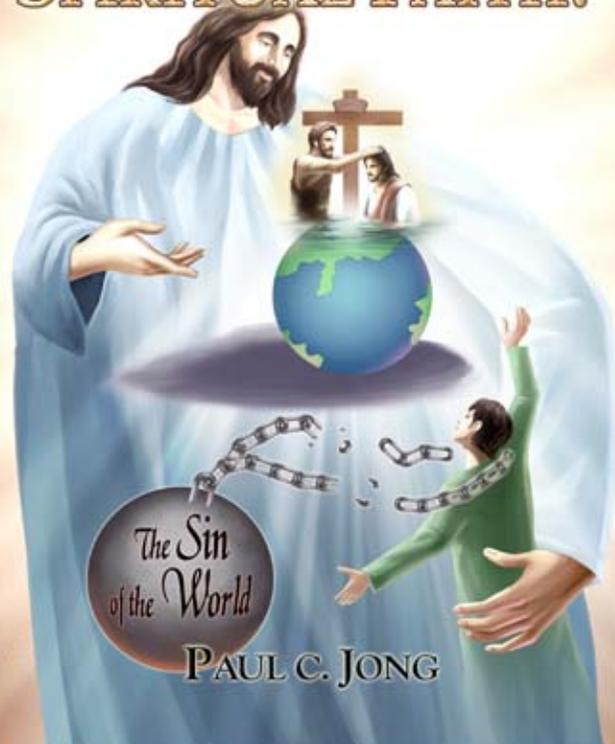




Sermons on the Gospel of Luke (II)

WHAT IS THE SPIRITUAL FAITH?



Sermons on the Gospel of Luke (II)

WHAT IS THE SPIRITUAL FAITH?

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Have You Met Jesus with the Word of God?

People are too simple-minded when it comes to understanding and believing in the Word in the New Testament. They think they can understand it all by just reading it. But it isn't easy to understand and believe in what the Word in the New Testament means when reading it. Do you really understand every passage in the New Testament when you read it? Do you also know why God spoke and wrote the gospel of the water and the Spirit in the Scriptures?

Most Christians didn't have these questions at first. But they come to have such questions the moment they think they have almost figured out who Jesus is. So, they must know and believe in the gospel Truth of the water and the Spirit. Only then will they come to be saved from all their sins by knowing and believing in Jesus who came by the gospel of the water and the Spirit and eliminated all the sins of the world as the true Savior. You must once again think about whether you have met, through the Word of God, Jesus Christ who came by the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and we must believe that.



SERMONS ON THE GOSPEL OF LUKE (II)

WHAT IS THE SPIRITUAL FAITH?

PAUL C. JONG

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Sermons on the Gospel of Luke (II)
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Preface

What Is the Spiritual Faith?

What is spiritual faith? It is the faith that enables our souls to be saved from sin. Our souls obtain salvation from all our sins by faith in the Truth that is in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The role of the Word of the Bible in our lives is compared to that of a compass in a sailing boat on a boundless ocean. Every Book of the Bible focuses on the salvation of believers that was completed by Jesus Christ who came to this earth, took all the sins of this world by being baptized by John the Baptist, shed His blood on the Cross, and was resurrected from the dead. So, the Bible speaks of the birth of John the Baptist and the indispensability of his ministry prior to



the initiation of the full-scale ministry of Jesus that was to fulfill all the righteousness of God.

How well do you concentrate upon the spiritual work with which God saved sinners? The question is whether you truly understand that Jesus came to this earth in order to take all your sins by being baptized by John the Baptist. You must know that God prepared to fulfill His righteousness by sending John the Baptist to this earth first. The Lord prepared John the Baptist because He truly wanted to accomplish our salvation by His wisdom.

We must now know the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We must know why Jesus had to come to this earth through the body of Virgin Mary. We must also know why He had John the Baptist born six months before Him, and we must know that Jesus took the sins of the world by being baptized by John the Baptist.

You will now come to know that the salvation

that fulfilled God's righteousness is known and believed in through the true gospel of the water and the Spirit. ☒



SERMON

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Have a Closer Look at Mary's Faith

< 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.”



Brothers and sisters, we will get to have a closer look at Mary's faith through today's Scripture passage. Even though Mary could not comprehend angel's message, she denied her own human thoughts and accepted the angel's message from God. That is how she could participate in God's ministry of bearing the Son of God by obeying God's Word.

What kind of faith is the proper faith in God? It starts by believing the Word of God and it ends by bearing spiritual fruits by faith in God's righteousness. So we need to begin accepting the Word of God by obeying it. We can reach the righteousness of God by believing what God calls the Truth as Truth. This means reaching God's righteousness through accepting God's Word by obeying it. Without believing in the righteousness of God, there is no way to have proper faith. To take for example, faith in supernatural body experiences such as seeing

visions and speaking in tongues are questionable for being the proper faith. God is telling Mary what the proper is faith that leads to His righteousness. When we see Mary accepting God's Word, we can take a guess what her faith was like.

Mary was a virgin at that time. She was engaged to a man named Joseph. All of sudden an angel came to her with God's Word as it is written, *“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” (Luke 1:28-32).

Mary heard God's Word through the angel. But she was dubious. The angel's message from God was too overwhelming for Mary to digest. She was at her home when the angel came in and said, *“Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!”* 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 1:29-33).*

When she heard that Jesus Christ would be born through her, she became speechless rather than surprised. It was quite alarming to hear that

a virgin was going to have a baby, and it is more shocking to imagine that would happen through Mary herself. She said from human's point of view, she was fertile but couldn't have a baby since she hadn't slept with any men before. The angel told her that her relative Elizabeth, who was originally barren, conceived a baby by the power of God's Word, and that with God nothing is impossible. Then she denied herself and her thoughts and accepted the will of God saying, *“Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word.”*

Likewise we choose to believe that the gospel word of the water and the Spirit removed sins of all believers at once even though our own thoughts are resistant to the idea that our sins can be removed all at once. We become born again when we put behind our prejudice and stereotypes and believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit through Jesus Christ.



