterday. I watched a video while

resting, and the movie was about the melting of the glaciers around the world and the events triggered by this. This movie was made with fictional imagination, of course, but it got its material from the global warming and climatic changes occurring on the planet earth today. In one of the scenes, the surging seawater swept away the Statue of Liberty in New York City and flooded the whole city. Only a few skyscrapers remained standing above the water, and big ships floated around downtown. It was a typical blockbuster movie from Hollywood.

Long ago, when I watched an old movie titled *Rapture*, I thought it would be nice if we the born-again could have made this kind of movie. Perhaps it's because the movie was very old, but the screen was not clear and the soundtrack also had a lot of noise. But even so, while watching it, the movie was quite grappling and I thought it was a really well made movie. Nowadays, though, hardly anyone watches this kind of movie anymore. Nonetheless, I was quite impressed by this movie when I watched it,



and as I recall, it was not only fun to watch but it also sent a wake-up call to the viewers. In the movie some people were lifted up to the air in rapture while others were left behind to suffer at the hands of the Antichrist and his followers. It was very educational and quite heart-warming to watch. After watching this movie, I even thought about making this type of movie to preach the gospel.

Of course, I'm sure many of you will be laughing again then, thinking, "Gee, now Rev. Jong wants to make a movie! He wants to do everything now!" But even this work is no different from others. While it's difficult to start, once we begin, we can finish it in little time. There are plenty of sisters here who can act as the main actress, as there also are plenty of brothers who can play the role of the main actor. We also have more than enough people for extras. Everything is ready. The only requirement to ensure the movie's success is that I am not in there. When taking group pictures, I often tell people to take them without me. Whenever I see myself in a picture, I

never fail to be disappointed. I don't' know why my face is such a disappointment to me.

As usual, there were a few movies on Jesus shown on TV this Christmas, but I got offended from watching them. One of them showed John the Baptist. But in this movie he was depicted like a homeless man. Even though John the Baptist was humble in his outside appearance, before God, he was a faithful servant with an upright heart filled with the Spirit. The makers of this movie had reduced John the Baptist to a worthless man, and they had also interpreted the Word of God to their own liking to shoot their movie. It was very upsetting to watch this movie, as it was made by those who obviously had no understanding of the Word of God at all. Among the recently published books, there is a book that claims that Jesus got married to Mary Magdalene, and I heard that over a million copies were sold in Korea alone. Its seems there is no limit to how far some people are willing to go to reject Jesus and insult Him.



It's true that when Jesus came to this earth in the image of man, His outside appearance was humble, and there was little that was attractive about Him physically other than being tall. However, His heart, His authority, and His power were not so lowly, for the Lord is the Creator and the Almighty God. Even if someone is unattractive in his physical appearance, one is bound to take another look at him if he has a strong mind. Anyway, nowadays there are a lot of movies and books putting Jesus down and degrading Him tacitly or otherwise.

The movie *Ten Commandments* was an excellent movie. This movie was made based on the Bible. But in these days, people are just corrupting the contents of the Bible all in the pretext of making something new. I think that's why the Lord said, "*Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?*" (*Luke 18:8*) Actually, those on this earth who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit are really fortunate; but there are so many more faithless people who don't believe in this gospel. The

divine status of Jesus is often demoted to where He is either depicted as half human and half divine, or downgraded below God the Father. All this is the Devil's work.

The Lord said, "*The just shall live by faith,*" and I believe this. It's written here in today's Scripture passage, "*And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria.*" When was Jesus Christ born? He was born during the reign of the Roman Emperor Augustus, when he issued a decree requiring the entire population under his rule to be registered. Emperor Augustus had issued a decree to his subjects and ordered all the inhabitants in the colonies of Rome to be registered. At that time, Rome was ruling supreme over virtually the whole known world. Israel was its colony, as were the neighboring countries. At any rate, according to this decree, Joseph and Mary also had to go to their hometown and register in the census. This census



took place because everyone had to be registered in order to find out the exact size of the population.

Because Jesus Christ actually came to this earth, from then on many people were able to have their names registered in the Book of Life in the Kingdom of Heaven. This means that your name can now be written in the family register of the Kingdom of God. The Book of Revelation says that people's names are written in either the Book of Life or the Books of Deeds, and those whose names are not written in the Book of Life will be cast into the fire of hell to face the second judgment of their sins. However, the Bible says that those whose names are written in the Book of Life will live together with the Lord enjoying everlasting glory in the eternal realm of everlasting life. It is of such utmost significance to us that the Lord came to this earth.

In the age of the Old Testament, the objects of salvation were limited to just the people of Israel, but once the Lord came to this earth in the age of the New Testament, everyone all over the world is now

able to be saved from sin to become a citizen of the Kingdom of God. Words cannot express just how grateful I am that the Lord came to us and accepted us to be the people of the Kingdom of God.

The Lord Came to This Earth

The day set aside to commemorate the coming of the Savior is Christmas. Who, then, is this Jesus who came to this earth? Although He came to this earth incarnated in the flesh of man as the Son of Mary and Joseph, He is fundamentally God Himself. Moreover, He is not just a lowly god created by man, but He is the Creator and the King of kings.

It's written in today's Scripture passage, "So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city. Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his



betrothed wife, who was with child.”

As seen, Jesus Christ was born in the city of David. What does this mean? God manifests His will through the history of mankind, and that Jesus was born in the city of David means that Christ is God Himself. As it's also written in the Bible, it means that Jesus Christ was born as the King of kings. It shows that He is the King of kings and God Himself. He is God Himself, the supreme Ruler of all. He is the Creator God who made the universe. In His fundamental essence, Jesus is the sovereign God Himself. Nothing in this universe is higher than Jesus Christ.

For us to believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and live out our faith, it is extremely important to realize and believe that Jesus is fundamentally the true God and eternal life (1 John 5:20). We all have received the remission of sins in the same way; by hearing the gospel Word of the water and the Spirit and believing in this Word of Truth. However, after we receive the remission of

sins, the power of the Lord is manifested either greatly or barely, depending on how exactly we understand and believe in Jesus Christ. It makes a huge difference whether you live out your faith believing that Jesus Christ is God Himself and the King of kings, or you lead your life of faith without believing in this. Whether or not God's power is manifested abundantly in your life of faith and mine is determined by this faith.

The Lord came to this earth as the King of kings and God Himself. He is also the One who has made us God's people by saving us from sin. If, in spite of this, you think that Jesus is just your Savior and nothing more, then the power of the Lord will not be manifested in your life of faith. It's because of the lack of faith that the Lord's power is not manifested. In this case, when the Lord's power is not manifested in your life, it will be inevitable for you to be abused and trampled on by the people of the world, and you will cower before the difficulties of your circumstances. However, if the power of the Lord is



with you, then no matter how utterly weak and inadequate you may be, you will be able to live out your faith in full force, for your strength will be renewed every day.

If you have the faith to believe that Jesus is God Himself, then you can rise up to any challenge with confidence. You can pray to God: "Lord, I am having a really hard time. Please empower me to lead a true life of faith. Help me not to be cowardly. Because I am so inadequate, on my own I can't help but live my entire life as a coward. So I need Your help not to live a cowardly life. Help me, Lord, so that I may lead a vibrant and victorious life like a brave warrior winning the battle. You have saved me. So I have truly become one of Your people, and I am indeed Your child who will enter the Kingdom of God. Empower me, Lord, so that even though I am still a lowly man with many shortcomings, with Your help I may not surrender to the people of this world nor be trampled by them."

In carrying on with our lives of faith, you and I

must have a clear understanding of who exactly the Lord our Savior is, and what our status is. This faith must be the anchor that holds your heart steady, and it must rule your life and mine.

People Today Are Living in a Difficult Age

Today's church ministers and religious leaders in this world are trying to comfort their congregations claiming that God will bless them all unconditionally. This is all an exaggeration and a lie. People today, Christians and non-Christians alike, and our saints also, do actually face many difficulties while living in this world.

My fellow believers, if someone believes only in the Cross, or professes to believe in just the blood of the Cross without having faith in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, then his sins still remain in his heart as his faith is mistaken. This is a false, man-made method of salvation, and through such a



method no one can be remitted from his sins. Such people draw a caricature out of Jesus and believe in Him according to their own thoughts, as though they were worshiping Jesus as an idol.

Does God help anyone just because he prays to Him blindly? No, that's not true. Many pastors in this world teach their sinful congregations that they shouldn't worry about their hardship, and that God will help them unconditionally if they just pray to Him. But this is all a lie. God has nothing to do with the prayers of sinners (Isaiah 59:1-2).

Who then has really received the remission of sins? It's those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Who has then saved us from sin and made us God's people through this gospel Word of the water and the Spirit? It is none other than God Himself. It is Jesus Christ, our Savior and the King of kings. Jesus Christ is the Judge, the Savior, and the Creator who made us. It's none other than Jesus who blesses us, and He is the One who sits on the throne of judgment to punish and condemn the wicked.

Jesus is the supreme King. He is the living God who works in our lives.

The religions of the world are nothing more than products of man's own making. So you should never believe in Jesus merely as a worldly religious practice. Our Savior is not some icon painted in a picture, but He is the immortal God, alive and working in our lives even at this very moment. It's because He is the living God that He can protect our saved saints and renew their strength when they are really struggling with their hardship. Even when you feel unsure of yourself thinking that you are too insufficient to carry on with your life of faith, and you feel that you need some special help to continue on, if you trust that Jesus Christ your Savior is God Himself, the almighty Creator who made the whole universe and the King of kings, then He will answer your prayer, lead you, help you, and bless you. That Jesus Christ was born in the city of David, the greatest king of Israel in the age of the Old Testament, entails precisely such significance. It



means that Jesus is the sovereign King.

However, even if someone claims to have been saved by believing in Jesus Christ, and if this person just thinks of Him as merely one of the four great sages like Confucius or Buddha, then it's inevitable for him to fall into false faith, be trampled by Satan, and live an accursed life. The Jesus who has saved you and me through the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not one of those sages—that is, He is not a mere creature, but He is God the Creator Himself. As the One who exists by Himself, He is the King of kings. He is sovereign over everything and rules over everything, and He is also the Judge who bestows His grace of salvation on those who deserve it, and pours curse on those who deserve it.

When we first received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we all worried about how to make a living, what to eat and what to wear. However, if you really believe in this gospel of the remission of sins, the gospel of the water and the Spirit, then you have to make sure to

grasp exactly who your Savior is, and what kind of power He has. What's important is not your own power or mine, but His status and the power of the One who has saved us from sin and made us God's people. The question to ask is whether He is fundamentally King or subject, whether He is indeed omniscient and omnipotent or limited in His power.

Our faith springs forth depending on how we perceive Jesus' power and status, and depending on whether or not we properly understand them. An accurate understanding of all these things means that you believe that Jesus is the Almighty God, and therefore you can pray to Him and receive His help. In other words, you can lead a proper life of faith. Jesus Christ was born in the city of David. Both Jesus and David are from the house of Judah. This means that as Jesus Christ was born from the house of David, and His lineage is that of royalty.

According to the traditions of Israel, only the members of the tribe of Judah could inherit the throne and become kings. For the priests, only the



descendants of Aaron from the tribe of Levi could be appointed into priesthood. Only this tribe had the privilege to serve God in the Tabernacle. This was a rule established by God. Not just anyone could be king. Whose descendant was King Solomon? He was the son of David, from the tribe of Judah. What was David's lineage? His lineage was of the house of Judah. Jesus Christ was also born in the lineage of the house of David from this tribe of Judah. He was, in other words, born in the lineage of kings. This underscores the fact that Jesus is the heavenly King. It means that He came to this earth as the King to save His people from their sins and lead them. So my heart is deeply saddened and offended when I come across people who believe in Jesus merely as a matter of religious practice without any real knowledge of the Bible, or who underestimate Jesus and relegate His authority. I even feel like swearing at them sometimes, saying to them, "You bastards! It's because you believe like this that you do all these nasty things!"

My fellow believers, if we were not saved from sin, God would not listen to our prayer. He listens to our prayers precisely because we have received the remission of sins. However, there is one condition, and it is that our prayers must first be congruent to and in unity with His Kingdom and His righteousness, offered to seek the righteousness of God. It's for this that we should ask for His help. Only then does God hear our prayers, answering us and guiding us. God made this clear to us. That's why you and I must live by faith, just as the Bible says, "*The just shall live by faith.*"

You may then ask, "But how can I live by faith when I've never done so before?" It's easier than you think: All that you have to do is look at your predecessors of faith, follow your church leaders, and seek their counsel. Do you think your pastor's job is just to preach? No, a pastor is more than just a preacher; he is also your leader.

My mind is filled with ideas on how we could preach the gospel all over the world through this



Church. Though this is no easy task, I rise up to such challenges because I believe in God and follow Him. It's because I believe in God, and God is my God and my King, that by faith I take on such a difficult and exacting endeavor to create something out of nothing. Even when I can't see ahead clearly, I still rise up to the challenge by faith and plow ahead. That's how I carry out God's work.

How about you then? Is this also how you do your work? Yes, you also do everything by faith. This is what is meant by living by faith. All of you must learn to live like this. I am convinced that once you learn to have this faith, realize that the One who has saved you and me is the Almighty God Himself and the Absolute King of kings, grasp that He has such power, rely on Him by faith with this understanding, ask for His help and seek His righteousness, the Lord will surely open your way. We must all abide in the Word like this, looking at the things of the world and the things to come through faith. The Lord will then teach us what will

happen to the world. Through faith, we must be able to see and realize what will happen in the coming years, and we must prepare ourselves for these events now, even though they are not visible to our eyes at the present.

When Joseph was the prime minister of Egypt, he knew that a seven-year famine would come, and he stored up grain for seven years while the harvest was abundant. He filled up the storages across the land. After seven years, Egypt was indeed visited by a famine. What did Joseph do? He released the grain saved up in the storages and fed all the people of Egypt as well as His own family. Like this, faith is all about believing in the Word of God and following it, and making preparations according to it. You must learn to do this. If you act on your own according to your merits with your own man-made methods and means, then neither your endeavor nor your faith can flourish and grow, for this is not the faith that's placed in God.

A while ago, to one of our sisters whose business



was altering garments, I gave the following advice: "Since you are so gifted, why don't you expand into the more lucrative business of designing and making your own line of clothes instead of just fixing and altering them? You may struggle a bit at the beginning, but I am sure you will eventually succeed." At first, she seemed to heed my advice, but soon she told me that she just couldn't do it. She didn't trust my advice. If she can't rise up to her challenge by faith, then she will have to spend the rest of her life fixing and altering garments. Even someone who just fixes garments for a living can also become the most renowned designer in the world. This is all possible as long as the person is someone who has received the remission of sins, is led by God, and embarks on this road by faith. Although I know nothing about design and I can't do anything with a piece of cloth, if I am determined like this, then even I can do it. Everything is possible if I rise up to my challenge by faith. This is all because I believe in God. For those who believe in God, their power

comes from God. In just a year, I will be able to surpass even the most experienced designers. All this is actually possible.

Do you think it's out of delusion that I'm saying such things? No. If money is needed to spread the gospel, the Lord will give you such abilities. All that you have to do is just take on your challenge by faith. You can achieve your goal if you begin and promote your work by faith step by step. Money doesn't just pile up all at once as if by magic. However, if you rise up to the challenge by faith, make the necessary preparations step by step, and give all your effort to your endeavor, then your will reach your goal and beyond. The faithless realize this only after they fail. The faithful, in contrast, believe that they will succeed without fail even as they have nothing at the beginning, and they work diligently to bring this about. We must live by faith.

Jesus Christ was born in the city of David. Joseph was living in a town called Nazareth. So it was quite possible for Jesus to be born in Nazareth also. Of



course, Jesus is sometimes called Jesus of Nazareth in the Bible, but this refers to the town where He grew up. The city where He was born is Bethlehem, the city of David. At that time, Joseph and Mary had no choice but to go up to the city of David according to the decree issued by the Roman emperor. This was God's providence. Everything came to pass according how God had prepared. God Himself had prophesied that Jesus Christ would be born in Bethlehem, and that is why, to fulfill this prophecy, God had raised Augustus to be the Roman emperor, allowed Israel to turn into Rome's colony, and made the Roman emperor issue such a decree.

Like this, God moves world history. He moves in this history of the world. We must learn to have faith. The gospel of the water and the Spirit can be learned by anyone, and anyone with an honest and humble heart can accept it and believe in it. In other words, anyone can be saved. However, faith is not something that you learn by yourself.

When children learn to ride a bike, they first ride

a tricycle and then move onto a bicycle. But they don't always learn it directly from their parents, but from their older siblings. Some of them also learn from their friends. "How do I ride this?" "I'll teach you. I'll push from behind." "What if I fall?" "Don't worry. I will hold the bike from behind. Keep pushing the pedals." Although they usually fall and tumble a few times during the course of learning to ride a bike, in the end they all master it. They learn from their siblings or friends teaching them, "This is how you ride a bike. There is nothing to worry about. Look straight ahead, hold the handle firmly, and just pedal away. If you are worried about going too fast, press here. It's the brake." Similarly, faith must be learned from the predecessors of faith in the Church.

In times of troubles, prayers must be offered. You can experience the Lord's help firsthand for yourself only if you ask Him for it. If instead you do everything by yourself before God helps you, before you ask for His help and pray to Him, then there will be nothing for God to help you, and your prayer will



be just formal. It's akin to saying to God, "Lord, I will take care of everything by myself. Why don't You just get some rest?" Against this, what is there for God to do? How could God work in your life? When you are struggling, you should let God know and ask Him for His help, and do everything that you can. It's then that you can experience Gods' help coming on your way.

Do you now understand? Faith is something that you learn. Many people jump with joy when they first receive the remission of sins, but in reality, that is not the end of what is meant by having true faith. Real faith starts from then on. This means that you have to continue to learn to lead an upright life of faith from the Church and the predecessors of faith from the moment you are born again by the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Put differently, you have to obey your church leaders in order not to be fooled by Satan's schemes only to perish.

Shortly after Jesus was born on this earth, when King Herod learned of the birth of Jesus from the

wise men from the East, a great commotion arose in Jerusalem. As the wise men from the East tricked King Herod and did not report to him the birthplace of Jesus, he got angry and ordered his underlings to kill every child born in the vicinity of Bethlehem who was under the age of two. So a massacre took place in that area. This happened because the wise men from the East had deviated from the star guiding them and gone to see King Herod. Like this, unless you are led by the Lord, you will perish away. Even if you have received the remission of sins, it will be unavoidable for you to face death.

Despite digressing, however, the wise men from the East were ultimately led to Bethlehem by the star and they were able to meet Jesus there. What did God to say to them when they were about to return after offering gifts to Jesus? He told them to not to take the same road but take another route. So they took a different road according to God's order, while King Herod was grinding his ax. He was waiting for their return, ready to kill both the Lord and the wise men



alike as soon as he found out where He was.

God led these wise men to safety. He told them not to return on the same road but take a different road, and they did as they were told. Joseph and Mary also fled from Bethlehem after giving birth as they were told by an angel. All of them were spared from death because they were led by the Lord and followed His guidance faithfully.

It's Extremely Important for You to Be Led by the Servants of the Lord

However, many people refuse to be led by God's servants. Even after receiving the remission of sins, do you really like to hear your predecessors of faith giving advice to you, or do you feel they are just nagging you? Most people hate it. It's not just a handful of people who gave up their lives of faith over their pride, saying, "Do they think I am a kid? Do they think they are better than me, when they

aren't any more virtuous than me? It's so irritating to attend this Church! I hate how they order me around as if I were their little brother, telling me to do this and that. I quit! It's all good to receive the remission of sins, but I am too offended to continue attending this Church."

You must cast aside your human thoughts and pride. Everyone who has received the remission of sins is now a new creature in Christ. The Bible says, "*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new*" (*2 Corinthians 5:17*). My fellow believers, your faith is new just as you are living a new life. You are no longer living your old life. Everything is new. So you must also learn everything anew. You must follow your predecessors of faith from a new beginning. You must be humble. Even for those who received the remission of sins long ago, if they judge and decide on their own, they will also perish. Everyone needs to be led by the Church. Everyone needs to be instructed. Everyone



must ask if he has any questions. This is not something that can be done in words alone, but it is something that you must do in your everyday life.

For example, let's say that you ran out of food. It's not that you ran out of just groceries, but you don't have any money to buy any groceries at all. There are times in your life when you really need money or some other things, and although it is okay for you to try to find some human means and ways to meet your needs, you should first pray to God asking for His help, trust in Him, and then look for a solution. It's then that God works in your life. This is what walking with the Lord is all about. Unless you are led by the Lord, you will perish for sure.

When you follow your own thoughts while carrying on with your life of faith, your predecessors of faith will advise you not to do this. But if you ignore their advice and don't heed it, then it will be inevitable for you to give up your life of faith and ultimately fall into death. If anyone who has received the remission of sins gives up his life of faith, this is

not all that he is giving up, but he is giving up his life itself. For the newly born-again to give up their lives of faith is akin to giving up their own happiness. Some of you may wonder how I can say such blunt things, but I am not being too blunt here. Far from it; I am saying these things very carefully, simply because they must be said. What I am saying here is absolutely indispensable to you.

The life of faith that you lead after receiving the remission of sins is closely related to your happiness. If someone who has received the remission of sins cannot lead an upright life of faith, then everything else is also ruined. That's why you must learn to lead your life of faith properly, learn about faith, and move forward step by step. Although you may not be able to take giant steps from the beginning, you must still learn to take at least small steps and make progress in your life of faith. Little by little, you should get the problems you are facing solved by faith, and you should experience the Lord's help in your life. This is what the true life of faith is all about.



In the days gone by when I had nothing to call mine, I prayed to God and asked Him as the following: "Lord, I have nothing. I have no wealth. I don't even have any money to buy groceries, far less any appliances. I am penniless. I don't even have \$30 to pay the rent for my small room. But am I not Your servant, Lord? How can I be so wretched when I am Your servant? Still, I believe that You are allowing this to happen to me because You have prepared Your will for me. Lord, even though I am lacking, I want to carry out Your will. I will obey Your will. Lord, right now I have nothing to eat. I'm too ashamed to beg and too weak to do manual labor, so give me something to eat. Help me find a job." So the Lord came to my assistance, and I was able to find a job and make a living. Then the Lord allowed me to establish His Church and preach and serve the gospel of the water and the Spirit to this day.

My fellow believers, your life of faith is not a mere theory. It is real. It is your actual life. Are you not also facing actual hardship in your life? Your

struggle is not imaginary, but it is real. When you hear about some other people struggling, it may not seem so real, but it is very real when it comes to your own difficulties. In times like these, you have to pray earnestly to Jesus who has actually saved you and become your Shepherd for real, and not just in your imagination. The Lord will surely solve all your problems if you let your life of faith be led by the Lord and move forth one small step at a time, coming before His presence and praying to Him, "Lord, these are my circumstances. Please help me. Deliver me from these difficult circumstances and solve my problems, so that I may live out my faith diligently and vibrantly."

When one of our current ministers was a layman, he had some debts. He had a job, but he could barely make ends meet month by month, and it was nearly impossible for him to pay back all his debts. So I advised him to do the following: "You should go into business even though you don't have much capital. You can't improve your lot unless you go into



business. The salary you are making at your present job is hardly enough to make a living. So go into business." Although his expectations were not great at the beginning, when he actually followed my advice, his business prospered and he was able to pay off all his debts and make a good living. Now he is living as a servant of God and His worker.

I am telling you this story as an example to underscore how it is so indispensable for all of us to be led by God in our lives like this brother. When it comes to being led by God, you and I must believe with all our hearts that Jesus Christ is indeed our King, the King of kings and the King of power. Jesus Christ is our true King. "Immanuel" means that Jesus Christ, God Himself, is with us. "Christ" refers to the King of kings. It means the anointed One. This King of kings came to this earth as the Savior who would deliver His people from their sins, and He fulfilled this salvation to perfection. Coming to this earth to save us, He has blotted out all your sins and mine, and He is now leading and helping us, His saved

people.

Did the Lord say to us, "You are all on your own; live however you want to live. I don't' care what happens to you"? No, of course not! The Lord has not only saved us but He is also our Shepherd who walks before us and guides us to the right path, to the way of happiness, to the way of blessings, and to the way of Truth. How does the Lord achieve this? He achieves it through God's Church.

What If the Lord Finds No Room to Stay in Our Hearts?

Let's turn to Luke 2:6-7 here: "So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn."

When Joseph and Mary arrived in the city of



David, Mary was near her delivery date. Pregnancy usually lasts about nine months before the baby is delivered. So as Jesus Christ was about to be born, Mary needed a place to deliver Him. Although a lot of shameful things take place in hotels or inns nowadays, in the old days, they had a positive meaning. The inn was a place where weary travelers found a place to rest and get some food. Anyway, all the inns in the small city of David were filled with guests. There probably were a lot of visitors in the city because of the Roman emperor's decree.

So, as there was no room at the inn, Mary went into a stable and gave birth to the Baby Jesus there, and she laid Him in a manger wrapped in swaddling clothes. A manger is a trough used to feed livestock. This means that Jesus was born in a stable, a dwelling place of livestock. The Bible also says here that Mary gave birth to her firstborn Son, wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger.