Brothers and sisters, the faith in God's righteousness comes through the Word of God after the denial of our own human thoughts, doubts and prejudices. We can accept it by obeying God's Word of righteousness. As the power of the Most High fulfils God's will, we become God's children by faith in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that washes our crimson sins clean and white as snow. Brothers and sisters, to have faith in the righteousness of God, we need to give up our human thoughts and turn away from them. As you can see in today's passage, Mary put her human thoughts behind and accepted God's will into her heart. When she accepted and confessed her faith saying, *"Let it be to me according to your word,"* baby Jesus was conceived in her and born to this world.

Mary could not have accepted God's Word with her own thoughts, but she denied herself and obeyed the Word. This is the faith in God's

righteousness, by which we can bear Jesus in our hearts. We feel thankful before God's Word that came by the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Who can conceive baby Jesus in the heart? It is those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and believe the Word of God will come true exactly as it is written, and it is not those who believe according to their own thoughts that can conceive baby Jesus.

We Should Reexamine Our Faith

What is genuine faith? I tell you once again that it is something that can be attained by denying our own human thoughts. It is accepting God's Word with an obedient heart. Then we can receive the real blessing of salvation by faith. Brothers and sisters, remember Peter, who threw the nets all night, but caught no fish. When he



said, *“Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net” (Luke 5:5)*, and threw the nets, he caught a lot of fish just as the Lord said. If you really want to be Christian with genuine faith, you should discard your own thoughts and believe God's Word as it is written. We need to accept God's Word into our hearts as a whole. Only then baby Jesus can be born in us, grow with us and become our King and Shepherd to lead us.

There is not a person who can perform the righteousness of God without faith in God's Word. Do you think Mary could accept God's will and obey it if she had acted based on her human thoughts? Absolutely not. Can we attend Jesus in our hearts with our human effort, putting God's Word aside? Mary accepted only God's Word to conceive Jesus Christ. What she did was just accepting God's Word, but the Word of God

enabled her to conceive and bear Jesus.

When you receive God's Word into your hearts by faith in its power, the Word of God turns into powerful tool to make miraculous changes in our hearts. Our life of faith is not based on our human thoughts, but based on God's Word, which will lead us before God and help us follow the Lord.

This is the faith that follows God's Word. When we live by the Word of the Lord and not by human standards, the power of the Word enables us to do God's work. Brothers and sisters, didn't we get out of sins just by accepting the Word of God, and not by our own efforts? We received salvation from all sins by accepting the gospel of the water and the Spirit with an obedient heart. When we accepted God's Word into our hearts just as it is, all our sins were cleansed as white as snow, and we could live a genuine life of faith. In the meantime whether we



realize it or not, we are His righteous vessels that live according to His righteousness. We become completely separated from the world without our knowledge.

Brothers and sisters, we should attain genuine faith by knowing God's Word. No one can have genuine faith by human efforts. In other words, it should start from accepting the Word of the Lord into our hearts. When our thoughts conflict with God's Word, we should always deny our human thoughts and follow God's Word. From there the faith that pursues God's righteousness begins and enables us to bear real spiritual fruit. The Word of God we believe has the power to keep us going with genuine faith. We can enjoy all the blessings from God by faith.

Mary became a blessed woman because she accepted God's Word that the angel delivered. That is how she could conceive baby Jesus. Our Lord granted her the favor to conceive baby

Jesus. Luke 1:28 says so: "*Rejoice, highly favored one.*"

Who Is God's Favored One?

The angel greeted Mary, "*Rejoice, highly favored one.*" Then who gets such a favor from God? Our Lord favors those who are poor in heart. God favors those who do not have self-righteousness, those who give up their own righteousness to have God's righteousness. Those people treasure the gospel of the water and the Spirit and cherish God's love rather than human love. Those people acknowledge God as the Most High and accept God's Word believing in the power of His Word. Those are the people with poor spirit, and God's favor falls on them.

God talked to Mary through the angel. Mary responded to Him by emptying herself and



saying, "I am Your lowly maidservant, Let it be to me according to Your word." Our Lord visited the lowly maid and bestowed the grace of salvation on her. God blessed those who know their lowliness with salvation of peace. Brothers and sisters, how lowly are we before God? We should realize how lowly we are before the holy God, but many of us are not aware of our lowliness. Of what can lowly humans boast before the holy God?

God called Jacob as a worm (Isaiah 41:14). We are all like earthworms that come out on rainy days and wriggle along the muddy ground. God also calls us maggots (Job 25:6). We are such lowly creatures. Nevertheless God granted His grace of salvation to people like earthworms and maggots. God plants His righteousness in the lowly hearts and becomes the source of power for those who depend on His righteousness and live by faith. Those who are loved by God know

how lowly they are. But those who do not receive any favors from God think they are righteous and just.

However, God's righteousness is far greater than that of anyone on earth. God is holy and righteous, and He is the God of love and righteousness who removed all our sins once and for all by sending His own son to be baptized by John the Baptist to wash away all our sins. Therefore our Lord is the holy one who fulfilled all God's righteousness. His baptism and the blood are more than enough to show God's righteousness, and those who believe in His righteousness are as righteous as God. Brothers and sisters, God favors such people.

We are originally as lowly as earthworms, but we are too proud to admit our lowliness. Humanism has exalted human righteousness too high. During the Renaissance and thenceforth humanism prevailed. During that period of time,



humanism became dominant as a reaction to theocentrism that emphasized God's authorities and neglected humans. But originally theocentrism is the right idea. It is true that humans are lowly creatures while it was wrong for the religious leaders of the Medieval Age to misuse their godly authorities for their own benefits. It is not even possible to compare our lowliness with God's loftiness. God's Word is the absolute Truth, but we are always changeable and full of weaknesses.

To Receive God's Favor, We Should Be Committed to God's Word

Who gets favor from God? Who received the grace of salvation when Jesus was born in Bethlehem? Most people who belonged to the high class at that time such as the Pharisees, the

scribes, the high priests, the kings and the religious leaders couldn't receive salvation. However, those who were aware of their lowly states, Mary for example, received God's favor. The shepherds also received His favor. While the shepherds were keeping watch over their flocks in the fields at night, suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests*" (Luke 2:14).

As you have seen so far, those who receive God's favor were people who depended on God's righteousness and trusted His Word as a whole. They didn't rely on their own righteousness. Brothers and sisters, who received salvation? Only those who knew their true ugliness; those who knew the greatness of God; those who knew the fact that God saved them from sins by the gospel of the water and the



Spirit found favor with God. Do you believe this? Such people receive God's favor.

Brothers and sisters, now we should reexamine our faith in God's Word. You should ask yourself, "Do I trust God's Word?" If your answer is 'yes', you are favored a one. If you do not believe in God's righteousness through His Word, you are denying His Word, and you belong with non-believers. Let me ask you this; who would be happier; those who found favor with God or those who have not? It would be the favored ones, of course. What is the favor? It is God's free gift. Salvation is a free gift from God. Why not receive the free gift? I want you to know that God favors those who like free things.

Do you know how much grace they enjoy for being demanding and persistent before God? Those who like God's favor get their sins cleaned by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and go to Heaven. Those who seek

and believe in God's grace live a blessed life under God's love. On the other hand, those who do not care for God's grace live the opposite life. Those who reject God's favor will go to the hot place. Just as Mary received salvation by believing the Word of God's grace, we can all be saved from sins by faith in God's grace. I hope all of you will find favor with God.

Brothers and sisters, it is good for us to be blessed by God. We cannot live without His grace. We cannot survive without His help. Even though we cannot see His protecting hand over our problems and troubles we have throughout our lives, we definitely need it. All human beings need to find favor with God. We should not forget His favor. In every matter of life praying to God, 'God, please help me this way.' 'May God bless!' Those who seek God's favor even in small things like that are wise people and real worshipers of God.



Whom did God favor? Those who found favor with God are: really insufficient people; those who know their insufficiency and lowliness; those who have poor spirit; those who really need God's help, and those who yearn for God's grace. God wants everybody to find favor with Him, but only those with poor spirit can receive His favor.

God's Word Has Power

What did the angel say to Mary? He said the power of the Highest would overshadow her. He is saying that God's power, not God Himself will overshadow Mary. It is similar to God's creation of light. When God said, "Let there be light," the power of God's Word enabled the light to come to existence so that we can now see during the day. With the power of His Word, "Let there be

light," at the time of creation of the heavens and the earth, light still exist millions of years later.

"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," said the angel. (Luke 1:35) Our God overshadowed Mary with His power, which enabled her to conceive, bear, nurse and take care of baby Jesus. God also told us through His angel that His power was going to save Mary from sins, making her His people and a blessed person clothed in His righteousness.

The power of God's Word that was given to her by the angel enabled the Virgin Mary to conceive Jesus Christ. Brothers and sisters, people who receive salvation are those who lean on God believing in the power of salvation which God has already fulfilled. Baby Jesus can be conceived in anybody who received the remission of sins by believing in God's Word of



salvation and its power. Jesus Christ comes into the heart of those people. Brothers and sisters, believing in the power of God that removed our crimson sins all at once by the gospel of the water and the Spirit is to welcome Jesus Christ into our hearts. Jesus Christ is already inside those who believe in His power.

Within the hearts of us as believers of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, He makes our faith and our knowledge of His Word grow. Bible says that Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men (Luke 2:52), and so should our faith after we welcome Jesus Christ as our Lord.

Our faith should not be stagnant, but should keep growing after we become born-again by the gospel of the water and the Spirit. God is the one who makes us keep growing. His wonderful power makes us grow. God continues nurturing us. He continues protecting us with His Word.

He keeps healing our wounds. Why does He do that? It is because Satan and demons keep harassing us and hurting us. God is the one who keeps curing the wounds, putting bandages on them, providing nutrition and pouring blessings on us. Brothers and sisters, just as the power of God overshadowed Mary for Jesus Christ to be born, God's power removed all our sins. The powerful Word of God not only carries our sins away but also makes our faith grow. Besides His power heals our wounds daily and empowers us to serve God and follow Him. Brothers and sisters do you believe this? Jesus Christ was born and stayed on earth for thirty-three years to fulfill the salvation work for us.

Jesus Christ lived on this earth for thirty-three years. During His life on earth, He saved believers of the gospel of the water and the Spirit from sins and granted them salvation. He is now sitting at the right hand of God, blessing those

whose hearts are poor and humble. God is the one who lives forever, heals, nurtures, blesses the born-again and makes them grow fulfilling His wills.

Dear beloved saints, God's Word is still in effect. God's favor shown by the birth of Christ is not over, but His amazing grace of saving lives will continue tomorrow, the day after tomorrow and in the future. God keeps our faith growing and sends us His blessings continuously. Brothers and sisters, Jesus Christ did not die permanently on the Cross, but He rose again from the dead. He is now sitting at the right hand of God as the Master of the heavens and the earth. He is also the Judge and the King of kings, and His blessings will last forever. He blesses those who He chooses to bless, curses those who He chooses to curse, and He will be with us as our King and God.