What is implied by the word "firstborn Son" here? It means that Jesus is Mary's first Son. In other

words, it was her first time giving birth. The Bible says that the Virgin Mary conceived the Baby because she believed in the Word, and she did not sleep with Joseph until this Baby was born. The Bible also records that Mary gave birth to her firstborn Son. The disciples of Jesus were well aware of His family background as they accompanied Him everywhere. What then, is the significance of the fact that these disciples, who knew Jesus' family very well, wrote of Jesus as Mary's firstborn Son? It implies that Mary bore six or seven more children from Joseph after giving birth to Jesus. So I cannot help but laugh at the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church concerning the other children of Mary and Joseph, insisting that they were Jesus' cousins in order to deify Mary.

It's written here in today's Scripture passage that Mary gave birth to the Baby Jesus, her firstborn Son, and laid Him in a manger wrapped in swaddling clothes. What does this tell us? It tells us that God had borrowed the body of the Virgin Mary for a short



while in order to come to this earth as a Man. That's why God said, "*Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel.*" The name "Immanuel" here indicates that God was born on this earth by borrowing the flesh of man in order to be with us. In other words, God Himself actually had dwelt with us humans on this earth. It means that the Lord has made such lowly people like us His own children, and He is now dwelling with us. So Mary also called herself a lowly maidservant before God and His angel, and you and I can't help but confess to God that we are also lowly beings. Yet the Lord came looking such wretched beings like us, bore our sins on His body, was crucified to death, rose from the dead again, and has thereby blotted out all our sins. Having made us God's own people, sinless and holy, He has embraced us in His arms.

Just as God had used Mary as an instrument for His righteous work, so is He also using us as the instruments of His righteousness to spread the gospel

all over the world. God had used Mary here just like us, as an instrument of His righteous work. So one must never exalt Mary as high as Jesus and God.

When today's Catholics give rosary prayers, they say, "Hail Mary, full of grace, pray for us sinners." They also pray to Saint Peter and a myriad number of saints to intercede on their behalf. But they shouldn't do that. Although Mary was a woman who found grace from God, ultimately, she was still a mere creature used by the Lord. She is not someone who should be exalted so highly. It is wrong to deify her like this.

Jesus Christ had borrowed the body of Virgin Mary for a short while and was born in the city of David through her in order to fulfill His promised Word to save us. Mary did not conceive Jesus because she had somehow become the wife of God the Father. Mary is just someone who found the grace of God just like us. When the angel appeared before her, he called her "highly favored one," and said to her that she was blessed "among women." This means that just as we



received the remission of sins when we heard and believed in the Word of God, and we are now being used by God, so is Mary one such person.

However, many people today exalt Mary even more than Jesus, and they deify her and worship her as a divine being. This actually originated from pagan religions. Primitive religions used to worship their respective goddesses such as the goddess Asherah. It was because agrarian societies attached religious significance to female fertility and regarded this fertility as a heavenly blessing. Even today, people still come up with similar notions, such as the goddess of fortune. For instance, when Brazil and Germany are playing in a match in the World Cup, they talked about whom the goddess of fortune would show her favor. They deify a woman and worship her as a goddess.

By the same token, Catholics elevate Mary above Jesus, praying, “Hail Mary, full of grace.” This prayer implies that Mary is somehow capable of bestowing grace and salvation. The grace in the

phrase “full of grace” refers to the love of God and His gift. It refers to His mercy, in other words. But does any human being have any mercy on any other human beings? Human beings may have the tiniest inkling of mercy received from God in His likeness, but they are incapable of bestowing mercy as God does. Their hearts and minds may desire this, but they don’t have this ability.

As you know very well, many people today are revering Mary way too much. But in reality, Mary is not someone who deserves such exaltation. Jesus is her Savior, even though He was born as her Son. But it seems as though Mary sometimes forgot this. When we turn to the Gospel of Luke, we see that when Jesus was twelve, the whole family had gone to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover, and on the way back home Mary and Joseph had lost track of Him. So they went back into the Temple in Jerusalem looking for Jesus, and there they found Him conversing with the Jewish rabbis. Jesus was teaching them. Seeing this, Mary said to Him, “Why



are You here? I was looking for You all this time thinking that You were lost.” Jesus then said to her, “*Why did you look for Me? Did you not know that I must be in My Father’s house?*”

This means that even though Mary was Jesus’ mother in the flesh who had given birth to Him and nurtured Him, in Jesus’ sight, she was ultimately a lowly creature. Jesus had just borrowed her body for a short while for His use; just because Mary was His mother in the flesh, she was not someone who was higher than Jesus or His guide. If Mary had given birth only to Jesus and kept her chastity, then we may have some more respect for her. We would have respected her in the same way that we respect Catholic priests and nuns for not getting married and trying to do good deeds in their lives. However, Mary bore many more children, all siblings to Jesus in the flesh. One may then rebut this by saying that it’s no sin to bear children, but I am only saying this to point out that no one should exalt Mary as high as Jesus or turn her into the wife of God the Father.

People are very prone to think of Jesus and God the Father in carnal terms based on their own standards. Let me illustrate this with a funny story. Long ago, there were two brothers, but the older brother died one day, and so his younger brother took care of his son. Seeing how his nephew might feel lonely, the uncle suggested to him that he attend church. So the nephew began to attend church, and at his pastor’s admonition, he took his uncle to his church. The uncle, having come to the church at his nephew’s suggestion, sat there and saw his nephew praying to God, calling Him his Father. So seeing this, the uncle thought for a while, and he figured that since his nephew was calling God his father, and he himself was the child’s uncle, he and God were brothers. But he also thought that it was unlikely for God to be his little brother, and so he concluded that he should call Him his big brother. So he said while praying, “Thank You, my big brother Jesus. I’ve tagged along my nephew to this church today, and so I ask You to be nice to us.”



Like this, everyone is prone to look at God and His spiritual realm with his own fleshly and instinctive thoughts. What a blunder this is. The uncle in our story called God his brother because he was ignorant, and like him, many people today revere Mary calling her Mother of God. Catholics routinely pray, "Holy Mary, Queen of Heaven, pray for us sinners." What does the Queen of Heaven imply? Doesn't it imply that Mary is the wife of the Father of Jesus Christ—that is, God the Father? Wouldn't this then mean that Mary is more exalted than Jesus? At least when viewed in terms of the flesh, we should consider a mother to be above her son, since the mother is equal to the father. Isn't this true?

It's quite true, at least when thought in fleshly terms. It is then a matter of course to exalt Mary even more than Jesus Himself. That is why Catholics pray, "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death." They keep praying to Mary time after time. This is completely wrong. It is to think only in carnal terms. To continue to believe

like this and pray like this is to blaspheme against God. It is a short-cut to hell. Catholics say that although they believe in Jesus, they also believe in Mary, and they pray to Mary as well as Jesus, God the Father, and the Holy Spirit. But is this right? No, it is totally wrong!

That is why it's so important for you to have the right knowledge and learn to lead the right life of faith. Before, when I was trapped in the world, I used to also think that I was a smart man. I then found the Lord and came to live in the realm of faith, but I struggled with this as it was a road that I had never walked on before. If it were just leading a religious life, then I would have had no problem since I was quite experienced with this, but I had never really lived by faith.

So God trained me, and this training was extremely tough. He put me in the spiritual wilderness all by myself to discipline me. That is why I am now able to teach you about the upright life of faith like this. If I had lived in luxury without any



hardship after meeting the Lord, then I would have nothing to say to you about your life of faith. However, because I realized who the Lord was and believed in Him, I rose up to my challenge by this faith, and I came to live a true life of faith and grasp its meaning. As I followed the Lord by trusting Him, He actually opened my way.

Let us therefore all rely on Jesus our Savior, trust Him, pray to Him, and live in unity with Him, realizing that He is our King and our Shepherd, and that He is always alive. ☐



SERMON

9



CONTENTS



Jesus Christ, Our Shepherd

< Luke 2:8-21 >

“Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. Then the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.’ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying:

‘Glory to God in the highest,

And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!

So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, ‘Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us.’ And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. Now when they had seen Him, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child. And all those who heard it marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart. Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them. And when eight days were completed for the circumcision of the Child, His name was called JESUS, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb.”



The Bible says that life is like dust. However, God also said that our lives are more precious than anything under the heavens. The human soul is more valuable than anything else in the world. In some ways, life seems completely worthless, but in other ways, a soul is very precious. Like this, the Lord spoke of life in completely contrary terms. Although He says that life is nothing, at the same time He also says that it is actually very important. Referring to our lives, He said that they are more precious than the whole world.

How do we think of ourselves? Do we think that we are more valuable than the whole world? Of course, our lives and our souls are indeed more precious than anything else in the world, as the Lord said, *“For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?”* However, when we look at our acts or thoughts, we don’t see anything that’s honorable. So it does seem as though we are worthless.

But what happens when we meet our Lord? We

come to realize just how precious and worthy we are. It’s by meeting our Lord that we can realize our fundamental worth, recognizing how precious we are and how God has blessed us to be honorable beings.

The Bible says that our Lord came as everyone’s Savior. This means that He came as the God of salvation. That’s why we call Jesus our Savior and Christ. Why is the Son of God called Jesus and the Savior? It’s because the relationship between us human beings and Jesus is that between the Savior and the saved, and that is why we call Him Jesus, the Redeemer, and the Savior.

That Jesus Is the Lord and Savior Means that Our Lord Came to This Earth to Save Us from Sin and Fulfilled the Work of Salvation

Although we human beings were originally honorable beings, before the coming of our Lord, we



were under wretched conditions. Although our fundamental essence was honorable, we were trapped in a quandary because of our problem of sin. So we needed someone to save us; a Savior. Jesus is this very Savior who came to deliver such people like us. It's for this reason that we call Him our Savior. We call Jesus the Son of God as the Savior. My fellow believers, it's extremely important for us to realize properly who the Savior Lord is and why He came to this earth. We also must grasp just how serious our problems are and how insufficient we all are.

In Korea, a dayfly is sometimes used as a metaphor to describe human life. Our lives are like the morning mist that disappears in no time. This, of course, refers to our lives on this earth. A dayfly is called a dayfly because it only lives for a day, and this dayfly ends its life at the end of the day. Born in the morning, by noon the dayfly has lived half its lifespan, and its life is over in the evening. God also compared our lives to a shadow (Ecclesiastes 6:12).

Even though dayflies live only for a day on this

earth, they face so many problems and obstacles. It would be nice if they were born on a nice day, but what would happen if they began their lives on a rainy day? How sick and tired of rain would they be? They can't fly around easily because of the rain, and when they try to find some refuge from the rain, they come across spider webs and insects preying on them. Like this, even though dayflies live only for a day, they still face much suffering while they are alive.

Our lives are like these dayflies. We are like the morning mist. Even the thickest mist disappears right away once the sun rises.

The Lord also said that our lives are like the wild flowers that blossom for a short while only to disappear. Flowers are beautiful when blossoming, but it takes little time before they wither away. The Lord says that our lives are like flowers, a mist, and dayflies. He compared our lives to such things, and this means that even though the purpose of our existence is honorable, we still have many problems. Just how many problems do we face in a day? How



many more problems and changes do we then come across and go through in our entire lifetime? We encounter and go through many problems in our lives.

I often look at myself. When I look at myself, I realize that every day I need the grace of the Lord that has come by the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and that without this grace of the Lord I would not be able to live a decent life even for a day. From all the days, months, years, and decades that I've lived, I wonder how many days I really lived as a decent human being. I recognize that without the Lord, decency and honor are simply beyond my reach. My mistaken thoughts, many problems, and many enemies confuse my mind and corrupt my values, and many worldly things cause me to go astray. So when I look back on a day, I discover that I cannot live a new life without the Lord.

That is why I have to live by faith in the Lord. How could we ever live a new life without the Lord? The Lord calls us new creatures. He says that He renews us every day. How can our lives then be

renewed every day? How can we forget all our past and begin a new beginning with a new heart, both psychologically and spiritually? When I look back to the many past events of my life, I realize that were it not for the Lord, my heart, my mind, and my body would surely have fallen into a deep swamp. So without the Lord, how could I ever shake off and escape from all these things to live a new life? It's none other than our Lord who enables you and me alike to live a new life. It's our Lord who renews our lives every day.

It's written, "*Old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.*" My fellow believers, it is because our Lord gives us new strength every day that we are able to lead energetic lives unlike in our past. Even though we ourselves, as dayflies, have not changed, our wings are still weak, our lives on this earth are still short, and we still encounter innumerable problems while living in this world. Our Lord solves away all the problems that we face every day as dayflies, so that we may live



energetically. He has taken away all the problems that we, the dayflies, face. He has made light the burden of our lives as dayflies and He has taken care of all our problems completely.

My fellow believers, we encounter many problems as we carry on with our lives. Even though we believe in Jesus, we still face many difficulties. For those who don't believe in Jesus, they are also facing many problems. We humans are still living with many problems. However, those who believe in the Lord can live a new life as their strength is renewed by the Lord every day. In contrast, those who don't believe in the Lord are imprisoned in their past, and they end their lives mired in despair. This is the difference between those who have met the Lord and those who haven't.

The Bible says in today's Scripture passage, "*Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around*

them, and they were greatly afraid." Every flock needs a shepherd to take care of it; it is bound to perish without a shepherd.

Do you know the temperament of sheep? Although they are very docile, they are also very stubborn animals. They are more stubborn than even a bull. Once they turn stubborn, they go their own way no matter what. They are so stubborn that they would walk right into a busy road, even if they were hit by a car and killed. Like this, a sheep is a very stubborn animal. It is also gregarious. But even though sheep live in a large flock, they cannot protect each other. No matter how many sheep may be gathered together, they are still sheep. Without a shepherd, they will all die. If a wolf comes by and snatches away just one sheep a day, a thousand sheep would be dead in a thousand days. Even if there are 2,000 sheep, a single wolf can decimate them all and leave none alive. If there are five wolves, it won't even take a few days before the whole flock is slaughtered. That is why a shepherd is so



indispensable to every sheep.

Here in today's Scripture passage, there were shepherds tending the flock out in the field, and the heavens shone the light and the heavenly host descended. Then, a messenger of the Lord approached them, singing, "Glory to God in the highest."

In the old days, angels often appeared before God's servants or His prophets to relay the will of the Lord. Here too, an angel appeared before the shepherds and relayed the Word of God to them. This messenger of the Lord said to the shepherds, "*Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. Listen to the praise of the heavenly host. Your Savior has come to Bethlehem, and this Savior is Christ. Today, your Shepherd was born in the city of David. The Shepherd of everyone was born on this earth.*" The angel taught them that the One who would become their Shepherd was born as the Baby Jesus, and that this Baby was now lying in a manger. As the angel

told them this, the shepherds could go looking for Jesus and meet Him.

Sheep are very stubborn and weak animals. They are like dayflies. They are so fragile that they can't stand up to any predators at all. Some sheep have horns. But these horns don't provide them with any protection. So you can see how easy it is to prey on such animals.

The Lord said that we are such sheep. He compared human beings to stubborn and ill-tempered sheep. He also drew analogy to many insignificant life forms to explain us humans. He said that we are like dayflies. Man is also set to age quickly. For me also, although it seems like it was only yesterday when I ran around in the field and played with my friends, I am already over 50 years old. I never imagined that I would get old so quickly. In my flesh, I am already looking at my sunset. Spiritually speaking, however, it wasn't long ago that I really began to live my life.

How stubborn and ill-tempered are God's sheep,



and just how myopic are their spiritual eyes? They don't see what's far ahead. Instead they only see and graze on the grass that's right in front of them. Even though they are nearing a cliff, they don't know this, and they keep on grazing on the grass right up to the edge of the cliff.

That is why we humans, who are like these sheep, need a true shepherd. Jesus came to this earth as our Shepherd. Forsaking the throne of Heaven, He came to this earth to save us, to give us life, to enable us to live forever, and to solve all our problems. Do you think that Jesus came to this earth so that people could do some charity work on Christmas and put out the Salvation Army's collection box?

Everyone can survive if his basic needs of clothing, food, and housing are met. But such things are not everything that you need. Your soul needs the Savior, and in your heart you must have spiritual bread. Everyone needs a Shepherd, the Savior who would solve all the sins committed with his heart or his acts, the weaknesses of the flesh, and all other

problems. If someone is starving with nothing to eat, then it is the moral duty of the more fortunate people to help this person. But spiritual bread can be obtained only from Jesus, our Savior and Shepherd.

Our Lord came to this earth as your Shepherd and mine. It's written, "*'And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.'* And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: '*Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!*'" The angel made it known that Jesus was wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger. This angel played the role of a shepherd.

The angel spoke to the shepherds. For the flock, these shepherds were its guides. The shepherds, on the other hand, believed what the angel told them, and went looking for the Baby Jesus and met Him. They spread the news to others that the Savior, the Messiah, the King of the Jews, and God the Creator of the heavens and the earth had come to this earth.



We recognize Jesus as our Savior and call Him as such. It's absolutely important for us to know and believe in Jesus our Savior properly. If we believe in Jesus, then it's also extremely important for us to know who He is. It's also critical for us to examine to see whether He is merely a human being or divine before we believe in Him. Though everyone is free to believe in Jesus, it's absolutely necessary to know Him correctly beforehand.

Jesus Is God Himself

Jesus is the Master who created the universe and all its hosts. The Bible says, "*And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth*" (John 1:14).

God made the heavens and the earth in the beginning. When God commanded to let there be light, there was light. Who is this God who created

light with His Word like this? It's none other than Jesus. Light came into being because Jesus, God Himself, commanded it to exist. It's none other than Jesus who created this light. This Jesus, in whom we all believe, is the very Creator of the universe and all things. It's Jesus who made you and me, the earth and the galaxy, all things both visible and invisible, and everything in the heavens and the earth.

Our Savior, God Himself and our Shepherd, was born on this earth. What kind of power does He have? It's important for us to understand who our Shepherd is. Our Savior is indeed God Himself. No one but God is the only true Shepherd for us. If Jesus were just human, then He would not have been any different from us. But even though He is God Himself, He put on the image of man when He came to this earth. So He is at once both human and divine. Jesus has these two attributes at the same time.

Why was our Lord conceived in the body of a virgin? It was because He had to come in the likeness of man. To save us from all our sins, all our barriers,



and all our problems, He had to personally come to this earth incarnated in the flesh of man rather than as God, and then take upon and solve away all the problems of humankind. Only then could He become our true Shepherd. That is why Jesus had to be born as a Man.

Who is our Lord? He is God Himself. Jesus is God Himself. Fundamentally, Jesus is the very God who made the universe and all things, and who blew the breath of life into the nostrils of Adam and Eve. God exists as God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and these three Persons of God said, “*Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness*” (*Genesis 1:26*). In this Trinity was Jesus the Son of God. This Jesus became our Shepherd. The Lord came to this earth as our own Shepherd. All of us must grasp this properly and believe in it. Only then can we live by faith led by God.

The Savior was born on this earth. Jesus is your Master and mine. He is the Creator who made us, and He is also our Shepherd. It is to save us that God

Himself came to this earth incarnated in the flesh of man and became our Shepherd. Isaiah 40:5 says, “*The glory of the LORD shall be revealed, And all flesh shall see it together.*” The Bible also says in Isaiah 9:6-7:

“*For unto us a Child is born,
Unto us a Son is given;
And the government will be upon His shoulder.
And His name will be called
Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
Of the increase of His government and peace
There will be no end,
Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom,
To order it and establish it with judgment and
justice
From that time forward, even forever.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.*”

It’s said here that a Son was born unto us, the government was upon His shoulder, and His name is Wonderful, Counselor, and Mighty God. Through the



Prophet Isaiah in the Old Testament, God had prophesied, “A Son will be born unto you. I Myself will be born as the Baby Jesus to become your Shepherd.” A Son was born unto us, and the government was upon His shoulder. Who has the authority to rule in Heaven and on earth? It’s God who has this authority. It’s Jesus who has it. This authority belongs to our Lord, who has become our Savior and our Shepherd. The government here refers to the authority to rule. Who has all this authority? Our Lord has it. Jesus Himself said, *“All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth”* (Matthew 28:18). This clearly shows that all authority belongs to our Lord. His name is Wonderful and Counselor. The word wonderful here refers to something that’s utterly amazing and marvelous. The very fact that the Creator became a creature is itself amazing and marvelous.

Let’s say that we created a dayfly. You and I would be very fond of this dayfly that we created. But the dayfly has many problems. However,

because there can’t be any sin in us, we cannot tolerate any sin. The dayfly, in contrast, has too many sins. Yet this dayfly worships something else instead of believing in us. Let’s say that even though we created the dayfly sinless in its origin, it changed in the course of its life and is now committing such sins. So we became dayflies ourselves because we loved the dayfly too much, to save this dayfly. If we were to thus become dayflies, how amazing and marvelous would it be?

My fellow believers, even if we really loved this dayfly of our making, could we ourselves become dayflies? Is there any duty for God to become a creature? How can the perfect One become an insufficient man? This is the same as a human being becoming a maggot. It is that amazing and marvelous. The fact that God has become our Shepherd is such an amazing thing. That is just how much God loved us sinners. God is truly the God of love.

God loved the world so much like this. The Bible also called Jesus Counselor, and the Counselor here



implies wisdom. What then, did God have to do to save us from all our sins and all our problems? A Korean proverb says that to catch a tiger, one must go into the tiger's den. Like this saying, as the Creator loved us humans, to save us all, He Himself had to become a Man. In other words, by becoming a Man, God Himself took upon all the curses of the human race, all its worries, all its obstacles, and all its flaws, and He was condemned for them all, thereby saving us. This is the Lord's wisdom. A counselor is someone who tries to find a solution for someone else's problem.

What then is your problem and mine? Weakness is our problem. The problem with us is that we are too weak. Sin is our problem, as are evil thoughts and wrongdoings. Even though we know the will of God, we are too weak to live according to this will. Our lineage, our species as human beings, is also a problem. Species does not change. Even if someone acts like a chimpanzee, this person doesn't change into a chimp. Gorillas and chimps look alike, but a

gorilla is a gorilla and a chimpanzee is a chimpanzee. Although there are various races from Africans to Asians and Caucasians, a human being is still a human being.

Like this, because the human race created by God was fundamentally flawed as a species, to solve this problem, Jesus, God Himself, personally became a Man. "I love these people whom I made, so I must solve all their problems." God had become a Man because He loved us so much. If God had said this just in words, then it would be hard to believe. But He not only said it in words, He actually became a Man and saved us. That is why Jesus was conceived in the body of a virgin. "*Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.*" It was to be with us that God was conceived in the body of a virgin, stayed in her womb for nine months, put on the flesh, and was born from the virgin's body. Our Lord had to be born as a Man like this in order to put on the same human flesh as ours.



God became a Man because He saw that it was necessary. That's why our Lord was born on this earth. On the eighth day from His birth, our Lord was circumcised and offered a sacrifice to God according to the Law, and when He turned 30, He took upon Himself all our sins. Having thus taken upon everyone's sins through His baptism, He then had to die on the Cross for these sins.

The Bible says, "*It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment.*" Because we are lacking, we have to be judged by God, and because we are sinful, we have to die. However, Jesus bore all ours sins through His baptism and died in our place. Having thus died once, He raised His dead body back to life. By doing so, He has made it possible for whoever believes in Him to never die but receive eternal life. This is the very wisdom of the Lord.

My fellow believers, you must meet the true Shepherd who is your Savior. We must find Jesus, the amazing God who is the Counselor and truly wise, who came to this earth incarnated in the flesh in

order to save us, and who took this method of salvation to deliver us. Like the shepherds here, we must believe in the Word, go to Him and meet Him. As the shepherds went looking for the Lord, they believed that Jesus, even though He was just a Baby then, was the very Savior of mankind who would solve all its problems of sins, save it from all curses and destruction, and solve all its weaknesses, barriers, and worries. They were saved by thus believing in this Savior, their Shepherd.

Who went to see the Baby Jesus? When the Baby Jesus was born on this earth, through whom did we realize that this Jesus is our Shepherd? We realized it by hearing the words of the angels that descended from Heaven. How did we know that Jesus is the true Savior? It was through the prophecies that God made through such prophets of the Old Testament as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Micah. Through the prophecies of these servants of God, we were able to realize that Jesus is none other than our Messiah and our Shepherd.



The gist of today's sermon given on the occasion of this Christmas is that our Lord was born on this earth to become the Shepherd of sinners. We are the flock that needs the Shepherd desperately. The Lord embraces us into His arms through the services of His servants. This means that the servants of God are the small shepherds to every one of us. If we follow the Shepherd along with the guidance of the small shepherds, we can attain everlasting life, receive the remission of sins, and get all our problems solved. This is the meaning of Christmas, the purpose for which the Lord came to this earth.

We Must Meet the Shepherd

The Bible says that people are robbed because they do not have the Shepherd. Why do people suffer? Why are they now struggling with so many problems? It's because they have not met the Shepherd. When they meet the Shepherd, all these

problems will be solved one by one. The true Shepherd leads the flock to the right path, protects them, feeds them, and guides them to the still waters to find true rest. The true Shepherd does not send His flock to the edge of the cliff, nor sells them, nor slaughters them. None of these is what the true Shepherd does.

The sheep can live only if they meet the Shepherd. However, right now countless people are going astray each in his own way, as they do not have the Shepherd. You may be determined to work hard and succeed in your chosen area, but you cannot reach your goal as completely as you think or resolve yourself. The flock may be okay for a day or two even without the Shepherd, but sooner or later, they will fall prey. Every sheep needs the Shepherd. It's because of the lack of the Shepherd that the sheep bleed, get injured, and live in suffering.