Earthly kings even with the most powers are mere humans and death is the end of them. However, God is the God of power and His name is Jehovah. Jehovah means "the existing One." When Moses asked God what His name is and what he should say to people in Egypt, God said, "I AM WHO I AM. I have no creator, no beginning no end. I am Jehovah God." Jesus Christ is God, who is eternal and immortal. We cannot do so, but God has such powers. Do you believe this? It is hard to believe from our human point of view. It must be truth since God said so.

Everything except God was created. Even the Devil and demons as well as angels are God's creatures just like humans. But with humans God saves, blesses, nurtures and takes care of us. I give thanks to God for that. Brothers and sisters, we have received the remission of sins through the righteousness of the Lord, and now we have faith as small as mustard a seed. I believe God



will keep our faith growing. I want you to believe that God does His work through us; He saves numerous people through us; He has us serve others and He blesses people through us.

“Let It Be to Me According to Your Word”

Luke 1:38 reads, *“Then Mary said, ‘Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word.’ And the angel departed from her.”*

It is written in the Bible that Mary said, *“Let it be to me according to your word.”* When Mary heard the angel's message, she put everything under God's care by faith. Right at that moment what God told her was fulfilled and the Word of the Lord and the blessing became hers. Saying, *“Let it be to me according to your word,”* aloud

means receiving God's Word and being ready for His blessings. Just because God said so, Mary accepted God's Word as it is. Since the Word of God is power, she took every Word of God into her heart. ‘Let it be to me according to your word.’ As a result of her commitment, she was blessed with all the Heavenly blessings. You should know this.

Brothers and sisters, we too can be blessed people like Mary by believing the entire Word of God. I mentioned that because of her faith everything that would be done according to God's Word brought all the blessings to her. So Mary praised God as you can see in Luke 1:46-48:

“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.”



She foresaw that all generations would call her blessed. Because Mary praised the Lord with her soul and received God's Word, she was able to enjoy all God's blessings. Her spirit had rejoiced in God her Savior because she believed that God had regarded her lowly state out of His mercy. God favors people like Mary, regards and blesses the lowly from generation to generation.

We are not any different from Mary. We heard God's Word just like Mary heard it through an angel. From whom did we hear God's Word? In the past, God sent His messages through His angels, but now He uses His people and His servants. The angel named Gabriel was running God's errand. Gabriel was a messenger angel.

Just as God talked to Mary through His messenger angel, Gabriel, God's Word is now being delivered by the born-again Christians and the servants of God. All you have to do is to receive God's Word confessing, "*Let it be to me*

according to your word." Brothers and sisters, did you believe God's Word when God's servants delivered it to you? Believing the delivered message is the same as what Mary did. If Mary had not believed the angel's message, she would not have received God's blessings. By the way, God's Word cannot be heard without messengers. Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ (Romans 10:17). If your faith is not based on the Word of God, the faith will never grow no matter how hard you try with your own efforts.

If the angel had not showed up before Mary and if she had thought to herself that God would bless her anyway, she would not have received any blessings. Only by the Lord's gospel of the water and the Spirit, she could trust God's Word saying, "*Let it be to me according to your word,*" and by this commitment she received the



remission of her sins and all the Heavenly blessings.

Jesus Christ 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). In other words, He was saying it is proper to remove the sins of all people. The ‘righteousness’ in this verse is ‘Yi’ (義) in Chinese character. What is amazing is that this Chinese character consists of two independent characters, 羊 (*yang*, which means ‘sheep’) and 我 (*wǒ*, which means ‘I’). This Chinese character gives us a picture of Abel’s sacrifice. Each and every one of us also can be righteous when we go before God holding up high the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ.

God came to this earth and did things that are right. Jesus took away people’s sins by His baptism and gave Himself to God as a sacrifice to pay for the death penalty on the Cross for sinners to be saved; otherwise humans would go

to hell because of sins, become slaves to Satan and demons, suffer from sins and cannot receive any blessings. That was the right thing before God and the message of the Lord that saved us. Jesus came to this earth for that reason.

Jesus, who is God Himself, was baptized. Right at the moment when Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River about two thousand years ago, all of our sins were carried on to Jesus. Do you believe that all your life time sins were handed over to Jesus? Do you believe that you are saved with your heart’s conviction and with your mouth’s confession (Romans 10:10)?

“Behold! The Lamb of God, Who Takes Away the Sin of the World!”

Brothers and sisters, where are the sins of the world now? Who has taken all those sins? Jesus



Christ took care of our sins by His baptism. After He was baptized by John the Baptist to take away our sins, He preached the gospel for three years. Jesus said to the woman caught in the act of adultery, *“Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more”* (John 8:11). Jesus didn't condemn the adulterous woman who got caught in action. Why was that? It was because Jesus had already taken all the sins of the world and could not judge her with worldly standards.

Besides, she was a woman with poor spirit. She was fully aware of her lowliness-as low as earthworms; her sins and her poor state. She knew she did not have any righteousness in her and waited for punishment from Jesus. Jesus said, *“Neither do I condemn you.”* He did not condemn her. Why? He is saying, “I took care of your sins, so you no longer have sins. I already knew you would sin.” Do you also believe this?

As in this example, Jesus became the Savior to all of us

“Let it be to me according to your word.” If you have welcomed Jesus Christ into your heart with such prayer, for the Word of the Lord saved us and adopted us as His children, you are children of God. Jesus sends the Holy Spirit to the hearts of God's children. He makes our faith grow through the body of the Church just as baby Jesus grew in Mary's womb. Then He helps us bear Jesus Christ and grow with Him. Therefore you should know by now that Jesus Christ has been watching over us to protect and to bless us ever since we were born again, even though He doesn't seem to be very much involved in our lives. Brothers and sisters, it is way above our understanding that God Himself became our King, our Master and has been leading our lives.

Beloved brothers and sisters, there are so many words in the Bible other than *“Let it be to*



me according to your word." After we become born-again Christians, our Christian life doesn't stop there, but rather starts from there; we should grow up spiritually, deny ourselves to trust God, fight against the world and love the Lord more than anything else in the world. We may love what is in the world, but we cannot help but loving the Lord more. His love is far greater than any other love in the world. I love You, Lord. Brothers and sisters, even as we frequently fall, get hurt and scratched, remember that Jesus Christ removed our sins and blessed us. The Lord is the only one who can give us real rest and blessings. Brothers and sisters, He loves us. When we understand His love and come before Him with love, He transforms our lives in His powers and awesome blessings. The Bible says, *"Though your beginning was small, Yet your latter end would increase abundantly"* (Job 8:7). For the faithful, the end will be more prosperous

than the beginning. God promised us that He would bless us to be prosperous. Do you believe this?

Brothers and sisters, God blessed Mary and she would be called blessed by all generations. However, when she first conceived baby Jesus, it was very embarrassing for her. To have a baby out of wedlock was not something she could feel proud of. But when Jesus was doing His ministry, a certain woman said to Him in a loud voice, *"Blessed is the womb that bore You, and the breasts which nursed You!"* (Luke 11:27) Mary was a very lowly woman in the beginning. All humans are originally lowly. I wanted to tell you that Mary turned into a really blessed and glorified person with times as she accepted God's Word and the Word of God came upon her.

Accepting Jesus Christ seems like nothing in the beginning, but as time goes by, God molds us into bigger and stronger vessels that hold God's



blessings. Brothers and sisters, God never forsakes us. God always protects us. He never stops nurturing us. He also pours out His blessings one after another. I want you to remember God did not leave Abraham no matter what he did. God doesn't abandon us no matter how we stand before God. Keep in mind that God blessed us the same way. What changes from time to time is our mind, but God's Word and His blessings are always with us regardless of our conditions. God's blessings were upon Mary forever. I want you to believe that God's blessings for you and me will be upon us forever as well.

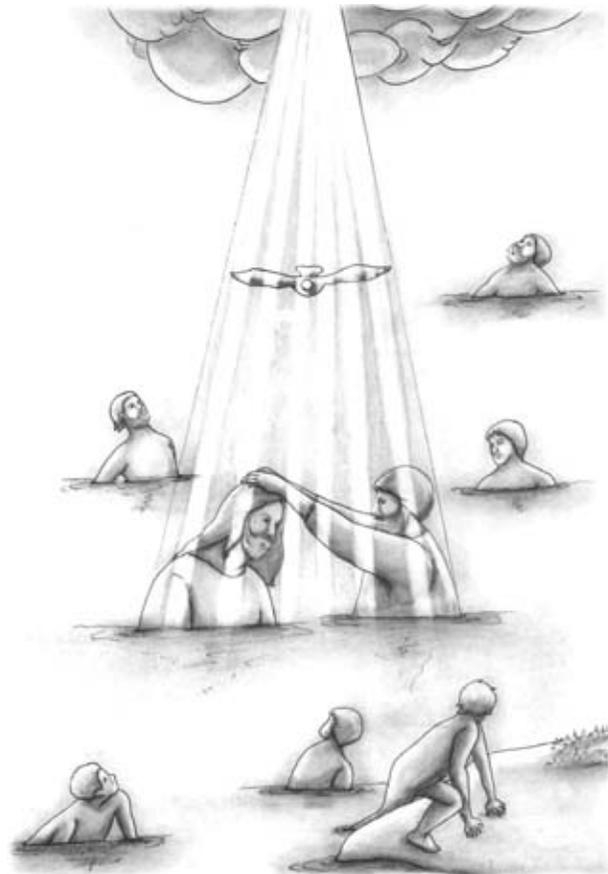
I am going to wrap up my sermon. I hope you will be reminded of God's amazing grace through this Christmas. Let's have the faith that turns the blessings in God's Word into our own. All God's Words carry blessings. God gives us faith to trust His Word. I thank God and give

Him glory and praise for such faith. I hope you will have a meaningful Christmas and enjoy more blessings from God in the New Year. I wish there will be invisible blessings such as spiritual blessings and growth in your faith as well as visible blessings. Understand that God allows everything on earth according to our faith, and receive God's Word with anticipation and trust from your heart. I pray that God's work and all His glory will be manifested through us, and God's glory will come with blessings. Thank you, Lord. ✉



SERMON

2



CONTENTS



John the Baptist Who Was Sent to Fulfill the Gospel of The Water and the Spirit

< Luke 1:57-80 >

“Now Elizabeth’s full time came for her to be delivered, and she brought forth a son. When her neighbors and relatives heard how the Lord had shown great mercy to her, they rejoiced with her. So it was, on the eighth day, that they came to circumcise the child; and they would have called him by the name of his father, Zacharias. His mother answered and said, ‘No; he shall be called John.’ But they said to her, ‘There is no one among your relatives who is called by this name.’ So they made signs to his father—what he would have him called. And he asked for a writing tablet,

and wrote, saying, ‘His name is John.’ So they all marveled. Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, praising God. Then fear came on all who dwelt around them; and all these sayings were discussed throughout all the hill country of Judea. 66 And all those who heard them kept them in their hearts, saying, ‘What kind of child will this be?’ And the hand of the Lord was with him. 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. And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Highest; For you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways, To give knowledge of salvation to His people By the remission of their sins, Through the tender mercy of our God, With which the Dayspring from on high has visited us; To give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, To guide our feet into the way of peace.’ So the child grew and became strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his manifestation to Israel.”