My fellow believers, on this Christmas, I want you all to really recognize the shepherds, who are the servants of the Lord. Whether saved or not, we all



need the shepherds. We will perish without Jesus and His shepherds. Some of you may ask, "How can I trust in my pastor and rely on him when he and I are the same human beings?" But God holds His servants steadfast without fail. Holding His servants, God makes them do His work and take care of His people, and God gives them strength, power, and blessings. When we thus listen to the servants of God and follow them, God solves away all our problems and fulfills all His works. Our Lord is the Chief Shepherd.

Our God does all these things through His shepherds. A sheep is a sheep no matter how gifted and strong it may be. It needs a shepherd. Yet in this world, there are so many people calling themselves shepherds. Too many people claim to be shepherds when they themselves have not even met the Lord, and like wolves, these people use the flock to fill their own bellies and devour them all. This world is filled with so many false shepherds. They are nothing more than fraudulent vendors.

We all know that we should practice virtue, but

can we really do good deeds as we wish? No, we can't do this even when we try. Human beings cannot even solve their own problems. A true shepherd heals the wounds of the sheep and admonishes them to fulfill their entrusted tasks when they have enough strength to carry them out. When the sheep are dying from their wounds, it's completely nonsense to say that they will be rewarded if they do good deeds even in such a situation.

You must meet a true shepherd. The Bible says that you can meet the Lord only if you meet a true shepherd and are led by him. On this Christmas, I ponder about the meaning of the fact that our Lord has become the Chief Shepherd and our true Savior. However, it's also important for the sheep to meet the proper little shepherds to meet the Chief Shepherd through them. You can attain life only if you meet the true Shepherd and His little shepherds.

Our Lord came to this earth to become our Shepherd. He was born on this earth to become your Shepherd and mine. Even now, our Lord wants to



become Shepherd to all the lost sheep. He desires them to listen to the little shepherds, that is, His servants, to be led to the true Shepherd.

On this Christmas, rather than looking for the Lord only in words, we must realize that we have met our Lord through His servants, His little shepherds. We should also realize that without these little shepherds, we would not have met the Chief Shepherd. Everyone must meet the Chief Shepherd through these small shepherds, and through them everyone must be led by the Lord. If there are any souls that still have not met the Lord, they must carefully discern who the shepherd is that truly cares about them and leads them the right way. They must also listen to the words of this true shepherd. Only then can they, through this guidance, meet our Lord who has become the true Shepherd of the flock, receive the blessings of everlasting life, and solve all their problems. The real purpose and meaning of Christmas is finding the Shepherd. You must meet the true Shepherd.

The true Chief Shepherd is our Lord. Those on this earth who are called by God to be used by Him are His shepherds. Our Lord works and fulfills His will through these shepherds. Through an angel, He made it known to the shepherds watching over their flock that He had come to this earth as the Chief Shepherd, and through the shepherds, He made it known to everyone around the whole world. Our Lord has also saved us, solved all our problems, made it known to us that He has become our true Shepherd, and made us believe in Jesus.

Therefore, realizing this will and accepting it by faith, we must follow the Lord in thanksgiving, remembering what the Lord said to us. We should all thus receive and enjoy everything given by the Lord, and then go to the Kingdom of Heaven and live forever. I hope and pray that you would get all your problems solved by meeting our Lord, and I pray to our Lord to give such blessings to you and me. ☐



SERMON

10



CONTENTS



Jesus Christ Came to Save The Entire Human Race

< Luke 2:25-35 >

“And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ. So he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law, he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said:

**‘Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace,
According to Your word;
For my eyes have seen Your salvation’**

Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples,

**A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles,
And the glory of Your people Israel.’**

And Joseph and His mother marveled at those things which were spoken of Him. Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, “Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against (yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.”

Christmas is upon us. On this very Christmas Day, Jesus Christ the Son of the holy God forsook the throne of glory and came to this earth in order to save all sinners. Although Christians all over the world are rejoiced by the fact that the Lord had come to this earth for their salvation, recently I’ve felt that for some people this joy is misplaced.



From this Christmas Eve to tomorrow, the whole world will be celebrating Christmas. As I recall, last Christmas was very cold. It looks as though this Christmas will also be as cold as last year, given how it snowed so much last night. Today, many sinners who have no sincere desire to receive the remission of sins by believing in Jesus and serving Him consider Christmas as just another holiday to rest and enjoy. It's true, as you know very well yourself, that Christmas is indeed a joyous day. But it saddens my heart to see people just wanting to enjoy Christmas without remembering its true meaning.

Over 2,000 years have already passed by since Jesus came to this earth. No one knows how long this world will continue to exist. But when we look at the various signs evident in today's world and the Word of God written in the Bible, we can sense that the end of mankind may be quite imminent. With 2,000 years gone by since the first coming of the Lord, we are now living in a time when the day of His return is imminent. In this context, before addressing today's

Scripture passage, I would like to take this timely opportunity to explain how the people of the world will change and what it is that we the righteous should beware of.

Lately I've been very edgy and impatient. After some careful thinking, I found the reason for this: Many people nowadays do not recognize their sins even when they commit them, perhaps because the end of this world is near. Christians and non-Christians alike, countless people have fallen into the deep mire of sin to ruin their own lives, and some Christians are pushing themselves into destruction by forsaking their lives of faith.

The prevailing cultural trends of this age, from the way people enjoy their lives to how they think, all indicate that this world is nearing its end. Although we have now been saved by the Lord and born again, because the world is heading in this direction, if we accept the things of the world without distilling them through the strainer of the Lord's teaching, we will suffer destruction in the end, swept away by the



enormous tides of sin. We may be able to enter Heaven in the next world, but in this present world, we will be afflicted with suffering from the world and the servants of the Devil.

Because the Devil knows that his days are numbered, he is bent on stirring up even more wickedness in people's hearts than usual. The entire world is rushing straight to the cliff of destruction because of the schemes of Satan. As the times are like this, the righteous must be that much more careful to make sure that their thoughts and hearts are set on the path of the right faith. Although even the righteous are engaged in worldly affairs to make a living, what's far more important is that they should do and think of the work of God first. It is in your human nature to think only sinful thoughts if you are idle, and so you may commit sin without even realizing it. However, for those who are constantly thinking of the work of God, and who want to carry it out diligently, there is neither the time nor the desire to commit sin. Facing such an age of confusion,

people like us who have been born again by the salvation of God, must have our bearing straight, and only then can the world be guided to the right direction.

As the righteous who have received the remission of sins from the Lord, we must believe in God wholeheartedly and offer ourselves to Him in obedience to His Word. We must lead a true life of faith, doing everything according to the will of the Lord. We will then prosper together not only in this present world but also in the God-given Kingdom of Heaven.

As mentioned, because this present age is tumultuously confused, my mind is not at ease either. Just a few years ago, the world was very different from today. Even though we might have lacked a few things materially while living in the world, our lives could still be prosperous and flourish thanks to the power of the salvation that our Lord had bestowed on us.

But how are we now? If we continue to be



shaken by Satan's work like this, we will end up ruining both our faith and our entire lives, as we will no longer be able to be taken care of by the Lord. So on this Christmas, let us not be swept away by the buoyant atmosphere of the season that seeks only material gratification, and instead carefully ponder on the real meaning of Christmas; that Jesus Himself came to this earth incarnated in the flesh of man in order to save us. And restoring our hearts again, let us devote all our effort to live the rest of our lives by faith.

A Man Named Simeon

It's written in today's Scripture passage, "*There was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel.*" After eight days went by since Jesus was born through the body of the Virgin Mary, she took the Baby Jesus to the Temple. Mary

had given birth to Jesus Christ as a virgin according to God's plan, and when she brought the Baby Jesus to the Temple, there was a man of faith named Simeon in Jerusalem. This man had been waiting for the coming of the Savior. It had been prophesied to him by the Holy Spirit that this man would not die before the arrival of our Lord on this earth.

So when Mary and Joseph were about to offer a sacrifice according to the custom of the Law, Simeon took the Baby Jesus up in his arms and praised God, saying:

*"Lord, now You are letting
Your servant depart in peace,
According to Your word;
For my eyes have seen Your salvation
Which You have prepared before the face
of all peoples,
A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles,
And the glory of Your people Israel."*

When Simeon saw the Baby Jesus, he recognized that this Child was the Savior of all mankind. He had



been waiting for the birth of Jesus, trusting that God would fulfill His promise. So when Simeon saw the Baby Jesus, he said, "*My eyes have seen Your salvation.*" The incarnation of Jesus on this earth marked the beginning of salvation for all sinners. The name Jesus means the "Savior."

Why was Jesus then incarnated in the flesh of man and born in a small town called Bethlehem in Israel? It was to save all human beings, who had become sinners, from their sins. So when Simeon saw the Baby Jesus, born on this earth in the image of a lowly human being to save the sinful human race, he said, "*My eyes have seen Your salvation.*"

Now, neither you nor I can see Jesus personally with our eyes. That's because Jesus, having risen from the dead and ascended to Heaven, is now sitting at the right hand of the throne of God the Father. However, when Jesus Christ was born, this man named Simeon had seen the Baby Jesus personally. Although Jesus was just a Baby back then, Simeon recognized with his own eyes that this Baby was the

Savior of sinners. In other words, Simeon witnessed that God Himself had come to this earth incarnated in the flesh of man in order to save the entire human race.

Simeon also said that Jesus was "prepared before the face of all peoples." By this, Simeon meant that Jesus was the Vessel prepared for the salvation of every sinner throughout the whole world. Truly, Jesus is the Savior who came to this earth in order to save all the sinners of this world from their sins. He had come to this earth to save all the sinners of this world from all their sins, and He has indeed delivered them all from their sins and iniquities. My fellow believers, we cannot confirm the existence of Jesus with our own physical eyes as Simeon had done when he saw the Baby Jesus and said, "*My eyes have seen Your salvation.*" However, the remission of sins can still be obtained, but this is possible only for those who have the profound faith to believe that when Jesus Christ came to this earth, He became their propitiation and blotted out all their sins.



What is it then that the countless sinners of this world must do in order to receive the remission of sins? Salvation cannot be attained by those who look for the Lord only with their lips, singing on Christmas, “Joy to the World, the Lord is come!” One can see the light of salvation shone by the Lord only if he believes in Jesus Christ with his heart, who is the King of kings, God Himself, and the Savior of all sinners. In other words, you must believe with your heart that Jesus Christ the Savior who came to this earth incarnated in the flesh of man. You must believe that Jesus put on the flesh of man in order to save the human race, and that this Savior remitted away all the sins of this world in the most proper way, by being baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan River. Only then can you truly say, like Simeon, you have also seen the salvation of the Lord.

Our Lord, the Savior of sinners, took upon all the sins of every sinner in this world through the baptism He received in the Jordan River, and to pay off the wages of these sins, He was crucified and shed His

precious blood and died on the Cross. That is why it's been possible for all the sinners on this earth to be saved. We must see this grace of the Lord and feel it with the eyes of our hearts rather than our physical eyes. Unless we are able to see with the eyes of faith the Jesus Christ who has saved us as the Savior of sinners, this approaching Christmas would be a completely meaningless day. If, on the other hand, you have true faith in the Lord in your heart, then you would no longer be a sinner no matter how sinful you may have been; instead you would be a righteous man saved by the Lord. Just by seeing the Baby Jesus, Simeon had the faith to say, *“My eyes have seen Your salvation.”* Like Simeon, only when we believe that our Lord came to this earth and blotted out all our sins can we say that we have seen His salvation. Like this, Jesus has saved all sinners. All of us should accept this Truth deep into our hearts and ruminate on it once again. Only then can the joy of the birth of Jesus Christ be ours.

It's written, *“For God so loved the world that He*



gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). This is how much our God loves each and every sinner in this world. In order to save all the sinners destined to be destroyed—that is, to save all the sinners doomed to hell for their sins—God Himself came to this earth incarnated in the flesh of man. He has saved us all. By doing so, God has made it possible for all who believe in Him to receive everlasting life and the remission of sins. He has enabled each and every believer to abide forever in His Kingdom instead of perishing.

Jesus Is the Savior Prepared Beforehand to Save All Sinners

Jesus has washed all the sins of every sinner once and for all. Born on this earth about 2,000 years ago, long before you and I were born, He took upon all our sins, was condemned in our place, and thus

became the Savior of sinners. Do you believe in this Jesus? When you and I were still sinners unable to receive the salvation of the Lord, Jesus was born on this earth 2,000 years ago in order to save us from all our sins. After accepting all sins by being baptized in the Jordan River, He was crucified and condemned in our place. Do you believe in this? This is what faith is all about.

When it says here in today’s Scripture passage, “*You have prepared before the face of all peoples, A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles,*” it means that Jesus is the Savior of not just the people of Israel but also every sinner throughout the entire world. Jesus is the Savior who has brought the remission of sins to the entire human race. This salvation of the remission of sins offered by Jesus is not limited to the people of Israel alone. It is worldwide and universal. Our Lord is the universal Savior who delivers everyone in this world from all sins.

The Bible says that the Lord is “a light to bring revelation to the Gentiles.” The Lord has saved not



only the people of Israel but also us the Gentiles, and everyone else throughout the whole wide world. In those days, everyone except the people of Israel was a Gentile. The Gentiles neither knew the existence of God, nor did they know the Creator who had made them. They were oblivious to both the Law of God and His love. However, my fellow believers, thanks to the God who created the earth and the heavens, it is now possible for everyone all over the world to be saved through the salvation offered by none other than Jesus Christ.

Out of His compassion, God the Creator Himself came to this earth for the sake of the human beings He had created, pitying that they were destined to die for their sins. Simeon spoke of this Truth by saying, "This Savior has been prepared before the face of all peoples, a light to bring revelation to the Gentiles. All the Gentiles will also receive the remission of sins by believing in Jesus Christ."

The whole world is now filled with the joy of the approaching Christmas. Everywhere in the civilized

world, even in Islamic and Buddhist countries, people are celebrating the birth of Jesus together. As we can see just by looking at the fact that people all over the world are using the Western calendar that's based on the year of the birth of Jesus Christ, everyone is rejoiced and glad over the birth of Jesus. Why, then, is everyone using the Western calendar to remember the birth of Jesus? That's because Jesus Christ not only came to save sinners from all their sins in the past, but He is still with us saving us from our sins, and therefore Christ is our Savior.

The salvation of Jesus is universal. Sinners in every country all over the world have received the remission of sins by accepting into their hearts the salvation offered by Jesus. This power of Jesus to save us from all sins is unambiguously universal. The entire human race must therefore listen to the Truth of salvation that's shone on all the sinners of this earth. Jesus is the Savior of all sinners. This means that every sinner can be saved from all his sins by believing in the salvation of Jesus, the Savior of



mankind.

However, we can see that nowadays, the meaning of Christmas has changed considerably. A message can change its meaning when it's relayed through many different people. Likewise, I feel that the significance of the birth of Jesus has also changed a lot with 2,000 years gone by. That's because many people today just think of Christmas as a day of celebration to enjoy themselves, and not a day to worship God or receive the remission of sins.

However, the true meaning of Christmas is found in ruminating on the fact that Jesus is the Savior of sinners. God had revealed this true meaning to Simeon, and Simeon relayed it to everyone else, saying, "God has become our Savior by coming to this earth incarnated in the flesh of man." However, because people have changed too much nowadays, they don't pay any attention to the profound spiritual meaning of this message and are instead just interested in enjoying themselves exchanging gifts with each other.

It's absolutely important for us to have the right understanding, throw away our confused thoughts, and realize the true meaning of Christmas. God Himself came to this earth personally, incarnated in the flesh of man in order to save sinners. He has saved us humans from all sins by becoming a Man Himself. That is why we praise God every Christmas season, singing, "Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her King."

As Jesus, God Himself came to this earth in the flesh of man. He led His everyday life just like everyone else in the world, and He also went through all the physical sufferings that everyone else goes through. However, one thing that sets Him apart from the rest of us humans is that He never committed any sin. That's because even though Jesus was a Man in His outside appearance, He was fundamentally God Himself. So He knows all about man, just as He knows God the Father well. Jesus Christ is the Son of God the Father who came to this earth as the Savior of all the sinners of this world, and He is also God



Himself.

Having Come as the Son of God and the Savior of Mankind, Jesus Bore All the Sins of Every Sinner in the Most Fitting Way

Jesus 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*). Lowering His head to John the Baptist, Jesus told him to baptize Him. As you already know very well, by telling John the Baptist to baptize Him, Jesus was telling him to lay his hands on His head, push Him into the water, and then raise Him back up. Even now, this is what you have to believe in order to blot out all your sins. The word “thus” here means the most fitting and appropriate method. It was to save us that Jesus had come, and He has indeed saved us sinners in the most fitting and appropriate way. In other words, even though we sinners all deserved to be condemned,

Jesus was crucified to death in our place, and thus saved all sinners. All our sins were passed onto Jesus when He was baptized.

What sins were passed onto Jesus? All our sins were passed onto Jesus and He bore them all. That is why we call Him Jesus Christ. The name “Jesus” itself means the “Savior,” implying that He has become the Savior of all sinners. When we say that we believe in Jesus, we must believe that the Lord Himself is our Savior.

After being baptized in the Jordan River, our Lord was punished on the Cross. Having risen from the dead on the third day from His death, He is now sitting at the right hand of the throne of God the Father as the Judge. From there He is admonishing all of us sinners to be saved as soon as possible by believing in Him.

Here in today’s Scripture passage, Simeon said,
*“You have prepared before the face
 of all peoples,
 A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles,*



And the glory of Your people Israel.” This passage is admonishing us to believe that Jesus came to this earth to save sinners. It is telling us to believe in Jesus and to thereby become sinless people—that is, righteous people. Indeed, to those who, like you, have received the remission of sins, Jesus is their glory. Jesus is the Savior to sinners, and to the righteous who have received the remission of sins, He is all their blessings and glory. In this Christmas season, we the righteous give all thanks and glory to Jesus, God the Father, and the Holy Spirit. To all those who believe in Him, Jesus Christ has become their glory. He has become the true joy for us the believers, and the true Savior for sinners. I admonish you all to believe in this Truth.

When Simeon saw the Baby Jesus, he said that he had seen God’s salvation. By this same faith, we have also seen the salvation of the Lord. What about you then? Have you also seen this salvation? Of course you have!

My fellow believers, I admonish you all to

remember the real meaning of Christmas and accept it into your hearts sincerely. You must accept into your heart that God Himself came to this earth to save us sinners and has indeed saved us all, and you must give thanks to the Lord for His salvation. Celebrating the birth of the Lord with all our neighbors, and carrying on with our lives of faith, we must never allow our short lives to be wasted on useless things, but instead be faithful to the Lord’s good work and stay far away from sinful things.

Don’t say that you are trying to live for the Lord when you are not in fact leading a diligent and faithful life. The world is drifting to such profound sinfulness that once you fall into it, it will be next to impossible to escape from it. When I say that we shouldn’t lead an indolent life, some people misunderstand this and are offended by my words of admonishment. Such admonishments are offered because I can’t just turn a blind eye to people when they are going astray. But if your heart is not ready to accept my words of admonishment, then there is



nothing more I can do for you.

It's absolutely critical for you to be fully awake now, as this present age is an age filled with sin and wickedness. The nearer the Lord's return gets, the harder we should try to gather together in fellowship rather than avoiding it, and whenever we are gathered together, we should pray together and learn the Word together diligently. Whenever we are apart, we should lead a faithful life from each of our positions, and whenever we are gathered in the Church, we should carry out God's work and lead an upright life. That's because with our faith, we have to expend our hearts, our minds, and our bodies on the good work and run our race to its end faithfully. As the people of faith, all of us must lead such a life.

I am so rejoiced that Christmas is upon us today. From the depth of our hearts, let us all give thanks to the Lord for shouldering all our sins, and grasping the meaning of this sacrifice. Let us also have the compassion to forgive those who wrong us. This means that since the Lord has blotted out all our sins

and clothed us in so much of His grace, we also ought to be able to share His grace with everyone else. Above all else, none of us should ever fall into sin to perish away. If we fall into sin, the death that will visit us will not be a peaceful one, but we will be cast into hell to suffer forever.

So, on this Christmas Day, let us all ruminate on the grace of the Lord one more time. Let us give thanks to the Lord from the depth of our hearts, and let us also spread the joy of His birth to all those around us. ☩



SERMON

11



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Jesus Becomes the Signpost For Rising and Falling

< Luke 2:25-35 >

“And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ. So he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when the parents brought in the Baby Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law, he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said:

**‘Lord, now You are letting
Your servant depart in peace,
According to Your word;
For my eyes have seen Your salvation’**

Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples,

**A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles,
And the glory of Your people Israel.’**

And Joseph and His mother marveled at those things which were spoken of Him. Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, ‘Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against (yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.’”

With the arrival of Christmas Season, we are celebrating Jesus who came down to this earth about 2,000 years ago. Just as Jesus was conceived inside Mary’s womb about 2,000 years ago, Jesus was born inside the hearts of you and me who are living today in this era. How wonderful is this Truth, and how special is this God’s love? Mary was able to take the



Baby Jesus into her heart by accepting the Word of God delivered to her by an angel. Likewise, it was possible for us to prepare a place for the Lord inside our hearts because of our earnest desire to wait for the Lord's love.

Right now, we are living in a world 2,000 years after the coming of the Lord. But because the Word of the Lord is miraculously efficacious as ever, it enters inside the hearts of those who believe and sits inside our hearts at all times by making them bear the Lord inside of them. Even right now at this moment, the Lord is being born inside the hearts of those who accept and believe in the Word of God just like Mary. If not by the omniscient and omnipotent power of God, how could something like this happen? I believe it is the power of God.

Approximately 2,000 years ago in Jerusalem, there was man named Simeon. This man was waiting for God's salvation. This man was a person of devout faith in God and received a prophecy of the Holy Spirit, stating, "*He would not see death before he*

had seen the Lord's Christ" (Luke 2:26). But after Jesus was born, that is, on the eighth day after Mary had given birth to the Baby Jesus, Mary brought the Child to the temple and offered Him to God and to offer sacrifice. Right at that moment, Simeon entered the Temple led by the Holy Spirit, and he got to see Jesus Christ's mother of the flesh, Mary, bringing the Baby Jesus on that very moment.

Simeon took the Baby Jesus up in his arms and blessed God and said, "*Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, According to Your word; for my eyes have seen Your salvation which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, a light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel*" (Luke 2:29-32). Blessing like so, he then said, "*Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against (yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also)*" (Luke 2:34-35). Because Simeon, who believed in God, had the Spirit of God inside him, he was able to recognize the



Baby Jesus born on this earth in the image of a human. He then said, "The fall and rising of many in Israel as well as the entire humankind depend on this Child Jesus." He was able to speak these words because this man named Simeon recognized the Baby Jesus properly and realized things regarding the Baby Jesus properly.

Actually, there are many people who suffer destruction because of Jesus. Even though Jesus truly does not want people to suffer destruction, He did say that He was the stumbling stone. So the Bible says to us, "*Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel.*" It is said that even today, many people will suffer destruction because of Jesus, but for what reason do you think this happens? It is because although God the Father had sent Jesus down to this earth and promised to give all the blessings to those who believe in and follow the works accomplished by Jesus, He had made up His mind to send to hell those who do not believe in Jesus. By creating the universe and everything in it,

God became the Master of them all. Moreover, He had created people according to the image of God and sent Jesus down to this earth in order to save us human beings who are sinners from those sins. Then, Jesus eradicated all our sins and gave salvation to those who believe in the work accomplished by Jesus Christ.

However, people who do not accept and believe such grace of Jesus will in fact, be judged by Jesus Christ. This is why the believers of God came to be thankful for the Baby Jesus having come down to this earth in human flesh. We, the creations of God, are all so meager existences. Nevertheless, when I think about the Lord having had to come down to this earth for us who are so meager, I am unable to express all the emotions that surge within me because I am all so thankful for the Lord's such great love.

People in this world try to go to Heaven only through their efforts without believing in Jesus. Hence, those who do not believe in Jesus suffer destruction. People tried to go to Heaven with their



own power, but God the Father sent Jesus down to this earth so that He could save the people and have them enter Heaven. Therefore, Heaven is a place where you can enter only if you have some sort of a relationship with Jesus. But, how can someone who does not believe in the Lord have anything to do with Jesus? If people were to go on living continuing to believe in themselves, with the illusion that they will receive a good compensation just by their will and efforts to live kindly, and if it were indeed possible for them to go to the Kingdom of Heaven by doing so, then why do you think God the Father sent down Jesus into this world?

Dear fellow believers, if you don't believe in Jesus, you will go to hell. God the Father had already decided to send to hell those who do not believe that Jesus was born on this earth in order to save all the people of the world, that He has blotted out all their sins, and that He has done so to turn them into the sons of God by saving them perfectly. For this reason, people who had trusted only in their power will, in

the end, suffer destruction and fall through the sending of Jesus down to this earth by God the Father.

The Bible states, "*Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given by which we must be saved*" (Acts 4:12). It is because God the Father had made it so that one can receive salvation just by believing in Jesus. For this reason, all the people who try to go to Heaven by rejecting Jesus or not believing in Him, or want to go to Heaven on their own resolution without even wholeheartedly trying to know the truth that Jesus has become their Savior, will fall due to Jesus' coming into this world.

What Did a Man Named Simeon Say about Jesus?

Simeon said, "*This Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against*" (Luke 2:34). If Jesus hadn't



come to this earth and hence the good go to Heaven and the wicked go to hell, what would have happened to this world? If Jesus hadn't come to this earth, people who had lived kindly would have all gone to Heaven. In thinking like this, someone who was foolish and weak like me would not have been able to go to Heaven. However, because Jesus did come down to this earth, those who couldn't go to Heaven on their own are able to go to Heaven, and those who had tried to go to Heaven on their own are sent to hell. That was the gist of what Simeon was stating.

Thus, people who do not believe in Jesus will suffer destruction in the end because of Jesus. It is said that Simeon "*was just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel*" (*Luke 2:25*). This precisely means that Jesus is the Consolation of God and the salvation of God." As for those who truly want to receive salvation before God, their fall and rising depends on whether or not they believe in and follow the Lord with their heart. It also means that God the Father has already placed in advance those

who do not believe in Jesus outside the Kingdom of Heaven. Also, among people who believe in God, those who believe in the Lord with their own obstinacy, those who believe by mixing up Christianity with Confucianism, and those who struggle to go to Heaven by adding on their own virtuous deeds on to the faith of believing in Jesus will all suffer destruction and go to hell. In another words, people like that will suffer the curse beset by Jesus and go to hell, rather than being in the grace of great love bestowed by Jesus.

Simeon also said, "Among many Israelites, there are those waiting for the Consolation, but because of this Child, they will fall and rise." Saying they will suffer destruction because of Jesus means the same thing as dying twice. It is because Jesus said, "*And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire*" (*Revelation 20:15*).

Also, when we read the Word in the Book of Revelation chapter 21, it is said, "The cowardly and the unbelieving shall perish." Let us take a look at the



Book of Revelation chapter 21, verse 8. As it is said, “*But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death,*” the type of people who will suffer destruction is precisely the type of people who are afraid of the Lord. It is also written, “*There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love*” (1 John 4:18). It means that people fear because they haven’t been able to perfectly accept the salvation that the Lord has fulfilled.

If you accept God’s love perfectly, there is nothing of which to be afraid. If you believe in Jesus being your Savior and having blotted out all your sins, then you will no longer be afraid of God. However, the cowardly are afraid because they know they will perish because of Jesus. Even though people may believe in Jesus, those who do not believe that Jesus has completely cleansed their sins by bearing all

those sins through the baptism on our behalf will perish. Once they perish, they will feel ashamed and there will be no rewards. They will only be humiliated by people.

Whatever one does, there is always a loser and a winner in this world. No matter how close a race may be, by the smallest margin, a winner will always be decided. A winner may feel high in spirit, but a loser has nothing to say. Those who continue to have fear in their heart despite believing in Jesus will perish without exception. People who do not believe in Jesus will go to hell, and they shall have a part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone. This was called the second death. It means that anyone whose name is not written in the Book of Life will enter into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone. In short, people whose name isn’t written in the Book of Life will have no choice but to become the fallen.

As I repeat, people who are afraid of Jesus will go to hell, and those who do not believe in Him will also go to hell. To believe in Jesus is never a difficult



thing to do. All one has to do is to believe in Jesus with one's heart. Jesus has cleansed all our sins by receiving the baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River. By getting nailed to the Cross, He has gladly received the judgment for our sins. Because Jesus has become our Savior like so, we no longer have sins. The sins inside your heart will disappear only if you believe in this fact.

To believe in the Lord is actually to believe in the work accomplished by Jesus. This is something very simple. For example, someone is bringing out to a guest some boiled water that has a brown tint. Because this person who had boiled this water and prepared the cup of tea himself, he would know that it is tea, and the guest who will be taking the cup and drinking it will know that it is tea just by the scent and color of that drink. Moreover, if the host informs the guest that it is tea, the guest will be convinced that it surely is tea.

Just the same, all we have to do is to believe in the Lord like that. Because Jesus has saved us, He is

none other than our Savior. When Jesus turned thirty after having come to this earth, He received the baptism from John the Baptist and cleansed our sins completely. All we have to do is to believe in this with the heart. The Lord has cleansed the sins of all the sinners in this world completely. When Jesus received the baptism, He completely took on all the sins of the world. By completely taking on the sins like so and receiving the judgment not for His sins but for those sins that we have committed all the while nailed to the Cross, He has made us sinless. To believe in this fact is the true faith.

Dear fellow believers, do you believe in Jesus? Yes, I am sure that now you believe in Him through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Then, how do you know that if you believe in Jesus you will receive salvation? God the Father sent down His Son Jesus to this earth as the Savior, and Jesus washed away the sins of people by having taken on all the sins of the world by receiving the baptism from John the Baptist as He turned thirty. Because Jesus has



taken on all sins through the baptism, there aren't any sins in us. Without even asking us, He did that work by Himself. Right at this moment, Jesus is sitting at the right hand of God the Father as the Judge. At the end of all these sufferings, Jesus became our Savior. This is the Truth, and to believe in this Truth is the faith that you all must possess.

In Buddhism, they seek to "cultivate the way," and this so-called 'the way' fundamentally means to enlighten oneself of the path toward Heaven. Cultivating the way doesn't mean to attain the ability to levitate oneself. Rather, it means to gain answers to the questions: "Why was I born; between Heaven and hell, which path must I choose; and how can I enter Heaven for sure?"

In Buddhism, it is said that people do penance by sitting down facing a wall and meditating in order to rid themselves of the so-called 108 agonies that originated from their carnal desires existing in their heart as a method of being enlightened of 'the way.' However, one of the monks in Korea once wrote a

book titled, "How Can I Gain the Way When There Is None?" There fundamentally has to be 'the way' in Buddhism in order for a person to realize it. But because one cannot discover the so-called 'way' through ascetic practices in Buddhism, in the end, one will not be able to achieve that enlightenment.

The Bible states, "*Nor is there salvation in any other; for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved*" (Acts 4:12). God the Father sent His Son down to this earth and had Him save us human beings; those who believe in this Son. He promised that He would give them Heaven and take them as His children if they were to believe in this Truth of salvation in which Jesus Christ, who is God, took on all the sins of humankind and received the judgment on their behalf.

To believe in Jesus is in turn to believe in God. Jesus is the Son of God, and He is the God who created us. The Creator created us on this earth, and He has remitted and saved us from all the sins that we commit as we live in this world until death



because of the devil's temptations. By blotting out all your sins and mine, He has turned us into the righteous. All we have to do is to believe this.

We don't need to struggle to live only virtuously. Who in the world would commit a sin just because someone has told him to commit sins? Also, is there anyone who will not commit sins when he is told not to commit sins? We cannot fundamentally do things according to our own wishes. Will we not commit sins just because someone has told us not to commit sins? Because we are all so weak, we are beings that cannot do things according our own wishes. Only if God had given us from the beginning the power to not commit sins, we would not be committing sins. But if in fact God has given us the power to have no choice but to commit sins, then we cannot but be committing sins.

However, God said, "You cannot but commit sins. Therefore, I have saved you by sending My Son to you. So, My Son has become your Savior. Do you believe in My Son? If you believe, you will receive

salvation. But if you do not believe, you will go to hell." Dear fellow believers, having faith is something really simple. Believing in Jesus who is the Savior as the Savior is in turn faith. If you do have such faith, then you go to Heaven, but if you don't have such faith, then you go to hell. So, I wish for you all to go to Heaven by becoming those who believe in Him by all means. If you rely on your own strength, and if you stay obstinate and practice your own virtuous deeds to enter Heaven, then you will become afraid of God, and in the end, you will go to hell.

Dear fellow believers, I want you to become those who will go to Heaven and be prosperous by believing in Jesus. By receiving the baptism, Jesus has completely cleansed our sins. He has taken on all our sins and eradicated them completely. Dear fellow believers, do you have sins right at this moment? No, you do not. Faith is to believe in Jesus having taken away all the sins of the world. I want you to become the faithful. Unbelievers cannot but fall into the lake



that burns with fire and brimstone. People whose names aren't written in the Book of Life will fall into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, and this is said to be the second death. It is written, "*And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment*" (*Hebrews 9:27*). People who do not believe in the fact that Jesus is their Savior will fall into the fire that shall never be quenched. This precisely is what it means to fall.

Although every human being has the potential to both rise and fall at birth, if one does not believe in Jesus before one's death, the person will have no choice but to perish, that is, to fall into hell. What if there is someone who falls despite having believed in Jesus? Then, that person is someone who does not believe in the salvation that Jesus has cleansed all the sins of the world with His baptism and blood, and the person will go to hell. For this reason, we must believe. Do you believe in Jesus having blotted out all your sins? Truly, you have no choice but to believe.

One day, I was delivering the gospel to a young sister who was suffering from mysophobia. She said, "Please wait a moment. I apologize," and then went to the washroom. She came back having cleaned her hands. But then, within less than three minutes, she went back to clean her hands again. I came to think that the sister became mysophobic because she couldn't cleanse the sins she had committed. Anyway, without any mishap, I finished delivering the gospel to her. Then, I asked, "Jesus has taken away all your sins. Do you still have sins?" And she answered, "No, I do not." Then, after having thought for a considerable period of time, she asked me a question. What she asked was whether or not I can swear by the name of God, that there is no sin. So, I gave her my word right there in front of her.

I said, "By the name of God who has created the heavens and the earth and saved me, I give you my word that the Lord has taken away all my sins and your sins, and that they no longer exist." Just then, the mysophobic woman, with her eyes wide open,



asked me if it is indeed true three times. After I had firmly told her, "You no longer have sins for Jesus has truly taken on all your sins by receiving the baptism and vicariously received the judgment by getting hanged to the Cross," her mysophobia disappeared as if it had been cleansed. She used to go to a psychiatric hospital because of her condition. But just as she had heard the Word inside the Church, her mysophobia disappeared. The sister had mysophobia because of sin. She had become so because she had been thinking that she has been committing sins repeatedly because of others even though she had tried not to commit sins.

Like so, even though the people of the world may not seem to have mysophobia like the sister who washes her hands and feet, it could be that their hearts might have mysophobia. After Pilate ordered the crucifixion of Jesus, he washed his hands and stated that he has no sin over the verdict. He said, "I want you to be the ones to bear that sin entirely. I wanted release Him, but did you not tell me to kill

Him through crucifixion?"

It is said that Jesus came to this world and bore your burden and mine on His back. This also means that He will entirely bear on His back the sins of all those who will be born in the future, too. You must also know that people who believe in this fact will have their name be written in the Book of Life.

Dear fellow believers, when you realize the Truth, you become free. However, by any other religion, you will not be able to realize this Truth. It is because there is no fundamental 'Truth' that a person must realize as mentioned earlier. You must know the anecdote about the Buddhist monk Won Hyo long ago. While traveling toward India to attain the Way, He slept inside a cave one day. When he woke up at midnight, he became so thirsty that he drank some water in a bowl beside him. He then fell asleep shortly afterwards. As he woke up the next morning, he was surprised to find out that the thirst quenching water he had drunk the night before had been of a human skull. He vomited out all that was in his



stomach first. But after that, he was enlightened with a thought, "Why did I not feel sick when I drank the water last night?" He became enlightened - that everything is determined by his mind. So, he stopped traveling toward India, and returned back to Korea as a man who had attained the highest state of enlightenment.

All things in this world aren't fundamentally filthy, but rather, it is people's hearts that are filthy as it is written,

*"The heart is deceitful above all things,
And desperately wicked;*

Who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9). As a person sees a certain object, if the person thinks that it is filthy then it becomes something filthy, but if the person thinks that it is clean, then it becomes something clean. Filthy things of this world will disappear only when we first clean our hearts through which we view objects.

But, is it easy to possess such clean eyes of the heart? It is not. Precisely because there is a limit to

our putting in efforts to do so, we must believe in Jesus as our Savior. We must believe in Him to be recognized before God the Father and to enter Heaven where there is a limitless amount of joy. However, liars who do not believe in Jesus, the wicked, the abominable, murderers, the sexually immoral, drunkards, and also idolaters will in the end have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone for they will not be written in the Book of Life.

Dear fellow believers, do you lie often? To lie is a sin. You can go to hell just by telling a single lie. Only those who don't even have the slightest amount of sin can go to the Kingdom of Heaven. Dear fellow believers, who among you thinks you can go to Heaven and enjoy eternal life? All of humankind cannot go to Heaven even though it is the Lord's wish. Only those who believe in Jesus sent by God the Father get to go to Heaven.

Jesus, who was sent by God the Father, actually did come to this world. Since the coming of the



Savior, over 2,000 years has passed. Then, by what standard was the method for counting years all throughout the world determined? It is said that the Western calendar originated from Dionysius Exiguus (c. 470 – c. 544), a monk born in Scythia (now Russia). In the past when Rome had conquered the entire world, the ruling class thought that they had to unite all the subject states by setting up a specific calendar. So the Emperor of Rome gathered up all the scholars from the subject states and asked them which point in time would be appropriate as the starting year of the calendar. It was because at the time when Rome was in control of the entire known world of the western hemisphere, Rome had killed off all the rebels in each country but had let the scholars and artists live, instead of killing them. As a result, the historians answered and made a request to set the year when Jesus the Creator—who had become the Savior of humankind by having taken on the sins of all people, died on behalf of us all human beings, and come back to life—came as the starting

point of the calendar. Hence now, people of the entire world are using the birth of Jesus as the starting point of the Western calendar year.

Jesus having come to us is true and Jesus having blotted out all our sins is also true. To believe in fact is faith. The Lord Jesus said, *“If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free”* (John 8:31-32). Do you believe in that Truth? Do you believe in Jesus having blotted out all your sins and mine?

If You Possess Such Faith, Your Names Will Be Written in the Book of Life

Dear fellow believers, what do you think hell will be like? Hell is a place that we can never think lightly of. If Heaven is place always overflowing with indescribable joy, then hell is a place that is the exact opposite of Heaven. People often imagine that hell



exists underground. Like earth, hell is also a real place. It is because God made it. Hell is a place that is impossible for you to get out of once you fall into it. Dear fellow believers, if you do not want to go to hell where there is only agony and permanent chaos, you must believe in the work that God has done. You must look up to it and believe it to the end. If God has saved me, then I will be receiving salvation. If God has not saved me, then I will not be receiving salvation. Our will, efforts and also the virtuous deeds that we carry out will have no affect what so ever in the end on our salvation.

Because Jesus has saved us, we believe in Jesus, and because of this, our names got written in the Book of Life for sure. Sinners will fall into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone because they lie that there still remain sins. They cannot profess the Truth because they don't believe in Jesus who has blotted out all their sins. Not because of ethical lies but because of lies before God, they are bound to hell. Clearly, we have no sin because Jesus has taken on

the sins of all humankind by receiving the baptism. People who do not have such faith ask in return, "How can you say that all the sins of this world have disappeared through Jesus if in fact you are continuing to sin even right now?" Not being able to believe like that is precisely lying. People who cannot believe in Jesus being their Savior cannot but lie.

God has clearly blotted out all our sins. From God's view, all the sins have disappeared for certain. We must believe in this fact. The lie is to say that God hadn't blotted out all our sins, merely from a human perspective. Such a person shall have his or her part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone. This is the second death.

Dear fellow believers, do not lie before God. There truly are numerous people who lie often in this world, but at least before God, never speak lies. People who do not believe in Jesus according to the gospel Truth of the water and the Spirit cannot but lie before God. They say, "If you believe in Jesus, you



should live virtuously. Even if you believe in Jesus, there still are sins. We always commit sins; sins always exist.”

There are two types of people among those who believe in Jesus: One type of people is those who lie to God, and the other is those who profess the Truth. People who lie to God must repent and turn back from their evil ways. They must repent and believe in the Lord, saying, “Dear God, I have done wrong. God has blotted out all my sins. I lack true faith, so please grant me a much greater faith.” With just a single strand of true faith, God will see that faith because His eyes are sharp, and He will send you to His Kingdom of Heaven. Do you believe?

Do you want to go to Heaven, or do you want to go to hell? I yearn to go to Heaven. Those yearning to go to Heaven must believe in Jesus. To believe in Jesus means to believe in Jesus being my Savior and in Him having blotted out all my sins. To believe in Jesus means to believe in Jesus being the Lord Savior who has eradicated all my sins. You all must have

such faith.

Dear fellow believers, if you lie before God, you will go to hell. You can go to Heaven only by not lying. You can perhaps lie before people, but I want you to never lie spiritually before God. As you may already know, people who do not lie prosper. People who believe in the work that Jesus has done by coming to this earth will prosper and go to Heaven. But those who do not believe in Jesus will fall. Today’s Scripture passage says, *“Because of this Child, many will fall and rise. This Child is destined for a sign which will be spoken against.”* It means that Jesus is the sign that will be spoken against.

People who do not believe cynically say, “Must I believe in Jesus? Despite having lived virtuously, if I do not believe in Jesus, do I go to hell?” They think of Jesus as someone trivial. The phrase ‘to speak against’ means to speak ill of, but it is said that Jesus was destined for a sign that will be spoken against. It means that Jesus came to this earth not only to save us but also to be blamed by those who do not believe.



If we were to tell those who are getting thrown into the burning fire of hell that they are going hell because of not believing in Jesus, how many of them do you think would not slander Jesus? Questioning how He could send them to hell like this just because they do not believe in Him, they get angry against Him saying they would rather go to hell. Hence, defining faith on their own and questioning, to say, "Must I also believe in the Lord like all the righteous?" is precisely what speaking against Him is.

All the religions in this world are speaking against Jesus. They say, "Why do you say that your religion is the best and despise us? We can understand people who believe in Mohammed or Buddha, but you who believe in Jesus are truly self-complacent. We will never again make acquaintance with you." Like so, most religions hate and slander Christians who believe in and follow Jesus. However, the fact that people of other religions are slandering God is truly deplorable, although their slandering of Christians for their lacking is tolerable. However,

what is worse is that there are people who speak against God because they are headed for hell for not believing in the Lord.

Nevertheless, let us remember the fact that Jesus was destined to be spoken against by people. Jesus is the signpost. For example, let us consider for a moment that there appears two forked paths in front of a traveler going about his way, and there stands a signpost directing the path on the left as the road leading to Jeonla Province and the path on the right as the road leading to Gyeongbuk Province so that the traveler may find his way. Like so, Jesus is the One who acts as the signpost in our lives, opening up the path to either Heaven or hell.

Faith means to believe in the Truth with one's heart. If you were to regard those words as being excessively self-compliant, your hearts will gradually be unable to believe in such Truth. Instead of putting forth your faith in the Lord, if you were to claim having carried out numerous virtuous deeds and believe only in those efforts, then that in itself is



precisely the short cut to hell. People who do not have faith by refusing the existence of Jesus itself and going against Jesus' will slander Jesus. Instead of seeking just some flimsy tactic, thinking that so long as you get to go to Heaven, any sort of method is acceptable, believe in the Lord without a single ounce of doubt. Just admit your own lacking and believe in the Savior. If you do so, you can all go to Heaven.

Having gone to so-called Heaven in imagination, it was so good that it was simply a paradise. An angel plays the harp at one side, and another angel comes to me opening its wings and says, 'Dear son of the Master, climb onto my wings.' It was a place overflowing with so much beauty and joy with sweet fruits hanging on the trees all throughout the year; an ocean that is as clear and clean as the sea of glass, and coral. Quietly thinking about 'How did I come here,' I came to the conclusion that I came to Heaven because I had believed in the Lord. When I asked God where my friend so-and-so had gone, He told

me that the friend had gone to hell. When I asked Him again why, He told me that he is suffering agony in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone because he did not believe in Jesus who is the signpost for Heaven and hell.

You will go to hell if you are too obstinate to believe in the Lord. The Lord said, "*But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God*" (*Romans 2:5*). If you believe in Him with your heart than you will go to heaven, but if you don't you will go to hell. This is precisely the signpost that God has set upon us human beings. Let us quickly throw away idle obstinacies and believe in God. Even if by some chance the will of the Lord does not suit our hearts, we should nevertheless have faith. We are nothing more than just a creation, and He is the Creator. Therefore, don't you think that we must believe in the work that the Creator has done in order to go to Heaven? We must put down our own



thoughts and believe before all else. It is good, and we are able to believe the Truth because Jesus has blotted out all my sins. We believe in order to receive the remission of sins, and because we believe, the sins exist no more. In doing so, we will realize why Jesus is good, and we will start believing in Jesus.

At first, I was a Buddhist in my youth. Confucianism and Buddhism had already come into Korea almost two thousands years ago. However, it had only been 100 years since the introduction to Korea of Protestant Christianity, which believes in Jesus. Because Christianity was something so unfamiliar to me, I did not know Jesus very well, and hence, I didn't have anything to do with the Lord. After that, as I began believing in Jesus, I just believed in Him in order to receive forgiveness for my sins. I did not know His true will completely. However, as I got to know more and more about Jesus, I felt myself becoming closer to paradise.

But if I hadn't had the proper faith like this, I would have been destroyed and fallen. People slander

Jesus because they could suffer destruction for not believing in Him like that. So, God has purposefully destined Jesus as the sign that will be spoken against, as it can be seen from the words, "Why don't you receive some resentment and hate before those going to hell." On the contrary, however, Jesus was established for those who believe in and follow Him as the signpost "to make them be thankful to Him, and to have them be thankful before God the Father as well."

Jesus is also the signpost for the blessing and the curse. Simeon, whom God had acknowledged as righteous, spoke of this matter through the Bible. Among those who believe in Jesus today, there are those that will go to hell for believing in Jesus just on the outside but not wholeheartedly. On the other hand, there are those that will go to Heaven by sincerely believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. There are people who will go to hell for having been obstinate to the end, not believing in Jesus, while others who have done nothing well, been endlessly



lacking, and have done many wrongful deeds get to go to Heaven.

Simeon tells us here that this is the way set by God. He also tells us that Jesus having come to this world, was to pierce the souls of people. It is said, "*A sword will pierce through your own soul.*" The Word of God pierces not our body but our soul. It is because He accurately points out the sins we have committed. He said, "From the heart of a human being comes out things such as evil thoughts, thefts, murders, fornications, pride, foolishness, crazy feeling, lewdness, an evil eye, strife and so on, and that person is none other than you," and like this, when you go forth before Jesus, your sins get exposed. Whenever you stand before Jesus, you feel ashamed. It is because no matter how kind a person may be in this world, by the piercing of the Word of God, the person will realize in the end that all people are sinners before God. Therefore, we receive salvation by believing in Jesus having taken on all the sins we have committed by receiving the baptism

and in Jesus having received the judgment on our behalf by going to the Cross. However, if we do not believe the Truth, the sins will remain as it were, and thus, we would have no choice but to go to hell.

A man named Simeon saw the Baby Jesus and spoke about this faith. Mary, Jesus' mother of the flesh, as well as all those ordinary people gathered inside the Temple and listened to those words. Through the Bible, you and I have also heard those words. God had spoken those words to you and me through the man named Simeon. Jesus sends people to Heaven as well as hell. At times, He becomes the sign that will be spoken against and also the sword that will pierce through our own souls. This Jesus is none other than God. God is He who accurately points out the sins of our hearts, and He is the Creator who has created us.

Dear fellow believers, we who believe in Jesus should think once more about the meaning behind the Lord having been born on this earth as we greet Christmas. We must engrave deep in our hearts and



give thanks to the Lord for Jesus having come to this world in the image of man in order to save all humankind.

Dear fellow believers, let us believe in this Jesus, and let us all go to Heaven and meet again. No single person should go to hell. Amen. ☒



SERMON

12



CONTENTS



Believe in Jesus Christ Truly in Your Heart

< Luke 2:25-35 >

“And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ. So he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when the parents brought in the Baby Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law, he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said:

**‘Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace,
According to Your word;
For my eyes have seen Your salvation’**

Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples,

**A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles,
And the glory of Your people Israel.’**

And Joseph and His mother marveled at those things which were spoken of Him. Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, ‘Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against (yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.’”

People Who Had Always Been Waiting for the Savior

The account of today’s Scripture passage is a story that occurred on the eighth day after the birth of Jesus Christ when Mary and Joseph came to the Temple of Jerusalem with the Baby Jesus to carry out



circumcision and give the first offering before God. It is the same today as it was in the past. People who wait for God as well as those who believe in God are all over the earth. They all have been waiting for the coming of the Savior as ever.

There was a man named Simeon living in Israel, and this man was waiting anxiously for the coming of the Savior, Jesus Christ. It was revealed to him that he would not see death before he had seen Christ who was to be born on this earth. Just then, filled with the Spirit in his heart, this man came into the Temple of Jerusalem. It was when Mary and the Baby Jesus had come into the Temple of Jerusalem to offer sacrifice before God. The man named Simeon saw the Baby Jesus and took Him up in his arms. Furthermore, he returned glory to God and said, *“Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, According to Your word; for my eyes have seen Your salvation which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, a light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel”*

(Luke 2:29-32).

After blessing the mother and the Baby, he went on to say, *“Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against (yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also)”* (Luke 2:34-35). This means that the man named Simeon, a believer of God, recognized the Baby Jesus who was born on this earth by the Holy Spirit of God. He also said that the fall and rising of many in Israel, as well as humankind, are dependent upon this Baby Jesus. Here, Simeon was delivering words by having recognized the Baby Jesus properly.