My fellow believers, we don’t even recognize

the turning of the season because our hearts are all busily engaged in God’s work. However, the leaves have already fallen, the seasons have changed, and Christmas is almost around the corner. I think of the lyrics of one of the Christmas hymns entitled, “It Came upon a Midnight Clear.”

It goes, “Peace on the earth, goodwill to men
From heavens all gracious King!
The world in solemn stillness lay
To hear the angels sing.”

We have appointed December 25 every year as the day the Lord came, and we commemorate this day, observe it, celebrate on it, and return glory to God. The whole world is busily engaged in putting up Christmas trees to celebrate the birth of the Lord. Our Church has made a beautiful flower arrangement for Christmas. Therefore, it seems my heart is becoming really warm and peaceful. In this Christmas season, our



hearts feel still and calm. It seems that the whole world is very quiet now as the day draws near—the day the Lord who is the King of kings came to this earth to save us from the sins of the world.

This year was really hectic, but there were many things for which we were thankful to God. At the same time, several instances come to mind where we were insufficient before God. I give thanks to the Lord who did the righteous work of coming to save us from all the sins of the world.

All our ministry workers and you brothers and sisters did a lot of hard work all year. I have worked hard and you also have worked hard. We truly did a lot of hard work all year long in order to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit. While doing a lot of service in various things, there were also times the flowers of those works bloomed, and there were also times we prepared something so that flowers of the gospel will bloom in the future. I hope that we see more fruit

next year from the service of preaching the gospel that we prepared all year.

Churches of the world usually hold the ceremony of the closing of offices for the year at this Christmas season, but we, the ministry workers in God's Church, don't do that because we do God's work ceaselessly no matter what season comes and passes by. This whole year has almost passed. In just a week, this year will be over and the New Year will begin. After discussing how we would spread the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the whole world, we decided to do so through written books and electronic books on the Internet. We decided this policy early this year and it seems like just yesterday that we started working according to the policy. But we came to spread the gospel of the water and the Spirit to many people all over the world through God's help. So, we were really busy doing that: We have preached the gospel



through literature ministries and the Internet mission in difficult circumstances so far. We have rushed in the direction of our goal without a moment to stop and think about ourselves.

But by making excuses that we were so busy, I wonder if we haven't lived too hastily. The brothers, sisters, and all the ministry workers in the Church throughout the country have lived very hastily day in day out. I feel that time flies as fast as an arrow. It is really fast. Even so, I give thanks to the Lord who made me able to serve His righteousness this way. Just as the angel received the mission from God, appeared to Mary, and said she was a blessed woman, people who receive the remission of their sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and who thus go to the Lord's Kingdom are truly blessed people. We are the blessed people just like the righteous written in the Bible like Mary, Zacharias, and Elizabeth. I give thanks once

more to God.

God Who Arranged Our Salvation

I read Luke 1:57-80 today. Zacharias' wife was an old woman named Elizabeth, and it is written that God made her conceive. When Zacharias was in the sanctuary of the Temple at the hour of incense, the angel Gabriel appeared to him and delivered the will of God. He said, "*God has heard your prayer. So, your wife shall bear a son. All people will rejoice at his birth.*"

From that time forth, the belly of the old woman, Elizabeth, began to swell and she bore a son when she was due. Elizabeth was a descendant of Aaron, and she had a son at that time when she was very old. In other words, she had a son who would carry on the family line of the High Priests. Therefore, her relatives and



neighbors gathered and were thankful for and had joy in the fact that God had truly showed mercy on Elizabeth. She also must have had quite a bit of joy because she had obtained a son from God.

But on one hand, if we think about it in a worldly sense, it would have probably been embarrassing for Elizabeth to have a child in her old age. But since she and Zacharias were so old and had no children, they rather had joy. Their whole community had joy after hearing the news. So, that event became a large festival in the whole community. God had answered their prayers. So, all of them had joy together.

The Israelites dutifully circumcised a boy eight days after he was born. That seems vile if we see it in a physical point of view. It would have been very painful. Children can't speak when they're young and can only express their feelings by crying. Wouldn't it have been very

painful? But they had to do it because God made a promise with their ancestors of faith. Therefore, this couple also circumcised the baby, and the relatives all gathered together in order to give him a name. The Israelites used to name children according to their parents or their relatives. So if the father's name was Zacharias, they would name the son Zacharias. So, when their relatives suggested the baby be named Zacharias, the baby's mother responded. "*No, he shall be called John*" (Luke 1:60).

They said, "What? There is no one among your relatives who is called by this name. Why do you want to name him John?" (Luke 1:61).

Then, they decided to ask Zacharias, the head of the household, what he would name the child, and they brought him a writing tablet. At the time, Zacharias was mute. He became mute as a sign because he didn't believe the words of the angel when the angel delivered the Word of God



to him in the sanctuary. Then, Zacharias wrote that his son's name would be John. Afterwards, Zacharias' tongue was loosed and he could speak. His tongue that had been twisted up in his mouth was loosed and he began praising the work that God had done.

His tongue could be loosed because he really believed for the first time the Word of God delivered by the angel Gabriel that said, *“Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, ‘to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,’ and the disobedient to the wisdom of*

the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord” (Luke 1:13-17). As soon as Zacharias' tongue was thus loosed, he gave praises of thanks to God and started prophesying. He was filled with the Holy Spirit and started prophesying through praises about God and about His servant.

The people heard Zacharias prophesying of the Word of God and were greatly surprised. On one hand, they were afraid. That was because the Israelites hadn't had any servant of God for 400 years. There had to be servants of God for the Israelites to continue living. But there wasn't any servant of God for 400 years. In such circumstances, Zacharias, being filled with the Holy Spirit, prophesied of what John the Baptist would do, and prophesied that Jesus Christ would be born on this earth. His prophecy is here in Luke 1:67-71. So, the people heard what he was saying and were greatly surprised, and the prophecy spread by word of mouth to all the



Israelites.