He said that Jesus is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against; and things really did come true according to those words. God created all things in the universe. He is the Master of all things. He also created human beings in His image. He gives people salvation by saving them from sins, but He judges those who do not believe. Like so, people who



believe that God is the Creator and the King of all kings become thankful for and believe that the Baby Jesus Christ came to this earth in human flesh. We human beings are all so very meager creations. However, even though we are meager like that, as we think about His first advent to this earth for us, we become very thankful, and deep emotions start to arise in our hearts. It is a glory that simply cannot be expressed into words.

As we celebrate Christmas, we see Christians of this day and age greeting Christmas with just emotional inclinations, without even knowing the true meaning of Christmas or Jesus Christ properly. Like Simeon and the shepherds shown here, it must be a time of precious blessing when one realizes the true meaning of the coming of the Lord, but Christians aren't doing that. In Korea especially, Christianity has become one of the worldly religions, and thus, people aren't showing any interest in what God is saying. They tend to think that as long as one believes in Jesus and becomes a kind person, does

not steal, and does good deeds, then that is okay. If this is the case, Christianity is fine and so is Buddhism. They tend to think that so long as virtue is sought, any religion is fine. Like so, Christianity today is becoming secularized.

When Roman Catholicism became secularized, Protestantism arose about 500 years ago, and the Reformists claimed, "Let us return to the Word of God. Let us believe in God through the Word." Since then, at least there were many priests who revered God and conservative believers who pleaded for people to truly believe in the Lord properly, and thus, they sacrificed themselves much for the gospel and God. But these days, despite the situation being like so, there are just too many people who place too much weight on how to grow the church, how to gather up many congregations and live prosperously, and how to enjoy wealth and fame driving nice looking cars.

As we believe in the Lord in this declining age, we must correctly know about Jesus Christ and



wholeheartedly believe in Him. God came to this earth approximately 2,000 years ago. Jesus Christ, who is God, came to this earth back then, and what we must truly know correctly is who exactly He is and what did He do after coming to this earth.

First of all, who is Jesus?

He is the Master of all the creations. He is your God as well as mine. Though He is God, He became a creation Himself, that is, a human being, for us sinners. Though He is God, He was born on this earth in the image of us human beings through the body of a woman. Jesus was born in the image of a human being in such a shabby place in order to save us from sins. Those who believe that Jesus Christ is God, the Judge, and also the Savior who has come to this earth to blot out their sins will be able to enjoy rising before God and live out eternal life, receiving the blessing of becoming God's children. However, those who do not believe like that will surely perish.

Your Rise and Fall Depends on Jesus Christ

This man named Simeon said, "This Child was born on this earth for the fall and rising of many people." On what does the fall and rising of all of us human beings depend on? You will enjoy the rising and suffer the fall depending on whether or not you accept in your heart the work that Jesus has done. He is the Son of God and the very God who had created all things of the universe, the One who has saved you by becoming a human being, coming down to this earth in order to save you from sins, vicariously receiving the baptism and dying on the Cross, and being resurrected from that death. On whom does the fate of humankind depend? It depends on none other than Jesus Christ. I am saying that this is our fate.

The entire history of the world is His (the Lord's) history. He puts all things of the universe into motion and carries out His work according to His wishes and plans. Therefore, as for all the people in the world



regardless of whom they are—whether they are the brothers and sisters in the Church, whether they are under a communist regime, or whether they live in Buddhist countries or not—the vicissitudes of their fall and rising depend on whether or not they accept Jesus Christ as their God and Savior. It is said that this Child was born for the fall and rising of many in Israel. It means that you can become God's children if you believe that Jesus Christ came to this earth and gave us everlasting life by taking on the sins of the world by receiving the baptism, receiving the judgment for our sins vicariously by getting nailed to the Cross and shedding His blood, and then being resurrected from the dead. You can receive all the blessings before God, or on the contrary, you can also receive all the curses.

We have nothing to boast of before God. We have something to boast of only when we think on our own, but before God, there can never be anything for us to boast about. It is actually so. I'm not saying this out of my humbleness, but rather, I am saying

this because we actually do not have anything to boast about. Do you really think that there is something for you to boast of when you stand before a perfect God who has created the universe and everything in it? On the contrary, you have nothing but lacking. You are strong headed, false and despicable at heart. You are lacking, very self-righteous, wanting to receive love, but not knowing how to cherish others, and wanting to receive care, but not knowing how to care for others.

If you are still trying to save yourself through your own virtuous deeds, you are challenging God out of your arrogance. Although God has told us not to put any other gods before Him, you have blasphemously become an idol yourself before God. Although you are truly lacking before God, you are challenging God just as Buddha had tried to exalt himself higher than the true God saying, "I am my own Lord throughout heaven and earth." From God's view, all the people in this world, that is, all the creations made by God, without exception are those



who are lacking. We are existences that are lacking, weak, filthy, and loathsome, always committing sins, constantly having evil thoughts, and doing evil deeds. The Lord said that human beings are those who are filthiest among all things. He also said that what comes out from the human heart are the twelve sins—evil thoughts, murders, fornications, covetousness, strife, lewdness, pride, foolishness, and so on—and that people are born with these sins and actually commit them as they live out their life.

However, these people are blasphemous beings who try to reign on top of God by creating religions and making up doctrines. They place themselves high above those doctrines all the while trying to look at the speck in others' eyes but unwilling to perceive the plank in their own eyes.

We Shall Have No Other Gods before God

We must realize on our own that we are too

insufficient. Only when we know ourselves correctly, will we be able to receive Jesus Christ as our Savior and believe the fact that He came to this earth, received the baptism from John the Baptist in order to save us, vicariously died on the Cross, and was resurrected from the dead. Jesus Christ now sits at the right hand of the throne of God the Father as the King of all kings

People who do not know their lacking cannot receive Jesus Christ. To not receive Jesus Christ is to not accept all the works of the salvation of Jesus which He has accomplished in order to save us by coming down to this earth, taking on all our sins, and vicariously receiving the judgment on our behalf on the Cross. Therefore, to not accept the works accomplished by Jesus in our hearts is to become servants of the Devil before God.

The Devil wasn't created as the Devil from the beginning. An angel became the Devil after having



risen against God but then getting put down by Him. People can all too well become the children of the Devil, should they do wrong. In conclusion, those who do not know their fundamental nature do not realize their lacking, and therefore, they think they don't need God's help and the work of salvation He has done. Hence, they become the children of the Devil. They tend to think that they are an entity close to perfection as if they were some kind of a stone image of Buddha, having no weaknesses, unyielding to cold even in frigid winds, and unyielding to heat even in the hot winds.

But human beings are never an entity like that. God says that human beings are like reeds swaying in the wind. Damaged, ripped, weak, lacking, dirty, filthy, and feeble beings are precisely yours and my self-images. For this reason, we are in need of the Lord and Savior Jesus. We are in need of the God of salvation. For this reason, God had to become a human being in order to come as the Savior for you and me. For this reason, Jesus Christ came to this

earth as the Savior, the King of kings, and God. That is why we call Him Christ. He came to this earth in human flesh as God and the High Priest of the Kingdom of Heaven. In order to save us from sins, He personally became a human being, took our sins unto His body through the baptism, vicariously gave up His body on the Cross, and shed His blood. Having done this, He was able to save you and me. He has saved us like that.

Do You Want to Be Well Off?

If you want to be well off, I want you to believe in the ministry work that Jesus Christ did by coming as your Savior. Jesus Christ is your Savior and God. To be specific, He saved you from all the sins by coming to this earth, receiving the baptism, taking on all our sins onto His body, getting hanged on the Cross to cleanse them, vicariously suffering through cruel hardships, and vicariously receiving the



judgment for our sins. To be prosperous in your life, all you have to do is to believe in that Jesus, who has made you the children of God like that, as your Savior. However, if you do not believe in Jesus Christ, you will fall. If you do not believe in Jesus Christ, you will suffer destruction. That is why the Bible tells us so.

That Jesus Christ has saved us is the Truth that is all so simple, brief, and clear. It is something neither difficult like philosophy nor futile like Zen Buddhism where they insist on everything returning to where it had started. It is something that is precise and brief. Just as Jesus said, "*I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life*" (John 14:6), He is precisely the Truth, the Life, and the Way to Heaven. Truly Jesus vicariously became our Savior. Having come by the water and the blood, He became our Savior.

Yet, why do you not believe? Do you have some pain in your heart? Do you have the doubt that how can this be if there is God? Fundamentally, weren't you someone who was to suffer destruction before

God? Weren't you someone who was originally destined for hell? You are not qualified to say such things as how could God do this to me if there really is God. What qualifications and what right do you have? Your ancestors were born in sin and such a plight and have sent down to you sins and the curse. Yet, having been born like that, what right do you have that you can say to God, "Why did You make me like this," and "If there indeed is God, how could He do this to me?" It is the fault of your ancestors. It is our fault. It isn't something we can resent God for. We should just have faith in God and in the works that Jesus Christ has done. How can we dare to judge God? That is precisely arrogance. People like that are arrogant. Such people must listen to the words of Socrates when he said, "Know yourself." People like that are those who still do not believe in God. We must throw away doubt and pride and believe in the Lord.

It is said, "*This Child is destined to become a sign for the fall and rising of many in Israel.*" It



means that Jesus Christ is a sign for us. It is also said, "To those who believe in the name of Jesus Christ, He gave the right to become children of God," but what does it mean, as stated here, to believe in the name of Jesus Christ? It is to believe that Jesus Christ was born on this earth, took on your sins and mine by receiving the baptism from John the Baptist at the age of thirty, died vicariously by getting crucified on our behalf, and became the true Savior by being resurrected from the dead. This is precisely what our acceptance of Jesus Christ into our heart is all about.

What does it mean to have faith in Jesus? Is it true that all we have to do is believe in the name of Jesus itself? To believe in the work that He has done is to genuinely believe in the name of Jesus Christ. It is not like saying, "I believe in You," with just a picture hanging on a wall. I went to a professor's house in Mongolia. The people living in the house had a photo of the head of Lamaism hanging on the wall, and on the other wall, they had a picture of Jesus hanging. Despite having done something like

that, they told me that they believe in Jesus.

Is it faith by having a picture frame of Jesus hanging on a wall and saying I believe in Jesus? What wrong did God do to you? Whether or not you believe in God depends on your volition, but the truth is that God has never done anything wrong unto us. God is the One who supplies everything to us. Also, because God is merciful, He is someone who has been enduring our evil deeds for a long, long time. But why do we not believe in Him who is all so full of grace like that? If we do not believe, we shall fall in the end.

What does it mean to fall? When we read the Book of Esther, there comes Queen Vashti. One day, as the king was feasting in a banquet he had held, he asked his wife, that is, Queen Vashti, to come because he wanted to boast her great beauty. He had called her in order to show her off to his officials. However, the queen was also holding a feast somewhere else, so despite several more encouragements from the king, she said, "Just as the king is holding a feast, I



am also holding a feast. So, know that and tell the king I cannot go." What happened after that day? The king took away the queen's royal position. It means that the he had the queen stripped of her clothes and cast out into the streets. Dear fellow believers, I want you to know that to fall has a concept similar to that.

The Lord said that such people shall fall; but to that, some people say, "Yes, if You want me to fall, then let me fall." Dear fellow believers, once you fall, such a great misery will fall upon you. If you don't know what it means to fall, you might think in your heart, "Let me fall if He wants me to fall, and let me rise if He wants me to rise." But, falling is not a simple curse like that: The path toward the fall is none other than death. It is getting stripped of all their possessions and receiving the curse. It means that if they do not believe in the work of Jesus Christ, they will lose everything that they have. They will lose their life, and even their soul will be thrown into the fire that shall never be quenched. They will have all their wealth taken away, including children and

everything else, leaving out nothing. They will receive such curses and suffer death without even realizing what is happening because of being thickheaded.

Like so, there are so many people holding fast to their stubbornness, not understanding instead of being able to understand when told what this Word means. If we were to say to those whose liver has rotted completely due to much drinking, "If you drink any more, you will die by liver cirrhosis," they will say, "It's all right. Leave it be." Like these people whose mind is stupefied by being drenched in alcohol, people who are foolish do not listen to the Word of the Lord.

Jesus, who is God, came to this earth and became the Savior for you. But you must clearly understand what happens to you if you do not believe in this grace and this Truth. If you do not believe, you will suffer destruction, but if you believe, you will enjoy prosperity. I want you to know that whether or not you become victorious, and whether or not your life



prospers does not depend on what good or bad you do. In the Book of Romans, it is written, “*So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy*” (*Romans 9:16*). Your life does not become successful just because you do good deeds unto others, not do anything evil, and go on living carrying out work well and sincerely. You must believe in Jesus Christ as your Savior, and you must believe in and accept the works Jesus Christ has done.

People tend to think that accepting what the Lord has done means requiring something great from them, but all they have to have is a believing heart. It is that simple. Dear fellow believers, whether or not you believe in God is what determines your fall and rising. As I’ve told you, to believe in one’s heart is not something difficult. It is something simple. All you have to do is to open up your heart and accept the Lord and His Word. If you want to fall, don’t accept, but if you want to enjoy prosperity, then all you have to do is to accept.

People who ask why their life is in such a mess and those who think that they truly don’t know why their life is so miserable must look back upon themselves. “Did I truly believe in the Lord? Am I in this mess even though I have believed in Him?” I want you to reflect upon yourself with these questions whether or not you did truly and properly believe in Jesus. I want you to think whether or not you have followed Him after starting to believe in Him, and whether or not you have followed the Word spoken by Jesus Christ by faith. The entire humankind, from the greatest to the feeblest, must accept Jesus Christ as their Savior. They must accept the works that He has carried out to save them all. Only then will they be able to receive blessings. You will be able to receive the blessings of heaven and earth. If you not accept, you will suffer destruction. You will lose everything.

As we welcome this Christmas season, we really must properly know its meaning. It isn’t simply a celebration of the birth of the Holy God on this earth.



God, who had created all things of the universe, as well as you and me, came down to this earth in human flesh. He came down and saved you and me. You must bear in mind that He has saved us from sins, destruction, and curse. Therefore, we all must accept Jesus by faith. If we do not accept, then we will suffer destruction, but if we do accept, then we will prosper. As Christmas draws near, we must think about that. We must reflect upon ourselves and think whether or not we truly believe. Then, after bracing ourselves up once again, we must introspect ourselves and put things in order if we are found not to have believed in Jesus properly. When we think about these things, this Christmas can become a very meaningful festive day.

Sending some Christmas cards and doing things that look good to the world aren't everything right. Has God done anything wrong to you? God has done nothing wrong to you. He continues to move the four seasons, provide us with sunlight, give us fresh air, and show mercy on you and me. Even though you

and I are lacking, He has treated us with mercy. But if a person were to still not believe in Him, resent Him, and not believe in Jesus Christ as one's own Savior, then that person will surely go down the path toward destruction, that is, the path toward eternal death. He will lose much more than what he has now. He will eventually lose everything. Also, he will be receiving every curse instead.

However, men of faith will be blessed with rising. People who genuinely believe in God will believe in God's Word, follow the words of God's servants who lead them, and unite with the Church despite the lacking in their acts. Such people get to prosper.

It is said that these Words spoken by Jesus will pierce the souls of people like a sword. I hope you will remember that. Just as you get pierced in your soul, quickly become honest and look back on why you are getting pierced. Think quickly about what is wrong with you and what you must believe. Then, I want you to quickly believe. I do not want you to just listen to the sermon and then forget about it as you



leave your seat.

Dear fellow believers, don't you really want to prosper? Do you not want to be well off? Brothers and sisters, do you want to be all well off or not? Do you want to be well off only in the flesh? The Lord said that if one wants to be well off spiritually, he must first accept the Lord as his Savior at heart. Then, his flesh can also be well off. If you want to be well off, that's what you must do. To the saints in His Church, the Lord said, *"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you"* (*Matthew 6:33*). If one attends God's Church but do not know about the Truth and follow it, then that person is mentally deficient. If the person attends our Church but does not know how Jesus Christ has saved him, then he is surely a mentally deficient person. Furthermore, if the person attends our Church but says that Jesus Christ having saved him by the water and the Spirit is not correct, then that person is not just mentally deficient but completely insane.

Jesus Christ Isn't Always the God of Love

If people hear and accept the Truth, God will bless them according to the Truth as it is, but if they do not accept it, then God will become the God of wrath toward them instead of becoming the God of love. He will rip them into small pieces and put them into a manure pail so that they may not be recovered. If someone else were to try to use them by picking them up and cleaning them, God will place them under a chopper and cut them up so that the person won't be able to do so. Also, if someone were to try to sew them up and use them, God will not let that happen by throwing them into a pit of fire and burning them so that no one may be able to take them out. Like so, the Lord is the God of justice.

As we greet Christmas, we must properly know and believe in Jesus Christ well. We mustn't think lightly of Jesus. I'm saying we mustn't think trivially of Him. I'm saying we mustn't think frivolously of Him. We mustn't always think of Jesus Christ as the



Baby Jesus in the bosom of Mary. Jesus Christ is God who has created humankind, including that Mary. Dear fellow believer, you mustn't ever think trivially of Jesus Christ. What I'm saying is that Jesus Christ isn't someone whom you can choose to believe in. Also, He isn't someone whom you can choose to believe according to the Word. "All I have to do is to believe somehow. Also, all I have to do is to go to church and live virtuously, not doing any evil deeds. All God has to do is to give me much blessing for I am like that. All He has to do is give much blessing." Are you perhaps thinking like this? Are you trying to make a good living by fawning on this place in whatever way possible? If I had been born in the Old Testament times, I would have said to such people, "Repent, you brood of vipers! You, children of the Devil!"

The Lord came to this earth in order to save us who are lacking by delivering us from destruction and curse. Even though He came in flesh as our Savior, He was never a weak person. He is the

perfect One. He is just, and He is the omniscient and omnipotent God. He is the Creator. It is said that His eyes are like the flame. Before Him, you cannot hide anything; you cannot hide your heart hidden deep within your spirit; you cannot hide your thoughts, actions, your past, present, and future. As you stand before Him, that is, if you go before Him without having believed in Him, you won't be able to avoid His judgment. Hence, He had no choice but to come to this earth so that He might save us from sins and destruction. Moreover, by urging His servants, He is admonishing you to believe in Him.

Dear fellow believer, this Christmas, I want you to listen carefully about Jesus and the works that He has done, and believe. Rather than putting forth your dim-witted obstinacy, I want you to believe firmly. Despite having stayed in the Church for a long time after having received the remission of sins, there are those who try to obstruct the spreading of the Word and put much weight on things of the flesh. But please do not do that. God is the God of love, but



when a person crosses a certain line, He will stop tolerating that person. God isn't always merciful. When a person crosses a certain line, He will dispose of that person. Before God, seek His mercy every day, and believe in Him. To believe in God is to believe in Jesus. Do you understand this? To believe with heart is to have genuine faith.

What the Lord earnestly wants from us are things such as these: "Truly believe in Me. Believe that I am your Savior. Believe that I am your God." If you believe in Him and His Word, your soul will be led by Him, and if you receive His guidance, you will constantly be walking on the right path even though you don't want to. However, if you don't believe, you won't be able to receive guidance from the Lord even if you want to. That is why I continue to ask you to believe in Him.

Do you think that I am speaking too harshly today? But that is never the case. I want those of you who feel as though your soul is getting pierced a lot to repent. It is said that His Words will pierce

through soul of people like a sword. When your soul gets pierced, all you have to do is to calculate the result fast and believe in His Word quickly. If you do so, you will never again be pierced. Do you like it when someone stabs at you and attacks? It is never good.

God also endures much and waits for you. Believe in God while He is still enduring long. While there is still a chance, believe. Good times like this will not last forever. Peace in family, peace in society, and peace in country will not last forever either. Only He knows what will happen and when.

As I greet this Christmas, I get to see and recognize even more insufficiencies of my own. However, I believe that the Lord came to this earth and became our true Savior in order to save you and me who are so lacking like this. And so, in the end, I give thanks for everything. I realize and thus am thankful that Jesus Christ has given us the great blessing of becoming the children of God and being able to enjoy the glory of God in the future by saving



us, who are so lacking like this, from sins, destruction, and curse. Furthermore, I am genuinely thankful for the fact that He came to this earth personally in order to do the righteous work for our salvation.

But one thing that saddens me is that there are still many people who do not believe in Jesus Christ as their God and Savior. When I see them, my heart aches very much. I think that as long as I can guide them into receiving the remission of sins, I will be able to endure any kind of hardship. If my heart is like that, then wouldn't God deplore much more in His heart as He see the unbelieving? There are exactly two things that God gives us human beings: One is the blessing, and the other is the curse.

If a certain man were to receive the curse, don't you think that He will deplore so much by Himself? What is more, how great do you think His desire to give him the blessing would be? Don't you think that God deplores so much to see human beings created in His image arriving at death after having continuously

walked on a path toward the curse due to lack of discretion and having no faith in Him?

Dear fellow believers, you must know God's heart. You must know the merciful heart of the preachers in God's Church. Do not think towards me, "He is making personal attacks." I am someone who has the task of having people receive blessings before God. However, what benefit would there be if I were to say to those who do not believe, "It's all right. Don't worry. It's a joyful Christmas, so let's have some delicious food and enjoy"? Of course, people who amuse themselves will eat well and enjoy well even if I don't say such words. Nevertheless as a gospel preacher, I must show you the way. Should there be a way for you to receive God's blessings now and in future, I must deliver to you what God finds joy in so that you may receive the blessings, regardless of what the past is in your mind. You must believe, and I must deliver God's Word. Dear fellow believers, as we greet Christmas, I want you to believe in the Lord with all your heart. To believe in



Him wholeheartedly is precisely to receive Him.

Dear fellow believers, Jesus Christ came to this earth in order save us, who are so lowly and lacking and always going against His wishes. Like so, He has saved you and me by the water and the blood. Hence, those who believe in the work that He has done by coming to this earth will rise, but those who do not believe in it shall fall. They will suffer destruction. There is never a middle ground.

Jesus Christ is the Life for you and me. He is also the Savior and the Author of blessing for you and me. He is truly the consummation of all treasures. Therefore, when Jesus Christ comes to you, you must greet Him into your heart and believe in Him.

Dear fellow believers, let us receive blessing by believing in Him. You and I are beings that are always lacking; those who cannot do anything special before God. Hence, we should go on living at least by the gifts of God-given blessings. If we were to kick away God-given blessings as well, with what strength do you think we can go on living? Dear

fellow believers, I hope you will all truly become recipients of the blessing by believing in that wonderful grace and salvation bestowed by the Lord. I wish for all the saints of the Church in Korea and all our coworkers and believers throughout the world to receive the blessing of God by believing in Him.

Today, we received a message from Pastor Peter Lee in Vietnam. He said he got to know the gospel of the water and the Spirit properly by reading our books, and hence, he was able to believe correctly. Also, he said he would carry out the work of spreading this gospel there. From Pakistan, a young man who had read our books and received the remission of sins sent us news along with his confession of faith. He said that he was currently distributing Urdu booklets of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and that he wanted to translate our books into the Urdu Language.

Those who have met the gospel of the water and the Spirit first must share the blessing they have spiritually received from God with others. As we



share it with others, it may seem as though we have nothing left, but in truth, God fills us again with a great many things. Even those who are so far away in places such as Vietnam and Pakistan receive the blessing and share that blessing with others. Yet, if those close to us aren't able to receive the blessing because they do not believe, then how can there be anything as deplorable as this?

Let us all receive the blessing by believing in the Lord properly. ☒



SERMON

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God's Love and Saving Grace Bestowed On the Lowly

< Luke 1:26-38 >

“Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. And having come in, the angel said to her, ‘Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!’ But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. Then the angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the

Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.’ Then Mary said to the angel, ‘How can this be, since I do not know a man?’ And the angel answered and said to her, ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God. Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren. For with God nothing will be impossible.’ Then Mary said, ‘Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word.’ And the angel departed from her.”

< Luke 1:45-55 >

“Blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord.’ And Mary said:



**'My soul magnifies the Lord,
And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.
For He has regarded the lowly state of His
maidservant;
For behold, henceforth all generations will call
me blessed.
For He who is mighty has done great things
for me,
And holy is His name.
And His mercy is on those who fear Him
From generation to generation.
He has shown strength with His arm;
He has scattered the proud in the imagination
of their hearts.
He has put down the mighty from their
thrones,
And exalted the lowly.
He has filled the hungry with good things,
And the rich He has sent away empty.
He has helped His servant Israel,
In remembrance of His mercy,**

**As He spoke to our fathers,
To Abraham and to his seed forever.'"**

The Lord Wants to Be Born in Our Hearts

As we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ in this Christmas season, we should remember that the Spirit of Christ, the Holy Spirit comes into the hearts of those who welcome Jesus as their Savior and receive the remission of sins by believing what God said and what Jesus did through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Our salvation from sins is similar to Mary's conception of Jesus through her obedience. Likewise, in this Christmas season, we should all receive God's Word into our hearts as Mary did.

Mary didn't get pregnant by force. She became pregnant by accepting the angel's message from God and obeying. By accepting God's Word, Mary could conceive and give birth to the Son of God, the Savior to all human races. This shows that only her faith in



God's Word, not her physical power made the impossible possible. Mary called herself lowly maidservant of the Lord and her heart was ready to obey whatever God said as it was.