My fellow believers, the first thing that Zacharias prophesied of after being filled with the Holy Spirit was that Jesus Christ would come to this earth in order to save all mankind from the sins of the world. Zacharias knew all these facts by being inspired by the Holy Spirit. He prophesied that the birth of his son, John the Baptist, was in order to transfer all the sins of this world to Jesus and that Jesus came to this earth as the Savior who took all the sins of mankind. All of these Words prophesied that Jesus would be born on this earth as the Savior, just as it was promised in the Old Testament.

When we read Luke 1:67-76, it says, *“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. And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Highest; for you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways.’”

This was the fulfillment of what God had promised through the mouths of the Old Testament prophets since long before. According to the prophecies of the Old Testament, Jesus Christ would come to this earth as the Savior; and the Israelites were waiting for the Savior to come. What then did He come to save us from?



The Bible says that He would come in order to save the Israelites from their enemies and from the hands of those who hate them.

Zacharias prophesied that the Lord came to us in order to make us serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our lives. This means that Jesus Christ came to this earth to save sinners. Until now, we were originally people who were ashamed and fearful and could not stand boldly before God because, fundamentally, we had sin. But Zacharias prophesied that the Lord would come to this earth, save all believers from all our sins at once through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and enable us to serve God without fear in holiness before Him.

And at the same time, Zacharias prophesied of the role of his son, John the Baptist, before the Lord came. Luke 1:76-80 is about the prophecy regarding John the Baptist: “*And you, child, will*

be called the prophet of the Highest; for you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways, to give knowledge of salvation to His people by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God, with which the Dayspring from on high has visited us; to give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.’ So the child grew and became strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his manifestation to Israel.”

Prophecy about John the Baptist

Here, Zacharias is pointing to his son, John the Baptist, when he says, “And you, child.” Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied of John the Baptist, his son. Even though the angel Gabriel told him of John’s birth,



it seemed impossible to him at first. But God's promise was realized exactly as it was; John the Baptist was born when 10 months had passed.

The prophecy continues as follows:

“Through the tender mercy of our God,

With which the Dayspring from on high has visited us;

To give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death,

To guide our feet into the way of peace” (Luke 1:78-79).

This Scripture passage means that John the Baptist would do these things. This child's name was originally just John, but he transferred the sins of all mankind to Jesus Christ by baptizing Him later. Therefore, Jesus Christ called him John the Baptist. In Matthew 11:12-13, Jesus pointed to John the Baptist and witnessed, *“He is Elijah who is to come.”* John the Baptist was Elijah whom the Old Testament said would come.

John the Baptist who “will be called the prophet of the Highest” (Luke 1:76) was Elijah who was to come.

You can find many prophets in the Old Testament. But Jesus said, *“Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist” (Matthew 11:11).* Then, John the Baptist was the representative of all humankind, and he is greater than any other prophets including Isaiah, Moses, and Ezekiel. He is called the last High Priest who was given the duty of transferring the sins of the world to Jesus Christ on this earth. Why do you think that was? John the Baptist's father was Zacharias and his mother was Elizabeth; both of them were descendants of Aaron, the first High Priest. John the Baptist would also perform the duties of a High Priest before God because he was born to Zacharias and Elizabeth.

John the Baptist was the servant of God whom



God sent to this earth six months prior to the birth of Jesus Christ. The Bible says that John the Baptist would “go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways.” God specifically made a child be born into the house of Zacharias who was a descendant of Aaron, and that child was John the Baptist. God prepared John the Baptist so that He could save all those who believe in Jesus from their sins by John the Baptist transferring all the sins of mankind to Jesus Christ once and for all.

So, the Bible spiritually states, “*The Dayspring from on high has visited us; to give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death*” (Luke 1:78-79). What does it mean by the passage, “*the Dayspring from on high has visited us*”?

For a long time, I lived by the sea. People nowadays purposefully go to the ocean to watch the sunrise, but I grew up seeing the sunrise everyday. The whole world is dark and the

morning hours pass dimly as the edge of the eastern sky becomes a little bright before the sun even rises. That’s called early dawn, and a little while after, the sun rises above the horizon. It rises like a rocket launching. The sun is red when it rises. Then, through the shimmering air, you can see the sun rising. There is no one who can stop it. This shows the irresistible grace of God who says, “*The Dayspring from on high has visited us; to give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace*” (Luke 1:78-79).



The Advent of John the Baptist and Jesus on This Earth Is Like the Morning Sun Rising and Shining on the Whole World

John the Baptist did his ministry telling people that Jesus Christ is the Savior and the true Messiah. Through his role of transferring all the sins of mankind to Jesus, John the Baptist told people that all those who believe in Jesus Christ's righteousness would come to be saved from all their sins with nothing lacking at all. Zacharias prophesied of this amazing fact.

Honestly speaking, we wouldn't be able to know that all our sins went over to Jesus if it had not been for the ministry of John the Baptist. How could the remission of sins be totally and clearly revealed like the rising sun? How could your souls and mine know God's righteousness

and be filled with faith? Through the role of John the Baptist, we have come to clearly know that Jesus Christ took the sins of the world through His baptism. In Matthew 3:15, Jesus said to John the Baptist, *"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness."* And in John 1:29, John the Baptist witnessed to Jesus saying, *"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"* John the Baptist proclaimed Jesus Christ's righteousness so that we would clearly know this with the heart. He proclaimed the gospel of the water and the Spirit that way in order that all the Israelites and all the gentiles would know.