Mary said to the angel, "*Behold the maidservant of the Lord!*" She obeyed God's Word since she believed the Word of the Lord would be fulfilled exactly as it was said. She accepted God's Word into her heart by faith. That is how she could conceive Jesus and give birth to Him. The same thing happened when we received the remission of sins by believing in the righteousness of Jesus. We believed when our Lord said He removed all our sins with the gospel word of the water and the Spirit once and for all. In the Old Testament, angels used to deliver God's messages, but now the righteous people who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit deliver messages from God. The righteous have higher status than angels. The righteous tell people, "Jesus took all your sins away by being baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan River, and He was

punished for your sins on the Cross. That is why you don't have any sins." Through the righteous people, God sends His message that He prepared John the Baptist and Jesus Christ to save us from sins and made us sinless once and for all.

Our Lord wants to be born in our hearts. To do so, He wants to come by the gospel of the water and the Spirit within our faith in God's Word. Our Lord wants to come into our hearts and eat and drink with us. He wants to live with the believers of the gospel of the water and the Spirit forever. He said He would be with His disciples until the end of the world. We could become God's people just by confessing our faith in His Word as Mary did. She said that she was a maidservant of the Lord and let it be to her according to His Word. When we believe God's Word, we can also conceive baby Jesus in our hearts. We can attend Jesus in our heart by holding onto the faith in Jesus Christ, who came by the water and the Spirit. Do you follow me? The Lord is with us regardless of our circumstances.



God Used Mary to Fulfill His Righteousness

Mary was only a lowly maid before she conceived the Lord. Today there are people who pray to Mary. They worship her as if she were God. They pray to Mary, "Mary, Holy Mother of God, pray for us all." They insist that Mary is the Mother of God because she is the mother of Jesus Christ, the true Son of God. However, she was only a lowly maid before she heard the message from God. When she accepted God's Word and obeyed by faith, she received the grace of salvation from God. The grace of God came upon her. The angel greeted her saying, "*Rejoice, highly favored one.*" We have all found favor with God by being saved. God sent us Jesus and remitted the sins of those who believed in the righteousness of Jesus. In other words, God clothed us with His righteousness. The grace of salvation also fell upon Mary. Mary was human like all of us, and she found favor with God by believing in the Word

of God.

But some people call her the Mother of God as if God the Father had a wife. From a human perspective people have husbands and wives; but God is Holy and He is not like us at all. He is not a creature. That is to say that God doesn't have sex like humans do. So Mary is not God's wife. Luke 1:35 reads, "*And the angel answered and said to her; 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, He will be called the Son of God.'*" This verse continues to say, "*The power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.*"

We should know that this verse fulfills God's covenants from the Old Testament to take all sins. It is referring to the fact that Jesus would be born in the flesh of man through Mary's body, go through the same human experiences such as being in the womb for ten months before birth, and when He turns thirty years old He would be baptized by John the Baptist who was a descendent of the High Priest Aaron. God



said this to come into this world in a human body later to take our sins as He promised in the Old Testament. God used Mary's body temporarily to save us from sins of the world as the High Priest of Heaven. In other words, she was an instrument for salvation. The Lord borrowed the Virgin Mary's body to save us from sins of the world just as we need a hoe to plow field; just as the faith of the righteous is needed to spread the gospel of the water and the Spirit; just as God uses us as an instrument of His righteousness in testifying it. God came to this earth in the flesh of man through Mary's body.

Then why did Jesus have to be born through a virgin? If He had been born the same way humans are born, He would have been born to be a sinner, so He had to be born through a virgin. God used His power and was born to a virgin in order not to be part of the sinful world. If He had been born as a sinner from the beginning, He couldn't bear the sins of the world as the Lamb of God. So He borrowed the virgin's body to be the Lamb of God without blemish.

This was prophesied through Isaiah seven hundred years before Jesus came to this earth. Isaiah 7:14 says, "*Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son.*" Jesus' arrival to this earth through a virgin was prophesied 700 years before the Lord came. Mathew 1:23 says the same thing: "*Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,' which is translated, 'God with us.*'" Jesus Christ, who is God Himself, was born through a virgin to be with us and to take all our sins on His body by His baptism. Our God used a virgin's body for a short time to fulfill His salvation work and to save humans from sins. The Lord is telling us this Truth.

God did not choose Mary because she was better than any other women in a fleshly perspective. He chose to be born by her to fulfill His Word as He told Isaiah. The King of kings chose to be born as a mere human through Mary, and saved us from sins of the world. God borrowed the virgin's body to come to the world and save us from sins. To show His work,



God didn't use any natural ways, but a supernatural way of using a virgin's body.

Mary in today's Scripture passage was a common person like us. Of course, she found special favor with God. Why was that? It is because she accepted the angel's message from God and obeyed it from her heart. This is same as receiving the remission of sins by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Mary also received the remission of sins. She carried Jesus in her womb for ten months and gave birth to him. When Jesus was twelve, Mary lost Jesus on her way back from Jerusalem, but she found Him three days later in the Temple discussing God's Law with the teachers of the Law. When Jesus said to her, "Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" (Luke 2:49), she kept all these things in her heart. She must have reminded herself that Jesus was born to her, but He is the Son of God and the Savior, so He was not her own, but God's.

Mary believed in God's Word and visited

Elizabeth while she was pregnant with Jesus. Elizabeth was pregnant with John the Baptist at that time. John the Baptist recognized Jesus, and jumped for joy in Elizabeth's womb. That is how Mary and Elizabeth got together.

Elizabeth welcomed Mary in great joy as it is written, "*Then she spoke out with a loud voice and said, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?'*" (Luke 1:42-43) It was Jesus who was in Mary's womb. God, the Savior was in the womb. She continued to commend Mary for her faith, saying, "*Blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord*" (Luke 1:45).

Filled with the Holy Spirit, Mary then prophesied;

*"My soul magnifies the Lord,
And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.
For He has regarded the lowly state of His*



maidservant;

For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed" (Luke 1:46-48).

Brothers and sisters, it is true that Mary was blessed. She found a great favor with God because she gave birth to God. Likewise, if the work of the gospel is done through us, we are truly blessed people before God. That is a real blessing. Mary said that God regarded the lowly state of her as a maidservant.

Mary Praised the Righteousness, Justice, Love and Mercy of God

Mary called herself a lowly person. But what do religious people say about her? The Bible clearly says that she called herself a lowly maidservant. She humbled herself thoroughly. She thought it to be a great blessing that the Lord had used such a lowly one like her. As a matter of fact, she was just one of

many people who were used preciously by God. She said, "*For He who is mighty has done great things for me, And holy is His name" (Luke 1:49).* In this passage, the Mighty One is God. The God of all creation made Himself a fetus in her body by His Word. Jesus Christ would be born through Mary's body.

"And His mercy is on those who fear Him From generation to generation" (Luke 1:50).

Those who can conceive baby Jesus and give birth to Him in their hearts are truly blessed and fearful of God's Word. God favors those who fear His Words. God works and stays in those who fear Him. Those who do not fear God cannot have God within them. Those who fear God and love Him will see God's mercy from generation to generation. God's grace of salvation comes upon those who fear Him.

"He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts" (Luke 1:51).



Our Lord came to this earth and saved those who fear Him, but scattered those who are proud and insolent towards God. God destroys those who challenge God with arrogant thoughts. According to a legend, it is said that Pontius Pilate became insane after he handed Jesus over to be crucified, and he died insane. God also punishes those who harass God's people. Even though Jesus was born to be the Savior, He also judges the proud as the Judge.

The baby Jesus in Mary's womb is God with all power and authority. God scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts as it is written, "*He has put down the mighty from their thrones*" (Luke 1:52). God puts down those who misuse their power, authority and fame. If God had not come to this earth, the mighty would have kept the power. When we look at the worldly authorities, they hand down their power to their children and grandchildren. It happens that way because once they seize power, they keep others from taking their power.

However, God puts down the authorities that are

too proud and haughty. God punishes them all. The Bible says that Jesus put down the mighty and the proud. Jesus took them away from their comfort zones. The baby that Mary was carrying was this Jesus who is doing this work.

*"He has filled the hungry with good things,
And the rich He has sent away empty"*
(Luke 1:53).

The Lord has filled the hungry with good things. This means He comes to feed the hungry, clothe the naked and strengthen the weak. But He puts down the rich and the mighty and scatters the proud. Jesus who came as a baby did these things on earth.

The Lord has exalted the lowly (Luke 1:52). You never know how God exalts lowly people. I would like to tell you about myself for an example. There is no need to mention anybody else. My life had been very lowly, and I had nothing and nowhere to turn to. How could I live? I had no money. When I tried hard to get on my feet, I got ill. I had a really humble upbringing. I would be a hopeless man if it wasn't for



the Lord and His righteousness.

I came to believe in Jesus in my mid-twenties. I could be saved from sins by the gospel of the water and the Spirit ten years after I first accepted Jesus as my Lord. During the first ten years that I believed in Jesus, I didn't know the gospel of the water and the Spirit and led a wretched life of faith. All I had to do while I was in seminary school was to finish a semester and write a thesis to get my degree of Master of Theology. However, I felt miserable and frustrated about the fact that I didn't know the Bible well enough to teach. I wasn't sure what I could do as a pastor even if I had all the qualifications to be one from the world's perspective.

Then, God told me with His Word in my heart, "*Unless the LORD builds the house, They labor in vain who build it*" (*Psalm 127:1*). I thought, "If God hadn't ordained me as a pastor, what kind of pastor would I be even if I become an ordained one from my denomination?" I was really miserable. Now I was starting my last semester. Pretending to move

into the dorm, I left my home with luggage and wandered around. I thought to myself, "What good is it to go on studying at the seminary school again? Why should I study this last semester for worthless knowledge?" At that time, I was really lowly before God. Nonetheless, God met such a miserable and lowly guy like me with the gospel Truth of the water and the Spirit. God visited me with His written Word. Then He lifted up such a lowly person like me. I am telling you God lifted you and me, who received the remission of sins by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

If we had not been such lowly people, there would have been no way for us to be lifted up by God. Brothers and sisters, remember God lifted the lowly. He lifted you and me up high. I am not sure about you, but I have been greatly lifted up. I was a hopelessly miserable person in every way. However, the Lord lifted such a person like me. I truly thank God for this.

"He has filled the hungry with good things,



And the rich He has sent away empty”

(Luke 1:53).

That is right. Can any rich man take his money with him when he dies? Life is originally coming and going naked. The Great Alexander once said, “Since I didn’t bring anything when I was born, make sure to drill a hole on my coffin and show my empty hands when I die, so that people can see that I am going away empty handed.” He knew the truth. He knew that he was born naked and he was going to die with nothing on him even though he had so much wealth. So he told other people about the truth.

God sent away the rich empty. On the other hand, He filled the hungry with good things. Brothers and sisters, how good is it to listen to the Word of God and have fellowship in it? It is same as filling our stomachs full.

Brothers and sisters, I want you to listen to the sermons of those who do not really understand the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The more you listen to them, the hungrier you will get. Their

sermons never fill you up even if you feed on them for ten years. The first time you listen to them as a new Christian, they seem to be good. But as time goes by, you will get hungrier and hungrier no matter how much you feed on them. If you listen to them for 50 years, you will definitely die of hunger.

Now we became the source of blessings by receiving the blessing of the righteousness of the Lord first. We became the blessed ones who share the blessings with others. We became children of God who have Jesus Christ in our hearts so we can do spiritual work.

Now the world is going to end. Today’s Israelites are still waiting for the promised Messiah in the Old Testament. When they cannot find the Messiah and realize the Messiah has already come, they will come to believe that Jesus Christ is God who came to this earth 2,000 years ago, is their Savior.

They will realize that Jesus, who they handed over to the Roman soldiers about two thousand years ago, was the Son of God and the Messiah who rose



from the dead in three days, and now is sitting on the throne in Heaven. They will accept the fact that Jesus had many eyewitnesses of His resurrection. Such historical evidence shows that He is the Savior. Once the Israelites believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the world is going to end. There is nothing else to accomplish.

While God leaves the Israelites in pain and suffering, for them to come back to Him He does one specific thing. There will be the appearance of a politician like a king of the entire world with power to influence the whole world as the servant of Satan. He will unite the world and set up a single government for the world. To have control over every individual, he will put a mark on people's forehead or on their right hand (Rev 13:16-18). Then people will do whatever he tells them to do. Under his rule, there will be several different kinds of people: One kind of people are believers of God and will not receive the mark; another kind of people believe in God but still receive the mark to survive;

the other kind of people do not believe in God but rather believe in the ruler as their savior. By then the righteous will be definitely separated from the sinners.

There will also be numerous martyrs. The Book of Revelation says there will be countless people who believe in the righteousness of God. This is the last harvest. When the time comes, countless believers of the gospel of the water and the Spirit will come back to the Lord. They will be persecuted to death to keep their faith. They will witness God's righteousness through their death. The Bible says many martyrs will rise solemnly swearing that they do truly believe in God, and then the world will end. Painful but non-terminal diseases will prevail everywhere. Natural disasters will be poured upon every corner of the earth from Heaven. The Bible tells that these things will happen someday.

God will end this world after saving His people for last. Brothers and sisters, this is not science fiction, but reality to come. The age of ideologies has



passed as communism has been demolished. Then what is controlling today's world? It is economic power. It is not the ideology or doctrines but economic power that is in control of everything. A leader will show up in the field of economics, and he will be outstanding in leading the world economy. There has been tacit competition for powers among the world economic organizations such as APEC, EU and NAFTA. APEC was founded for the benefit of Asia-Pacific countries, and EU aims to advance Europe to the world leadership once again. In other words, EU wants to restore Europe to an economic power of the world. NAFTA was established with the intention of keeping the interest of North American countries. But once an economic problem arises, they start to fight against each other and collapse. If one of them gets isolated, the unity and the contract can be broken any time.

So when everything collapses and the world changes, a person who is extraordinary and capable will appear to settle the problems by negotiation.

That is how the world will listen to him and depend on him, and everything will become subject to his rule. By then the computer and electronic industries will have been far more developed than now and the functions will greatly increase as well. When the time comes, the single government will make people have tattoos like optical bar codes. Through the barcodes on people he will be able to rule and manage the whole world. One man's administration will be feasible based on the barcode system.

It is most likely that believers and non-believers will be divided then, and the born again believers will be killed by non-believers if we are still alive. Or, some believers who get special protection from God will be alive to the end. One thing that is certain is that believers, regardless of the quick and the dead, will be lifted to Heaven when our Lord returns. The tombs of the dead believers will be opened and they will come back to life. The Lord will lift them up. The living will be transformed as well before being lifted by the Lord. Doesn't this sound like fiction to



you? If you just think from a human perspective, this is a story in a cartoon. Nevertheless, it will surely happen in the near future.

'That There Is an End of This Earth' Is Not a Groundless Sci-Fi Story, but the Sure Thing to Happen

I am telling you this is not a sci-fi story but the truth. You and I must believe this. People haven't thought about this much. If people ponder this, they may go crazy, so they create other stories that would occupy their minds.

There also was a new generation in the time of Noah. The new generation likes to eat, drink and enjoy their present moments as if there were no tomorrow. As it was back in the Noah's time, there is a new generation today. That's why there is no future for humankind. The air, water, economy and every other aspect of life are not getting any better.

Actually everything is getting worse. You are living in the most peaceful and fortunate era. Whoever doesn't believe this will face troubles. But those who believe in this Word will cope with the difficulties to come with faith; they will suffer less when tribulations will actually come. It is because their hearts are ready for any tribulation.

On the other hand, non-believers will suffer far more because they are not aware of anything. Scientists say that the natural resources of the world will have completely run out by 2020 or 2030 at the longest. A lot of people do not believe this, but this will happen no matter if they believe it or not. You should know how much difference there is between believing it and not-believing it. I am not using empty threats. I am warning you to stay alert for the end of this world since the end is sure to come. God might throw these people into the pan of tribulation and fry them alive. God can do so, and He will do it if He decides to do so. The Bible tells us about this. In the end days, we should live by faith to receive



God's protection. God kept the church in Philadelphia safe from the hour of trial (Revelations 3:10), and there are churches that will be kept by God's special care. But there are also people who will betray God and suffer from tribulations in the end times.

I am sure that those Christians who claim to be sinless without the Word of God's witness in their hearts are likely to betray God in the end. When they are pressured to get the mark of the Beast, they reluctantly agree to get it, thinking to themselves, "If I don't get the mark, I cannot take my children to hospital when they get sick, and I cannot buy any food for them. I have received the remission of sins, so God won't send me to hell just because I have the mark," even though they know for sure that they are not supposed to get one. Such a man would say to the subordinates of the Antichrist, "Okay! Put the mark while I am sleeping." Then they would say, "No, this is personal matter. If you do not accept this system, you don't get the barcode. But if you do, you will get

one." So they finally decide to accept this and get the barcode.

Brothers and sisters, you should believe the fact that there are other things beside the gospel of the water and the Spirit in God's providence. There is an end to this world, and there will be judgment, and we will live like kings forever in the new world for a thousand years. God will sweep this world and give us new heavens and a new earth for us to live in with Him forever. I also want you to believe that those who are not born again will end up in eternal hell. It is absurd to try to understand God with our small heads; smaller than a pumpkin. That is really laughable. How can we study and understand God with our fist-size brains? Believing in the God's Church from our hearts is the only way to get closer to God. How can we trust in God by judging Him? All we can do is to trust God's Word and wait.

So believe this truth. Remember that I am not making empty threats but I am trying to prepare you for the upcoming tribulations. But I am not telling



you to pack and leave this world. I am not telling you to get rid of your possessions. I will try to live a more righteous life as the end approaches. Why is that? It is a wise thing to do in the end days.

But if we have plenty of time before the end of this world, I would like to leave behind as many Christian books and literature as possible. If the world doesn't end so soon and the Lord is coming slowly, we can make the true gospel bloom all over the earth. Just as chrysanthemums have full blooms in autumn, we can make the faith of the genuine gospel bloom all over the place. But that is my wishful thinking and in reality, God's Word and the current events show the signs of end days clearly. If a disaster happens, a domino effect will follow. So an earthquake can turn this earth into hell on earth even though we are comfortable right now. Simply put, that will be the end of everything.

As you all know, natural disasters are bound to happen for sure. They will get worse as time goes by. So I want you to be prepared for that. Those of us

who believe in the Lord should take the Word into our heart and live out our faith. Do you follow me?

Jesus Took All Our Sins with the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit Once and for All

Those who believe in the righteousness of God have no sins. There is no sin with believers. Since Jesus Christ was baptized by John the Baptist, our sins were taken over to Him and now we are sinless. Jesus was put on a trial on the Cross and He rose again, is now sitting at the right hand of God the Father, and will come back. This is what we should know and believe. Whoever doesn't believe this from the heart is bound to betray the Lord. Only if the Word of God is placed at the center of the heart does it give us the power to do God's will and not to betray Him.

Brothers and sisters, as the end of the world comes near, we should be more watchful and prayer



oriented in every way. I hope you will stay faithful to God by the faith in the Truth. The Lord promised that He would save those who keep the faith when the time of tribulations comes.

In today's Scripture passage, angel Gabriel appeared before Mary and said, "*Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you.*" Brothers and sisters, imagine an angel showed up before you. How surprised must Mary have been then? Let's look at the passage: "*And having come in, the angel said to her, 'Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!' But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. Then the angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His*

kingdom there will be no end'" (Luke 1:28-33).

The angel said to Mary, "*You have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS*" (Luke 1:30-31). Mary didn't know any men, but God said a baby would be born through her. He said that He would do what He had promised. The Bible says that Elizabeth, Mary's relative, also became pregnant exactly as she was told. Elizabeth, who gave birth to John the Baptist, was a descendant of the house of Aaron the High Priest. Elisabeth, who couldn't have babies while she was younger, had a baby in her old age. It was possible by her faith when she accepted the angel's message.

Mary also became pregnant by accepting the angel's message. Mary confessed that she was a lowly maidservant of the Lord and she prayed that God's will might be done. Because she was obedient, Jesus could be conceived in her, grow in her womb and be born to this world. By accepting God's word Mary could conceive Jesus and give birth to Him.



What Mary did to conceive Jesus is same as what we do to receive Him in our hearts. God doesn't send angels to us as He did with Mary, but He talks to us through His servants: "I removed all your sins like this. You are God's children and His people." God shows His plans through His Word and becomes conceived in us. When we accept God's Word for salvation, He will adopt us as His children. Just as Jesus is the Son of God, He will make us equal children. As we celebrate Christmas, we should ponder on this truth deeply and realize it.

Mary was a virgin who had never slept with a man. Then how could she have a baby? How could she give birth to Jesus, the Son of God, the Messiah and the Savior? Please bear in mind that Mary believed what the angel told her. She could conceive Jesus and give birth to Him by her faith in the Word.

You can also become God's children and share the gospel of the water and the Spirit by accepting God's Word into your hearts. True salvation starts from accepting God's Word, the gospel of the water

and the Spirit, by faith. It is the expression of God's love and the gift of salvation. ☐



SERMON

14



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The Lord Who Came to Hearts Emptied of The Lusts of the Flesh

< Luke 1:24-55 >

“Now after those days his wife Elizabeth conceived; and she hid herself five months, saying, ‘Thus the Lord has dealt with me, in the days when He looked on me, to take away my reproach among people.’ Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. And having come in, the angel said to her, ‘Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!’ But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. Then the angel said to her, ‘Do

not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.’ Then Mary said to the angel, ‘How can this be, since I do not know a man?’ And the angel answered and said to her, ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God. Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren. For with God nothing will be impossible.’ Then Mary said, ‘Behold the maid servant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word.’ And the angel departed from her. Now Mary arose in those days and went



into the hill country with haste, to a city of Judah, and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. Then she spoke out with a loud voice and said, ‘Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. Blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord.’ And Mary said:

‘My soul magnifies the Lord,
And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.
For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant;
For behold, henceforth all generations will call
me blessed.
For He who is mighty has done great things

for me,

And holy is His name.

And His mercy is on those who fear Him
From generation to generation.

He has shown strength with His arm;

He has scattered the proud in the imagination
of their hearts.

He has put down the mighty from their
thrones,

And exalted the lowly.

He has filled the hungry with good things,
And the rich He has sent away empty.

He has helped His servant Israel,
In remembrance of His mercy,
As He spoke to our fathers,
To Abraham and to his seed forever.””



You Must Abandon the Lusts of the Flesh and Worship Jesus Christ as Your Savior

Brothers and sisters, it is only a week until Christmas. We have experienced quite a lot of things during this year. We have very grateful hearts for the fact that God has been with us this year, too, and that we can face Christmas with joyful hearts like this.

The Bible says, “*Now after those days his wife Elizabeth conceived; and she hid herself five months, saying, ‘Thus the Lord has dealt with me, in the days when He looked on me, to take away my reproach among people’*” (Luke 1:24-25). Elizabeth was the wife of Zacharias, a priest of the division of Abijah, one of the grandsons of Aaron the High Priest. Elizabeth was an old woman. Until that time, she had no children. She had lived being disregarded quite a bit because she had not been able to have a child until then. In our country, too, women were kicked out of their homes a long time ago if they could not have children. The Israelites thought that a woman who

could not bear children was really cursed. One of the seven valid causes for divorce in our country long ago was not being able to bear children, and this kind of woman was driven out of the home because she could not perform her proper duty.

But Elizabeth had no children until she was an old woman and then got a child by the will of God. So, she hid for five months because she was embarrassed about it. When Elizabeth was in the sixth month of her pregnancy, the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary, Joseph’s fiancée. He told her, “*Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you.*” The Virgin Mary heard this, was troubled, and wondered what it meant. Luke 1:30-34 says, “*Then the angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His*



kingdom there will be no end.’ Then Mary said to the angel, ‘How can this be, since I do not know a man?’”

The angel appeared to Mary and delivered God’s will. Mary was very surprised when he said, “*Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end*” (Luke 1:30-33). She was really troubled, saying, “I haven’t even been married, so how could I have a child?” Then, the angel said she would be overshadowed by the power of God, and the Bible continues, “*Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren. For with God nothing will be impossible.*’ Then Mary said, ‘Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be

to me according to your word.’ And the angel departed from her” (Luke 1:36-38).

At first, Mary could not believe when the angel told her she would bring forth a Son. But when she heard the angel tell her of Elizabeth in order to help her understand more easily, she accepted the Word of God in her heart just as it was. The angel was saying, “Elizabeth was also a woman who could not conceive, but it’s already been six months since she conceived. There is nothing that is impossible in the Word of God. Do you believe in what I am delivering?” Then, Mary said, “*Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word.*” She then accepted the Word of the Lord that was spoken through that angel. Therefore, Mary came to conceive the baby Jesus.

If you look at what comes later, there is a part where Mary praises God; this Scripture passage is saying that you must abandon your own thoughts and preconceptions if you intend to accept Jesus Christ in your heart. It also says that you must abandon the



desires of flesh in yourselves if you intend to believe in the Word of God. What would have happened if Mary had thought it was totally impossible to have a baby according to the fixed idea she had when she said, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?" Those are thoughts that are the fixed ideas of man. But the angel said, "Your relative, Elizabeth, is also a woman who cannot conceive. But the Word of God came to her, and she, too, conceived. There is nothing impossible for the Word of the Lord. God has also told you that the baby Jesus will be born through your body. Will you abandon the thoughts of man and your desires and accept this Word by faith? Or are you not going to believe because, in your thoughts, this is something that can never happen?" Put simply, the angel asked, "Are you going to believe and really accept this Word?"

Actually, the principle of Mary conceiving the baby Jesus and that of us receiving the remission of sins in our hearts by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit are the same. Accepting in our

hearts the Word of the Lord that says that Jesus eliminated all our sins and Mary accepting the words of the angel are the same. Brothers and sisters, our own thoughts and desires become hindrances to us when we are willing to accept this Word of God. If one thinks of things according to his own thoughts of the flesh, it is an obvious fact that a woman who has not known a man cannot bear a child. Therefore, if Mary's heart had been full of the thoughts and desires of man, she would have never been able to accept the Word of God, this blessed Word, that the angel was delivering. But Mary accepted the Word of the Lord, saying, "*Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word.*" She emptied her heart. When she emptied her heart, the works of God were revealed there and were accomplished.

Things are accomplished according to the will of God when we empty our lusts and when we abandon our desires and thoughts of the flesh and believe in God's Word because it is the Word of God, even



though we think something else. When we profess, "I believe that the Word of God will be accomplished as it says," the power of the Word of God enters our hearts and does works there just like the baby Jesus was born in Mary's womb. It is the same when we believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Looking at the Word of God from a human perspective, we can't believe in it because it's not something we've seen with our own eyes or heard personally. But looking at it by faith, all the sins of the Israelites transferred over when the High Priest laid his hands on the scapegoat in the Old Testament. It says that all sins were transferred over even though one didn't personally lay his own hands on the head of the Lord and that the Lord could fulfill all the righteous work of God by being baptized by John the Baptist in the New Testament, which was the same to the laying on of hands. In other words, it is written that the Lord gave us God's righteousness of the remission of sins. If one empties his heart, abandons his desires, abandons his thoughts of the flesh, and

decides to believe and accepts it because it is the Word of God, his heart is saved from sin. If he has that kind of faith, his sins are blotted out of his heart and the Holy Spirit comes to it. Therefore, Jesus is conceived in his heart. He comes to receive the holy God in his heart.

The Baby Jesus Is Conceived Spiritually as Follows

If we intend to conceive the baby Jesus in our hearts, we must also abandon our thoughts of the flesh and our worldly desires. A person must abandon his fixed ideas and the standards of man to come before God. When he abandons his lusts of the flesh and confesses he will believe in the Truth because it is the Word of God, he can be saved from sin by believing as the Redeemer in Jesus who came through the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Mary said, "*Behold the maidservant of the*



Lord!" Mary could say that because she had completely emptied her heart. When she emptied her heart, she could say, "*Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word.*" The works of the Word were fulfilled at that time. Brothers and sisters, we must empty our hearts. All we need to do is empty our hearts in order for the Word of God to work in us. We must know how to empty our hearts.

Elizabeth, the Wife of Zacharias, and the Virgin Mary Met Each Other

Since Elizabeth and Mary were both the descendants of Abraham, and since all the Israelites came from the same ancestor, they were all one family. Elizabeth was one of Mary's relatives. So, Elizabeth recognized Mary when Mary went to her, and Elizabeth said, "*But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?*"

Brothers and sisters, Elizabeth recognized that Mary had conceived. John the Baptist who was in her womb also knew. He jumped about and greeted the Lord as if to say, "*The Lord has come!*" Elizabeth said, "*But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?*" The two of them commended and praised one another, and Mary praised God in the fullness of the Holy Spirit: "*And Mary said: 'My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant; for behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed'*" (*Luke 1:46-48*).

Brothers and sisters, we also praise the Lord's righteousness. The Lord came to this earth in order to save us from the sins of the world and was baptized, was nailed to and died on the Cross, and was resurrected on the third day after His death to save us who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. He now sits on the right hand of God the Father's throne after having been resurrected. We praise that



righteousness of the Lord. We praise the Lord who abandoned His throne of Heaven in order to save us who are lowly, came to this earth, and, through His life of 33 years, saved you and me from sin through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Our souls praise our Lord because He made us into the children of God, gave us the eternal Kingdom of Heaven, made us new creatures by making us be born again, and gave us limitless blessings. Your spirits and mine praise the Lord. If you and I abandon the desires in our hearts and abandon our thoughts, we truly cannot help but praise the Lord through faith before God.

Just as Mary professed her faith in God here and praised the Lord in spirit, saying, *“My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant,”* you and I, too, have emptied our hearts and accepted the gospel of the water and the Spirit by faith. We rejoice in our salvation by believing in our hearts in the fact that Jesus took all our sins by being baptized by John, died instead of us

on the Cross, was resurrected, eliminated all our sins, and saved us. With this kind of faith, one can, just like Mary, rejoice in and praise our Savior who closely regarded our lowliness.

We Were Also Lowly People

We were originally lowly people. God told us that we were people worse than the filth of the world. If we actually know ourselves, we cannot but admit that we are really that lowly. We humans are born on this earth, live for 70 or 80 years, and die of old age or sickness. We were lowly existences that hoped for eternal life but couldn't attain it ourselves, hoped to not get sick but couldn't help but get sick and die, hoped to not get old but couldn't help but get old, and hoped to not die but couldn't help but die.

We were lowly existences like that, but the Lord regarded us, the lowly. The Lord regarded us who are lowly and saved us. He became our Savior by saving



us, gave us eternal life, the eternal Kingdom of Heaven, and the blessing of becoming the eternal children of God; He clothed you and me in Christ's eternal love just as He clothed the lowly maidservant with His blessings. So, we praise Him. We have the desires of the world in our hearts at anytime. If we abandon them, look to the Lord, and stand before Him thus, we truly cannot help but praise the Lord by faith because the Lord has saved us who are lowly from all our sins through the Truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

We come to truly praise the Lord's righteousness. We are very lowly people; how can we not praise the Lord's righteousness that made us high and noble? We are truly low people in the world, too. All the people of this world are now praising us, saying that we are the blessed, the people of Christ, and the people of God. You and I were lowly people like this, so we praise the Lord who regarded us and we give Him thanks. We give all glory before Him. Are you like that or not?

If we look at ourselves honestly, we are truly lowly people. Human beings are born as the incarnations of avarice and live radiating their desires until they vainly die. That is life. But the Lord saved these lowly people through the gospel of the water and the Spirit out of His amazing love. So, how can we not praise Him? Therefore, we must empty our hearts and praise God's righteousness.

If our heads are full of thoughts and desires of man, we will not be able to give praise and will merely look at the music and try to sing by matching it. We shouldn't do that. When you set aside your sectarian life and come to Church, you must lay down everything, empty your hearts, think of God's righteousness, think of the Lord who saved us who are so lowly from sin, and praise His exaltation and magnificence. We must praise God by faith in His righteousness. God gave us every reason to give Him commendation, praise, and thanks. What lovable things do we have that the Lord should love us? I am disgusted even when I look at myself. I really don't



understand why God loves us who are so lowly. As the Bible says, “*For God so loved the world,*” perhaps He loves lowly people because they are lowly. We were originally very noble and high people in the likeness of God’s image. Perhaps He loved us because He wanted to give that high status back to us who had lost it. Therefore, we must praise the Lord who regarded our lowness. We must praise Him with our hearts, our thoughts, our bodies, our faith, all our services, and our activities.

The confession of our faith is also the same as Mary’s. If you look at Luke 1:49-55, it says,

*“For He who is mighty has done great things for me,
And holy is His name.
And His mercy is on those who fear Him
From generation to generation.
He has shown strength with His arm;
He has scattered the proud in the imagination
of their hearts.
He has put down the mighty from their thrones,*

And exalted the lowly.

*He has filled the hungry with good things,
And the rich He has sent away empty.
He has helped His servant Israel,
In remembrance of His mercy,
As He spoke to our fathers,
To Abraham and to his seed forever.”*

God the Father who is truly great and Jesus Christ have performed a great work for us. Just as the Lord performed a great work to Mary, He has performed a great work to you and me. We being saved by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is the same as Mary conceiving the baby Jesus. We who have been saved, become God’s children, and become high and noble people by believing in Jesus Christ are all spiritually the same as Mary. All the brothers and sisters here are all spiritually like Mary.

After Jesus was resurrected and returned to Heaven, the Roman army entered and slaughtered the Israelites. If you take a close look at Israel’s history,



the Israelites are a people with a wretched history. They lived scattered all over the world for almost 2,000 years, entered the gas chambers during World War II, and were not treated like human beings even though they are living. Even in the days of Mary, the Israelites were under the rule of the Roman Empire. But fortunately, Mary emptied her heart and accepted the Word of God that was delivered to her by the angel. She accepted the Word of the Lord just as you accepted the Word of the Lord's servants who spread the gospel of the water and the Spirit. She became a very blessed person because of that.

Mary said, "*All generations will call me blessed,*" is speaking of you and I who have been saved. Among the many people of the world, we are people who have put on this special grace. There are many people in this world now who have power and authority. There are also many people who have a lot of money. But to whom does God bestow the unconditional love of compassion? On whom does He show mercy? That love comes to people who

highly regard and fear the Word of God. God says that it is on those who fear Him from generation to generation.

But there are also quite a lot of people in this world who have power, have authority, are smart, and think they are great; those people do not fear the Word of God. They stand up straight before the Word of God, saying whatever they think is right. God does not forgive those kinds of people. He strikes them down.

Brothers and sisters, among all the people who are as many as the stars in the sky, we have become people who have put on God's blessings and love just like Mary. God is a Person who sends the rich away empty. Even the richest man of the world cannot take even the smallest of his possessions with him when he dies. Even though money can be placed in his casket, he cannot take it with him. When a person dies, those remaining uselessly burn money or bury it with the person in order to help the dead get to the next life; all of these things are useless acts. All the



things of this world are nothing at all before God. God sends away the rich empty-handed and scatters all those with power and all the proud. He sends them to hell. But He has filled people who are lowly and those who are starving with good things. He has helped those who are lowly. He helped Israel, regarded that people with compassion, and, just as He spoke to Abraham, our ancestor of faith, He gave eternal blessings to those descendants.

Who are the spiritual people of Israel? Those who are saved before God are the spiritual people of Israel and the Lord's people. The people of God who have been saved from their sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit are people like Jacob. Jacob was wicked and did not have a good disposition, but he accepted the Word of God in his heart even so. If you look at him from a human perspective, he was a person who really wasn't much good. But in regards to the Word of God, he abandoned his own thoughts and accepted it. God's compassion and love comes to those kinds of people

eternally. Brothers and sisters, among all the many people in the world, we have become blessed ones.

Brothers and sisters, we have obtained God's compassion and put on His love like Mary. You and I are people who have put on the love of God and people who have received magnificent blessings. We are people like Mary who have received the blessings of salvation and eternal life. We have received God's blessings in body and spirit. Therefore, as we celebrate this Christmas, we have to thank the Lord who takes care of lowly people, and we must continue to praise God in our hearts and thoughts. Since we have received those kinds of blessings, we must give more praises to God this Christmas. I hope that you become people who know how to give thanks to God. The Lord truly is a Person who deserves our thanks. Therefore, we must know how to give thanks with our hearts. We have put on God's love and salvation regardless of how wretched we are. We have truly received magnificent blessings.

So, we have become people who, like Mary, give



praise like this:

*"My soul magnifies the Lord,
And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.
For He has regarded the lowly state
of His maidservant;
For behold, henceforth all generations will call
me blessed.
For He who is mighty has done great things
for me,
And holy is His name.
And His mercy is on those who fear Him
From generation to generation" (Luke 1:46-50).*

We accept the Word of God in our hearts and we fear God. All people who have been saved before God know how to fear Him. They are people who know how to obey the Word of God. Those kinds of people are saved. Have you been saved?

Brothers and sisters, do you think the remission of our sins is something that was done as easily as a piece of cake? The remission of our sins is God's grace that came down from Heaven. It came down

from God. We have received salvation that is extremely precious. Therefore, you must know how to be thankful for the salvation that you have received, and you must know how to praise God with your hearts. You must be able to praise God who has saved you.

Brothers and sisters, our salvation is not some cheap salvation that came to us for no particular reason. It isn't like going to the market and luckily coming across a name-brand product at a dirt-cheap price. Our salvation is extremely precious. Do you believe this fact?

I could never trade this grace of salvation with which the Lord saved me through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, even if someone offered to give me billions of dollars. I mean that I will never trade this amazing salvation that saved us from the sins of the world through the gospel of the water and the Spirit with anything in the world. I would not trade this salvation given through the gospel of the water and the Spirit even if someone offered to make me



president of our country or to make me the Secretary-General of the UN. This salvation we have received is very precious. How could we trade it even if someone offered to give us the entire universe? We cannot trade it. You too, must know the fact that you have received such a precious blessing like this.

Brothers and sisters, you must empty your hearts and minds before God, praise the Word of God more and more, be thankful, and serve the Lord more. By living with more faith, you must be thankful for the Lord's righteousness that has enabled you to return more glory to God. ☐



SERMON

15



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Jesus Who Met Our Souls

< Luke 1:46-50 >

“And Mary said:
‘My soul magnifies the Lord,
And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.
For He has regarded the lowly state
of His maidservant;
For behold, henceforth all generations will
call me blessed.
For He who is mighty has done great things
for me,
And holy is His name.
And His mercy is on those who fear Him
From generation to generation.”

As we greet this Christmas season and wrap up this year, we truly feel in our hearts something is wanting. There are a lot of complicated things that

happen as we live in this generation, but the most important thing we must know is that to us human beings, there isn't just our outward man but that there is also a soul that is our inward man. So, one of the writers of Psalms said, “*Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God*” (*Psalms 42:11*).

All of us have an outward man as well as an inward man. Our outward man adapts and deals with reality, but our inward man, that is, our souls feel uneasy and disappointed without the Lord's guidance. Many people are changing quickly because this generation is going really fast and everything has changed. People can't follow this world that changes so rapidly. The world we are living in changes so quickly that when the cost of living rises, taxes follow behind, and there are more instances of corruption. The natural environment also changes and is being ruined so rapidly. We are living in a world where it is really difficult to get our outward man together. In such a situation, our outward man



thinks that he is always just losing things. This generation is “the age of uncertainty” as a famous economist said. There is no one who is not influenced by this uncertainty. So, they feel uneasy about their futures, and try to eliminate that uneasiness. But it isn’t easy to be freed from such uneasiness.

My fellow believers, how about our inward man, our souls, in this Christmas season? Do our souls praise and have joy in the birth of our Savior? Our souls have joy and are in peace because of the Lord’s righteousness. Why is that? That is because the Lord came to us, took all our sins at once for all through His baptism, completely eliminated all of them, and gave us true freedom. It is because He gave us the Kingdom of Heaven that we didn’t really build ourselves. Our souls always have joy because our Lord gave us true freedom.

My fellow believers, all of us have two selves inside each of us. Those are our outward and inward man. Your inward man is your soul. It is your soul

that praises the Lord just as Mary praised when she said, *“My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant”* (Luke 1:46-48). We, too, come to make this confession of faith like Mary, and we come to make those kinds of praises through the same faith as Mary. As we celebrate Christmas, our inward man rejoices in the Lord who came to us. The sins of our souls could completely be remitted all at once by the Lord coming to this earth and cleansing them. Our souls praise our Savior Jesus Christ because we are able to thus enjoy freedom.

The Bible says, *“Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day”* (2 Corinthians 4:16). My outward man is uneasy as it lives in and sees this bleak world everyday, but I truly wonder what would have happened to my inward man if not for our Lord’s righteousness. I truly consider it fortunate as we celebrate this Christmas that our Lord came to us. So, my inward man has joy and gives praises because of



my Savior.

What would have happened if the Lord had not come to your souls and mine? But our souls have come to be able to stand before God without fear, praise Him, and return glory to Him because the Lord came to them and remitted all our souls' sins at once for all. All of these are the grace of God's righteousness.

Our Souls Would Have No Joy If Not for the Holy Spirit of God.

My fellow believers, I reemphasize that our souls would have no joy if God were not in us. We have joy because God is in us. Our souls give praise because of our God. We praise the Lord's righteousness because He did a great work to us so that we could praise and commend Him.

I repeat that each one of us has an outward man and an inward man. As you know, the inward man is

more important than the outward man. Your inward man is your soul. God made us living people by breathing the breath of life into our nostrils, and He made our souls into lives that do not perish. God made us as existences that never die; but if a soul has sin, it will be eternally destroyed.

Our souls have fallen into sin because we have fallen into Satan's snares. What would be more bleak and frustrating than this, if our souls had sin? But as extremely fortunate as it is, our Lord abides with us in our hearts. Jesus Christ came to us in order to abide with us. That is, He came to us in order to save us from all our sins. He is also the Creator who created the entire universe. Jesus Christ who is the true God came to our souls and saved us. Through that, our souls returned to life, had joy again, and praised God again. They praise Him by having received eternal freedom, eternal peace, and eternal blessings by God's righteousness. I am thankful for the fact that God is alive; and I am eternally thankful for the grace we have received from the living God



who came to us.

We would have absolutely no problems if we only had souls, but we also have physical bodies. That is why all the people in this world are dismal. They feel uneasy. The reason for that is because all they have is their outward man and their inward man has not been able to meet the Lord. No matter how unstable the world is or how weak we are, our souls, our inward man, have joy because of our Savior. It is truly fortunate and moving that the Lord came to our souls, and there is no greater blessing than this. There are no people anywhere in this world that are as blessed as we are. There are truly no people as happy as we are.

Mary Was a Person Who Put on Special Grace in Those Times

Mary was one of Elizabeth's relatives. One day, when Mary was alone, an angel appeared and said,

"Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!" (Luke 1:28) Out of many women, Mary had put on special grace of salvation. My fellow believers, you also have received a very great blessing of having put on the grace of salvation. You have put on special love before God.

Can our spirits become like Mary's spirit that was used by God? Can we have spirits like that of the Apostle Paul, and can we receive the remission of sins just as he did? The question is: Can our hearts be just like Mary's heart, can our salvation come about through the Word of God just as hers did, and can we praise God just as she did? Yes, we can because you and I have put on God's special grace of salvation. We give praises, are thankful, and return glory to God because of the Holy Spirit. Our souls rejoice in our Savior and our souls praise our Lord. Our souls praise and rejoice in the Lord because He saved us from all our sins, because He came to us, and because He met us through the gospel of the water



and the Spirit. He rescued us from all our sins and completely cleansed them, He blessed us so that our souls could go and live in the Kingdom of Heaven, and He made our souls into His people.

We are now living in a complicated and bleak world. As we are living in an aimless world that is full of sins and iniquities, we feel uneasy and have a hard time. But, my fellow believers, I hope that you don't underestimate yourselves because of the weakness of your outward man. We have the Word of salvation that we have received from God. Our real existence can be found in our inward man. Our outward man is not what we are truly like.

Larvae that look ugly crawl up out of the ground, build cocoons in trees, and hang in them until they wake up one moment, cast off their skin, become cicadas, and sing refreshing and beautiful songs in the summer. That is what our inward man is like. Our inward man is like a cicada that has shed its skin, not a larva. Our real entity is our inward man, not our outward man. It can be said that our real entity is our

inward man, that is, our souls. Our Lord clothed our souls, our inward man, in the grace of salvation. He completely eliminated all our sins once and for all through the Word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The Lord Made Us Do the Precious and Lofty Work of God

This work is spreading by faith that He took all our sins and shed His blood. Our Lord has regarded our lowly states. He has done it to us just as He did to Mary. Mary, being full of the Holy Spirit, said, "*Henceforth all generations will call me blessed*" (Luke 1:48). Was Mary a person who was blessed before God? Yes, she was. She was a blessed woman.

The Catholic Church calls her "Mary, full of grace." The meaning of those words is right if nothing else. They begin to pray, "Hail Mary, full of grace." This means that she received a fullness of



grace. They continue to pray, “Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb.” The words in their prayer are not wrong so far, but the problem arises from then on. The last part of their prayer to Mary goes, “Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death.” How about these words? The evidence of deifying Mary is revealed in this prayer. They call Mary as “Holy Mary, the mother of God.” It is total nonsense.

Mary was truly a blessed woman. But she became a blessed woman by admitting that she had been a wretched woman destined to hell without the Lord’s grace. She was merely a human being, but she received God’s blessings with a humble heart by faith. So, what kind of people are you and I before God? You and I are also blessed people. We must properly know what kinds of existences we are before God. We have received something precious from God; it is wrong to be ignorant of that fact and be in despair because we are too attached to our

bodies. The Apostle John said, *“I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers”* (3 John 1:2).

More than our outward man, we must want our inward man to prosper, and we must know what kinds of blessings we have received before God. John is also saying that he hopes that we know what kinds of blessings our souls have received before God and how big the blessing of salvation we have received is.

My fellow believers, when you look at yourselves, I hope you are not pessimistic from just looking at your outward man or the darkness of reality. You and I don’t have a lot of interest in this world because we are people who have been greatly blessed before God. Mary received this blessing a long time ago, and all our predecessors of faith who believed in the Lord’s righteousness also received the same blessing of salvation. I hope that you live absolutely knowing the fact that you and I in this generation are blessed people who have received the blessing of salvation from God. Do you understand?



We are people who have received the great blessing of salvation from God. It is the evidence of the great blessing that we have no sin in our inward man because we have received the remission of sins, isn't it?

Even if the things of your outward man don't prosper, the Lord will take us to the Kingdom of Heaven when the time comes and make us glorious forever because He came to our inward man, eliminated all our sins, and made us into His blessed people. No one has ever received bigger blessings than the blessing of salvation that we have received. What we have to think of during this Christmas season is that God is alive and that He came to our souls, and we must be thankful with faith that He eliminated all our sins once and for all through the Truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. By eliminating all our sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the Lord gave holiness to our souls, our inward man, and He met us personally. There is nothing greater than this. There is nobody

who has received greater grace than the grace of the Lord's salvation. You and I whom God has met are those who have received such great grace.

The Lord met you and me and eliminated all of our sins in this generation, just as He met Mary and eliminated all the sins of her soul. This Christmas, we must give praise and be thankful for this in faith. Our Lord came to us, eliminated all our sins, and became our Savior. Among all the many people in this world, we have specially met the Lord who became the Savior. He came to us through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. So the Lord was conceived in our hearts, and the faith in our hearts grows everyday. My fellow believers, do you know that Jesus Christ came to your hearts, eliminated your sins, and makes your faith continue to grow? Do you know the fact that the Lord is alive in your hearts and mine and blesses us?

Who is in our souls? The Lord is. Who is in the Lord? Our souls are. We have become one body; He eats with us and we eat with Him. This is a very



glorious relationship. My beloved saints, we are people who have truly received the precious blessing of salvation from God. Our souls have truly received great blessings before God such that they cannot be expressed in words. Our God met our souls and did the great work of salvation. He eliminated all our sins at once. He rescued us from the judgment of sin. Our souls will go and live in the Kingdom of the Lord when the time comes.

So, our inward man must be thankful, give praise, and grow well before God. But there are people who are sometimes weighed down heavily by things of the world because of their outward man and souls who become disheartened. I hope that you use all your power in strengthening the faith of your inward man. If the faith of your inward man grows, your outward man grows automatically. As we celebrate this Christmas, let's think again before the Lord about how great of a blessing we have received, and let's praise and be thankful to the Lord who clothed us in that great blessing and much grace.

The weather is cold and living in the world is difficult lately, and I know that your hearts are probably wearied for various reasons. But we must never forget that the Lord has met our souls, eliminated all our sins, and made our souls blessed. We must be thankful for those things, and we must live with the Lord beside us. We can never forget that our Lord has met us. Mary lived in thanks, never forgetting for her entire life that the Lord met her. When she met the Lord, she said,

*"My soul magnifies the Lord,
And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.
For He has regarded the lowly state of
His maidservant;
For behold, henceforth all generations will call
me blessed.
For He who is mighty has done great things
for me,
And holy is His name.
And His mercy is on those who fear Him
From generation to generation" (Luke 1:46-50).*



Mary immediately praised the Lord through her spirit when she met Him. This praise and this confession of faith of Mary has now become yours and mine. Our Lord has met us and given us great blessings so that our souls could make such a confession and such praises. Whether all people are blessed or not is determined by whether they have met the Lord or not.

You should also really praise the Lord and remember Him as you read this confession of faith that Mary made. Just as Mary made a confession of faith when she said, "*My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant*" (*Luke 1:46-48*), you must praise that the Lord regarded your souls. As we commemorate this Christmas, we must be thankful in our hearts. We can never forget this and must eternally be thankful for and praise that our Lord regarded us.

People's hearts swell when Christmas comes. As this world is really confused in such an atmosphere,

Satan is all the more unyielding, knowing that his time is almost up. If we read the Book of Daniel, it speaks of the signs of the last days; it says that knowledge will increase then. How much has knowledge increased now? We are currently in the generation of the computer. I heard that a computer chip the size of a thumbnail has enough memory to hold several hundred million words. In the future, trains will not run as they do now. They say bullet trains will be built that can practically fly at a speed of 500 km/hr (313 mph). Then, they might be as fast as an airliner. I've also heard that since passenger planes are also slow, tiresome, and tormenting, the day isn't far off when passenger planes will travel a little faster by having supersonic engines installed in them. It's hard for us to keep up with the world because it changes so quickly. People who go wild trying to catch up with the world in these kinds of times are rather foolish. A person will fail in a year if they abandon everything they need to do and try to catch up with the world. People will get run down



because advancements will be made tens of times more than what they know by studying hard their whole lives. They can never keep up with the world. People merely follow far behind the world; they can't keep up. A person who works hard to keep up with the world will ultimately have a hot temper or, in serious instances, they will go crazy.

My fellow believers, our outward man can't keep up with this world, but our inward man has joy in God and praises Him. It lives eternally, praising the Lord. We live today, tomorrow, and the day after tomorrow, and we will live eternally, praising the eternal Lord, even after we go to the Kingdom of the Lord, which is the eternal world. This Christmas, let's remember that our souls praise our Lord. Let's not forget that our Lord has regarded us. Let's not forget that He has met and saved our souls. My fellow believers, do you wonder why I keep repeating myself even though you know it? That is because we must always ruminate over this obvious Truth. Do you eternally have joy in the Lord? Yes,

you do. My soul has joy in our Lord. We live forever. If not for the Lord, we would have no joy and no eternal life. Therefore, we must be thankful for His existence and also for Him meeting us.

We must think of our spirits. People are eternal existences. The physical world that we see is not everything. The Lord made us as eternal and immortal existences. He gave us life by breathing the breath of life in our nostrils, and thus, He made us living beings that never die. We praise the Lord who made us eternal existences, and we praise Him who has met our souls that never die. We rejoice in Him. We take pleasure in this. We praise our Lord who has regarded our lowly souls, and we thank Him immensely.

Our inward man, our soul, praises God, is thankful to Him, and returns the glory to Him. We praise the Lord who has given us as great blessings as Mary received. When we think of the fact that the Lord has met our souls, we automatically praise Him, and our hearts can be peaceful and thankful even



though our outward man is so insufficient and the world is completely dismal. If that was not the case, that is, if the Lord had not met us, or if He did not exist, it would be hard to live our whole lives because we would feel too uneasy. Thankfully, the Lord does exist, and He has met our souls. Therefore, our souls are peaceful like this even though we live in this uncertain generation. Of course, there are times when we fall into uneasiness for a short time, but we are mostly in peace. Are your souls peaceful? I see that you all are. I hope that you don't forget that we are peaceful because our Lord met us. The blessing of salvation that we have received is extremely great. Even though the world today is very uneasy and uncertain, our souls have joy.

We praise the fact that our Lord exists forever and we will live forever with Him. That is because He has met us. When we first believed in Jesus, we didn't know how we got such a great blessing or why our souls had put on this kind of glory. But as time passed after we met the Lord, we were surprised and

thankful that we really have gotten these blessings from God. My fellow believers, go out into the world and meet some other souls. Look closely at whether they are souls who have received blessings through the Lord like you have. Their souls are in despair. Where is their praise? Where is their gratitude? Where is their joy in all things? They are only full of worry and despair. But souls who have met the Lord have joy in God. That is because they have met the Lord.

I truly give thanks to the Lord for meeting us. How could you and I live if He had not done so? This generation is this complicated and we have to live in a world that is so busy; could we worship in peace if the Lord had not met us? This generation is one in which a person cannot live that way. It is a generation that is hard to survive in even if one works to death.

It is also hard for students attending school to study hard. They are students who feel they're not good enough even if they study until 12 or 1 o'clock



in the morning. A long time ago when I went to elementary school, we studied under small kerosene lamps or took our notebooks out under the moonlight if those lamps weren't good enough. Then, we just went to bed quickly not finishing our homework. We used to be swatted with a switch a few times by the teacher when we went to school the next day. That was it. So, there were a good many students who graduated from elementary school without properly knowing even the Korean alphabet. At that time, people could continue on in life even in those circumstances. People could graduate from elementary school even if they didn't know how to read. Everyone graduated if they just attended school. But now is a generation when that can't happen. People of all ages lately are afflicted with obsessive-compulsiveness and live a crazy life that is pressed for time and business. The more this generation is this way, the more uneasy and difficult it is to live without the Lord.

Not just individuals, but people are also

collectively afflicted by the instability of this generation now. People in our country feel uneasy. The socio-political situation of our country is extremely unstable: Politicians are uneasy, and farmers are all uneasy now because the UR (Uruguay Rounds) negotiations have been pushed through by WTO. Government officials in politics are also uneasy. People involved in trade, those in business, those who work, and even small business owners are uneasy. There isn't anyone who doesn't feel uneasy. Even our nation's president is uneasy now.

But what are you and I like now? Our outward man feels uneasy often, but even that is just a very little while. We get caught up in the mood of the world and feel uneasy for a short time, but we become light-hearted again after a little while. We are able to live in peace like this because the Lord takes care of us.

That is because our Lord has met us. Our Lord has met our souls. He has met your soul. We can live happily because the Lord has met us. How could we



live in joy if He had not? We couldn't live a normal life in this crazy world. Is this a generation in which one can live light-heartedly? This generation isn't one in which people can be light-hearted. In the near future, tribulations and disasters will arise in this world. It is said that even a creature of no account makes preparations or takes shelter when it knows in advance that a typhoon is coming. How can we who are the supreme creations live light-heartedly facing such disasters if we were not crazy?

Even so, our souls are peaceful like this because our Lord has met us. Our souls are peaceful because our Lord is in us. He did a great work for us, He has saved us from the curse and destruction of this world, and He has rescued us. My fellow believers, we are the only ones who will not perish when the world is destroyed.

My fellow believers, our inward man is not uneasy for the Lord has met with our inward man, unlike our outward man. If you feel uneasy, ruminate on these words:

*"Why are you cast down, O my soul?
And why are you disquieted within me?
Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him
For the help of His countenance" (Psalms 42:5).*

You won't be uneasy if you look to the Lord. My fellow believers, look more to the Lord the more perilous this world becomes. Pray to Him. Ask Him for help. This way, we live enjoying peace and praising the Lord through faith in Him.

The beloved saint Mary prophesied,
*"For He who is mighty has done great things
for me,
And holy is His name.
And His mercy is on those who fear Him
From generation to generation" (Luke 1:49-50).*

Mary was a God-fearing woman. Are there people who fear God in this generation, too? God meets people who fear Him. So, are there people who fear God in this generation? It is really difficult to meet people who fear Him. There may not even be one person in ten thousand who fears God. Almost



all people in this world don't know how to give ear to the Word of the Lord because they're so full of themselves, and consequently they don't fear God. So, we are only thankful that we somehow met the Lord, somehow came to fear God, and somehow became these kinds of blessed spirits.

Concerning the question of by what people live, the answer is that they live by every Word that proceeds forth from the mouth of God. We must live by caring about our souls. More than our outward man, our inward man must prosper. We must become people who think about what blessings God has clothed our souls in, people who are thankful for that, people who praise God, people who believe in Him, and people who witness of this gospel.

Because we live in these last times, our God holds firmly to our souls, according to the circumstances clothes our souls in His love through compassion that can't be fully expressed in words, and supplies whatever our bodies need. We who live in the last days must take care of our souls. We must

examine our inward man closely and increase our interest in it. The outward man thinks, "What should I eat? What should I drink? What should I wear?" It frequently worries uselessly about those kinds of things, but those daily necessities are taken care of automatically if we just walk by the Word of God. Our Lord has promised us, "*Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you*" (*Matthew 6:33*).

Our inward man must think of and rejoice in the grace God bestowed on us. We should be thankful that He who is mighty performed a great work that has eliminated all the sins of our souls, and we must witness this salvation to all the people of this world. The Lord has met our inward man. Therefore, we must live eternally in the Lord by praising Him. We must live by thinking of, believing in, and being thankful for how our inward man has met the Lord. We must think a lot by being inclined to our inward man.

If your heart becomes carnally minded, you will



become like Lot. People who care a lot about their outward man are like Lot, not Abraham. Lot is a person who was ruined by caring about only the outward man and only seeking after material prosperity. Only two of Lot's daughters received the remission of sins; all the rest of his children weren't able to do so. His wife and descendants couldn't receive the remission of sins, either. That is because Lot didn't think of his inward man, that is, his soul.

We who live in these last days must think more and more of our inward man. Our jobs, business, or studies are all trivial things we do routinely in our daily lives. These things are of minor importance. But, if your outward man takes away the initiative from your inner man, it is like a case of the tail wagging the dog. My fellow believers, we must think of our souls that are our real existence. We must think of what kinds of blessings our souls have received from God. We must always think of our God and be grateful before Him. We must think of how our souls have received blessings from God.

We must first become spiritual people. If we try to become spiritual people first, all our physical problems will be resolved. But if we first become a physical person, we ultimately become like Lot. You probably know Lot, Abraham's nephew, very well. Was Abraham richer than Lot? Or was Lot richer? Abraham was much richer. Abraham sought after his inward man, that is, his spirit. Therefore, God blessed Abraham to make him very rich. God also made Abraham's son, Isaac, the richest man in those days.

If we first think of what blessings God has given to our souls and praise God, give thanks, and have joy with faith through our inward man, our Lord will make our outward man prosper also. So, what is there for us to feel uneasy about as we live in these last days? We usually feel uneasy when things concerning our outward man don't turn out well. But, even if things go well for our outward man, won't they perish when this world is destroyed? Our outward man will also be destroyed. Therefore, our inward man must prosper first. Our outward man is



only necessary temporarily while we live in this world now; it is never eternal. We must live spiritually, knowing that truth. Whether you and I conduct business, attend a job, or are engaged in studying, we must live by thinking of the fact that our Lord has met our souls that are our inward man, and make praises and witness just like Mary did.

We should not care about our outward man first. Our souls must prosper first. My fellow believers, how grateful are you before the Lord? Our God has eliminated all the sins of our inward man, that is, our souls; then, how grateful are you before Him for this? How thankfully do you live to the Lord who eliminated all your sins and mine and who met your souls and mine? We must be thankful to Him without end. Are you thankful? Yes, you are. The thing that we have most to be thankful for is that our Lord has met our souls and eliminated all their sins. We cannot forget this and must always be grateful for it. As we live in these last days we must have the same faith as Mary's that says, "*My soul magnifies the Lord, and*

my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant" (Luke 1:46-48).

Our Lord has saved us from all our sins by regarding our souls, coming to us, meeting us, taking all our sins, and receiving the judgment for us. Therefore, we must praise the Lord and be thankful to Him forever. We cannot compete amongst ourselves about who is better off or be jealous of who has received more blessings from God. There is only one thing we have to say in this world, and that is, "I give thanks that the Lord has eliminated all the sins of my soul." We must live by being eternally thankful like this. This must be engraved in our hearts. My fellow believers, there can never be anyone among us who forgets the fact that the Lord came to us as the Savior and has eliminated the sins of our souls, or who is ungrateful or hides the fact that he has received the remission of sins.

My fellow believers, be alert in this unstable and uncertain generation. If you fail to do so, you will



lose the salvation of the Truth in an instant by Satan who is watching for every opportunity to pounce upon you like a roaring lion. Be thankful before God. Be thankful that He has given peace to our souls. Have joy in that. No matter how perilous this world is, even if, contrary to your wishes, a lot of work by your hands isn't settled well, and consequently, even if you live in a lowly state because of that, I hope by all means that you live with joy. God originally saved lowly people like us.

My fellow believers, be thankful that you have met the Lord. Don't be thankful because of your desirable circumstances; be thankful because you have met the Lord. We must praise that the Lord has met us. We shouldn't listen to the Bible inattentively; I hope that you listen to it by faith.

My fellow believers, the time has come for us to be awakened from sleep. We must now clearly know with clear minds what kind of generation this is. There is not much of this world left to us. I'm over 50; if I live till I'm 70, whatever they turn out to be,

there will be changes in this world for the rest of my life. Even if God doesn't do anything, Satan will totally change this world. The time has now come for us to be awakened from sleep. We must live with our inward man praising the Lord and by being thankful to Him who has met that inward man.

Now is not the time for us to be easygoing in this world. We might be the ones who are on the last train. I mean that we are on the last train of salvation. The whistle blew and the first train left when man was born into this world. Trains left every hour afterwards, and it is now 12 at night, the time for the last train to leave. The last train of salvation in this world is leaving, and we stop and pick people up at every station on the way. People on the train here are people riding the last train just like us. People not on the train become the wretched ones who missed it. Eternal destruction waits for them. But we who are on the last train obtain eternal joy.

We must praise God by our spirits in these last days. Just as Mary was moved by the fullness of the



Holy Spirit and praised the Lord with a prayer of prophecy, we must also praise God through our hearts. By doing so, our inward man can rejoice everyday. Do you understand, my fellow believers?

Don't be repressed by your outward man. Rather, rejoice in the Lord always with your inward man. Be thankful and rejoice everyday. When our Lord comes, I hope that we will meet Him, enter His Kingdom together, and live enjoying eternal happiness. ☐



SERMON

16



CONTENTS



The Lord Who Made Us Serve Him in Holiness and Righteousness

< Luke 1:67-75 >

“Now his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying: ‘Blessed is the Lord God of Israel, For He has visited and redeemed His people, And has raised up a horn of salvation for us In the house of His servant David, As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets, Who have been since the world began, That we should be saved from our enemies And from the hand of all who hate us, To perform the mercy promised to our fathers And to remember His holy covenant,

The oath which He swore to our father Abraham:
To grant us that we, Being delivered from the hand of our enemies, Might serve Him without fear, In holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life.””

Did the Lord Make Us Serve God in Holiness and Righteousness?

Christmas is a day we commemorate and celebrate that the Lord God came in the flesh of man to this earth to save all mankind from all their sins. I am very thankful to the Lord because we get to share the Word of prophecy about the birth of Messiah.

We are living in truly difficult times. It’s already been over 2,000 years since our Lord came to this earth and saved all sinners through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and there are signs all around of



His Second Coming. Therefore, it is worthwhile for us to think about the Lord's birth together with His Second Coming in this Christmas season. Thus, we have very strange feelings and are excited.

If we really just commemorated the day that the Lord came to this earth, it would suffice for us to just joyfully celebrate His birth singing, "Joy to the world! The Lord is come. Let earth receive her King." But now that the signs of the Lord's Second Coming have drawn very near as this generation shows evidence of the last days, it seems that our hearts are alternating between joy and sorrow as we celebrate this Christmas. The world is gloomy when we look at it, but our hearts are joyful and glad when we think of our Lord's birth. We don't know how many more times we will have Christmas in the future, but we must constantly commemorate and spread the Lord's birth, His Second Coming, and the gospel of the water and the Spirit that He gave until He comes to this earth again.

We just read Luke 1:67-75 today. This passage is

the prophecy of Zacharias, John the Baptist's father. He, inspired by the Holy Spirit, was praising the Lord. Whom was Zacharias praising in his prophecy? He was prophesying and praising Jesus Christ. He was praising that Jesus Christ would come to this earth and make us who believe in God serve the Lord all the days of our lives in holiness and righteousness without fear. What he said means that all the Words of promise made to Abraham in the Old Testament were thoroughly fulfilled.

John the Baptist's father, Zacharias, was a person born to the house of the High Priests Aaron. Zacharias was a priest picked by God according to the rules and regulations of the Tabernacle System of the Old Testament era, and he was performing the duties of a priest for the people of Israel. He was well aware of the prophecies in the Old Testament that would be fulfilled by God's Providence. He was also a person who experienced the hand of God sending John the Baptist through the body of his wife before the birth of Jesus Christ. God sent John the Baptist to



this earth six months before Jesus Christ came. Jesus Christ came in the New Testament era to fulfill all the prophecies of the Old Testament. John the Baptist was God's servant who was used to transfer the sins of the world onto Jesus Christ so that He could fulfill the promises of the Scriptures.

John the Baptist was the last High Priest of the Old Testament and the person whom Jesus witnessed of as "the greatest man born of women." John the Baptist was the representative of mankind and the person who was to transfer the sins of the world to Jesus Christ. John the Baptist was born into this world by the power of God. All of these things were fulfilled by God: That the Baby Jesus was conceived in Mary's womb by the Holy Spirit; that Jesus who is God and the Savior was born on this earth as the Savior of mankind; and that John the Baptist was born six months prior to Jesus' birth—all these were realized by God. That's why Zacharias praised Him.

Zacharias actually became mute because he didn't believe the Word of God that the angel

delivered to him at first. The angel Gabriel appeared to Zacharias in the Sanctuary and spoke to him. "Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John." But Zacharias didn't believe this and stood there with his mouth hanging open. So, the angel said to him, "You will be mute and not able to speak until the day these things take place."

Later, John the Baptist was born through Zacharias' wife, Elizabeth. It was the custom of the Israelites for a father to name his child. Since Zacharias was mute for ten months, Elizabeth asked him what to name the child after she gave birth to him. Zacharias asked for a writing tablet and wrote on it, "His name is John." However, the name John was not one in his family. By the way, Zacharias was prophesying that we would be saved from darkness by the birth of his son, John, and the birth of the Baby Jesus a little bit later. He said that the Baby Jesus who came as the Savior of mankind would make us such that we "might serve Him without fear,



in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life." Because of Jesus Christ all people who believe in God put on holiness before God and become His children by being saved. They put on the righteousness of God and live before Him without fear.

Zacharias gave praises of prophecy in that manner. The Holy Spirit inspired him so that he prophesied and praised God, saying, "Jesus Christ will come to eliminate all people's sins, and He will make them holy. He will also make them the children of God and make them live before Him without fear all the days of their lives and forever." Jesus Christ is the Person who makes us stand before God without fear, makes us God's children, and makes us sinless people whose hearts are holy. Zacharias knew through the Spirit the Baby Jesus who was to come in six months, and he praised Jesus Christ by writing a poem.

The Baby Jesus was the Son of God who came to save all humankind from all their sins. He is our

Savior and God. Concerning the question of who made us holy, the answer is Jesus Christ, the Son of God. He gave us the Law and He made us who believe in God's righteousness into holy people before Him by cleansing us of all our sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. God made us live forever as holy people. How could we become holy people in God's sight if it were not for the gospel of the water and the Spirit? How could we dare to insist that we could become holy and clean by our endeavors of the flesh? All of this holiness can come about through Jesus Christ who is God, and that's the way it's turned out. If not for God, it would be impossible for us to become holy people. Since we, through Jesus Christ, have become God's children by putting on holiness with faith, and by putting on God's righteousness, we are now able to stand before God without fear and praise His righteousness.

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth, and He made us. Jesus Christ told us what



is right, what is sin, and what the gospel of the water and the Spirit is in order to make us holy all at once through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and to make us live forever in holiness before God. He took all our sins by being baptized by John the Baptist, taught us what the righteousness and love of God are, and saved us all at once from all the sins of the world through the salvation of baptism and the Cross that constitutes the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

By giving us salvation that contains God's righteousness, He made us fearless before God, made us praise God who gave us salvation, and made us live gloriously forever. Jesus Christ came to this earth as the Son of God the Father and as our Savior. Jesus Christ made us able to live by becoming God's holy children without fear before the Holy Trinity that came to us in the Spirit of holiness. We have received the grace of eternal salvation from God by believing in Jesus Christ through the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

How Could the Fear in Our Hearts Disappear?

It is through God's righteousness, not by our own strength, that we are able to live without fear before God, that we have become the righteous without any sins in our hearts, and that we have become God's children. It would be absolutely impossible without God's righteousness. Our very existences would not have come to pass if not for God's righteousness, and there could be nothing before our eyes without God. So, because of the righteousness of God, He has given us holiness from sin through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. He makes those who believe His children, and gives blessings so that they can live joyfully before Him without fear.

Zacharias told the people at that time through the Spirit that God gave these blessings to those who believe in His righteousness and all those who are the descendants of Abraham by faith. That's right. How can we praise this way if not for God? If not for God,



how could we live before Him without fear? The question is: "How could we who cannot help but live in sin out of our weakness live without fear if not for God's righteousness?" Because of His righteousness, we are able to live without fear through it. We who believe can become absolutely sinless and holy righteous by Jesus Christ receiving the transference of all our sins through the baptism He received from John the Baptist.

All this grace that the Lord has given us was due to God's righteousness. That's right. Just as Zacharias made all of these praises by putting on the fullness of the Spirit, we can also live by praising God's righteousness by the same faith. We can now live a life that returns glory to God. That is truly the case. Since being saved from sin, putting on holiness, and living before God without fear are all due to God's righteousness, let's once again think of God this Christmas and the salvation and much grace that was given us by Him, and let's give thanks before Him once again. My fellow believers, you cannot just

be thankful merely for Jesus' coming to this earth. In order to give us holiness, God put on the flesh of man and came to this earth. He pulled us from sin, destruction, damnation, darkness, and despair so that those who believe in Him could live before Him without fear. We are always thankful for and think of this grace of God.

We must think of and be thankful for the grace of salvation God has given us, no matter what situation we are in. We must become people who meditate on it and are thankful for it from the depths of our souls, just like Zacharias did. We can't have our hearts swell, be light-hearted, and just think, "Wow, Christmas is here. I'd better have some fun today." When Christmas arrives, above all else, we must first think of all the grace God has given us. We must be thankful for the love of God's righteousness. We must write new hymns and praise God's righteousness. We must also be thankful once again for the grace of salvation with which He saved us from sin, and we must be thankful for His love. I



hope that we can use this Christmas as an opportunity to once again be thankful that God has given us the grace of salvation to be able to live without fear with the holiness and righteousness He gave us. Then, this Christmas will become a very beneficial one. We can never forget this, no matter when and no matter what situations we are in. We must never forget the grace of the Lord with which God loved us, gave us holiness, gave us His righteousness, and gave us the blessing to be able to live without fear.

It doesn't mean much to agonize over what we can do to repay all the grace that has been given us, think of some new way to do so, and make the pledge to do that this year. People usually like new things, but what is truly precious is really old. New things aren't precious; what is truly precious is that which hasn't changed even though it's been around for a long, long time. God's eternal salvation and His eternal love are still the most precious things in our hearts. We in this generation, too, think of and are thankful for this salvation that was totally

accomplished out of God's love, and we should be thankful for the blessings He gave us long, long ago.

There is a proverb that goes, "Friends and wine improve with age." They say that the older something is, the more precious it is. As we celebrate this Christmas, we must think dearly of God who existed before the creation of the heavens and the earth and who, therefore, made the universe and us a very long time ago. We must be thankful for His salvation, the holiness He has given us, and His righteousness. God planned and achieved our salvation through Jesus Christ a very long time ago in order to make us live before Him without fear. He gave His blessings and love to those who believe in His wonderful salvation.

In this Christmas season, we must once again think of the blessed love with which God loved us since a very long time ago and give thanks once again for that eternal and truly precious grace of the Lord. Our hearts are truly full of God's grace, just as Zacharias praised the Lord while filled with the Holy Spirit. Today's world has changed quite a lot, but we



are truly thankful and our hearts are full beyond measure because of the love of our Lord and this Word of God that was given to us a long time ago. Our hearts are full of joy and peace because of God. My fellow believers, I hope you truly have joy and are thankful, unshaken, and satisfied because of God.

There is no reason for us to be unsatisfied for we have the righteousness of God. We are unsatisfied and have fallen into our own useless thoughts if we don't have the God of righteousness. But we are satisfied when we think of the God of righteousness, even if we live in a shack. We rejoice and are satisfied with the Lord even if we own nothing. But if we think of something without God's righteousness and live without Him, things are hard and we are unsatisfied with everything. However, God always makes us rich in our hearts. If we attend on Him and serve Him, we are always rich.

I hope that we'll all spend this Christmas thinking of and being thankful for God's righteousness, His love, and all the blessings that He

has given us. Let's enjoy watching the Christmas plays and praise the Lord with hearts of children this Christmas. I also became an actor, prepared for Christmas plays, and sang Christmas carols a long time ago. Those adult brothers among us say they couldn't prepare well because they are very busy, but they finished without practicing much because they have innate skills. Let's watch together to see how they do.

Since they were busy, as soon as they met to practice, they told one another they were good, so they wouldn't need to practice long. They just looked at the script one time through, each practiced their parts on their own, and went through it together for just a short time. It was unavoidable because their jobs are so busy. But they will probably do well with their wisdom and quick spontaneity from their life-long experiences. I'm excited to see it, anyway. I believe that not just the adult brothers but also the middle school students, high school students, young adults, and the adult sisters will also show wonderful



and satisfactory performances. I hope that we do everything for the glory of God, whether we present a Christmas play, sing praises, preach the gospel, eat, drink, or whatever we do.

I think a lot of people will come into God's Church this Christmas because this generation is gloomy. A long time ago, people who didn't usually come out to church all came to church on Christmas. The elderly and those who believe in Confucianism came to church on Christmas. It seems that this generation is like that. Christmas is a day when those who had chided us before and those who live near us might come. It is a day we preach sermons, too, but it is also a day we give good food, a day people can see some Christmas plays for free, and a day when people's hearts are merry and joyous for some reason.

Therefore, people who don't believe in Jesus will come to God's Church in crowds. There will be some of your parents who didn't believe, listen to the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and see some Christmas plays. Some of them will accept Jesus as

their Savior after being touched by the Holy Spirit like Zacharias. I hope that you really prepare and pray for the feast of Christmas Eve in all sincerity and faith for the glory of God.

My fellow believers, Christmas is approaching and the world is in agitation. So I admonish you to not follow the world, go crazy, and go completely out into it. It's useless going out into the world. Let's just live together in grace and glory while eating a lot of food spiritually and physically in the Church. I hope that the sisters will especially make a lot of tasty food this Christmas. ☐





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