The Bible says that John the Baptist grew up in the desert. He didn't mix with the people of the world, and he was a pure man of God who was not contaminated by the world. Then, John the Baptist suddenly appeared in clothing made of camel's hair and shouted at those who had left



the righteousness of God, “Repent, you brood of vipers!” The Israelites had no servants of God for 400 years and now a servant of God appeared in the wilderness all of a sudden. His first ministry was to urge people to repent of their evil ways. John the Baptist’s role was to ‘to give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death’ (Luke 1:79). So, what is this light mentioned here? It is the baptism Jesus received and His blood of the Cross.

It is written, “*Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness*” (Matthew 3:15). Put differently, Jesus ordered John the Baptist saying, “Baptize Me. Doing so is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Jesus said that it was fitting to fulfill all righteousness and to save mankind by receiving all their sins at once through the baptism John the Baptist gave to Him.

John the Baptist baptized Jesus Christ in the

Jordan River. The spiritual meaning of the word ‘baptism’ is “to cleanse,” “to bury,” or “to transfer something.” So, Jesus took the sins of the world by being baptized by John the Baptist. Thus, Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist and fulfilled God’s righteousness in order to cleanse all our sins. God’s righteousness was completed by the righteous acts that Jesus came to this earth, was baptized by John the Baptist, hung on the Cross, shed His blood, and was resurrected from the dead. Jesus Christ has saved us this way. The reason Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist was to cleanse all the sins of us who believe. He has saved us by hanging and dying on the Cross and being resurrected from the dead. He could die properly for our salvation because He bore the sins of the world by receiving the transference of all the sins of mankind on His body at once through His baptism. Jesus being baptized by John the Baptist this way was thus



fitting to fulfill all righteousness.

By What Kind of Faith Could Your Filthy Sins Now Be Cleansed?

Could all your sins now be cleansed through the baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist and through the blood of the Cross? Then, what kind of baptism was that baptism which Jesus received from John the Baptist? The question is: “What was the baptism that the Son of God received?” What does the Word of God say? God says that He would send His Son to this earth and have Him take the sins of the world by being baptized by John the Baptist. Therefore, the baptism Jesus received is the same as ‘the laying on of hands’ spoken of in the Old Testament, especially in Leviticus.

In Isaiah 53, it says, “*Surely He has borne our*

griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted” (Isaiah 53:4). That prophecy was fulfilled by Jesus Christ when He was born on this earth, took all the sins of mankind by being baptized by John the Baptist when He was 30, shed His blood on the Cross, and was resurrected from the dead.

The sins of people who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit have already all been cleansed. The meaning of baptism which Jesus received from John the Baptist is “to be cleansed,” “to bury,” and “to transfer something.” Because Jesus received the transference of all the sins of this world at once for all through the baptism that He received from John the Baptist, He could shed His blood on the Cross and suffer death in our places. Jesus could shed His blood and suffer death on the terribly painful Cross because He received the transference of the sins of this world all at once



through the baptism He received from John the Baptist. As such, the true meaning of the baptism He received from John the Baptist was to take all the sins of mankind onto His body at once. Therefore, we baptize people who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist in the beginning of the New Testament. Baptism is the same as the scapegoat in the Old Testament taking the sins of the Israelites when the High Priest laid his hands on its head as the representative of his people. The baptism was performed in the form of laying on of hands in the Old Testament. Therefore, we are also baptized in the form of the laying on of hands in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Then, why do we receive baptism in the name of the Holy Trinity? It is because we are baptized

as proof that we believe in the gospel Truth that had been fulfilled by the Holy Trinity. The Truth is that God the Father planned our salvation in Jesus Christ, and Jesus shed His blood and saved us because He took all the sins of the world by being baptized by John the Baptist. We are baptized with hearts that believe in Jesus Christ's righteousness as our salvation. We are baptized as the confession of faith that believes Jesus saved us from all the sins of the world at once through the baptism He received from John the Baptist. We are baptized as the proof that we have been saved from all our sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that is the Lord's righteousness. Therefore, we must know and believe that Jesus being baptized by John the Baptist was in order to receive the transference of all the sins of mankind at once and that John the Baptist baptizing Jesus Christ was in order to transfer all the sins of mankind to Him. We have



to confirm the spiritual meaning of the word ‘baptism’ again: It means “to be cleansed,” “to bury,” and “to transfer something.” We must know this fact.

God the Father made it so that all people could clearly know that He eliminated everyone’s sins through the baptism His Son received from John the Baptist and through His blood. He recorded this providence first in the Old Testament as the laying on of hands. In the New Testament era, Jesus Christ and John the Baptist fulfilled the prophecies of the Old Testament. This Truth is revealed by the passage, *“The Dayspring from on high has visited us; to give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death” (Luke 1:78-79)*. Who was it that witnessed of this Truth? It was none other than John the Baptist. He witnessed that Jesus Christ bore the sins of the world by being baptized by John the Baptist and would shed His blood on the Cross, and

become the Savior. John the Baptist transferred all the sins of this world to Jesus Christ through His baptism, and he told everyone that all their sins went over to Jesus Christ by witnessing of all these facts. Through his role of baptizing Jesus, John the Baptist let everyone know this fact that all people’s sins had gone over to Jesus Christ. John the Baptist made us believe in this Truth by witnessing of Jesus Christ and His ministry. This is what John the Baptist witnessed of on this earth, and it was his ministry.

Just as the sun shines on the whole world, John the Baptist transferred all the sins in your and my souls, hearts, thoughts, and actions to Jesus Christ through the baptism he gave Him. You and I have to know this. How did your sins and mine go over to Jesus Christ? They went over all at once to Jesus when John the Baptist baptized Jesus Christ when he was thirty.



Jesus Could Not But Take Our Sins This Way

Let's read Matthew 3, starting with verse 13. *“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. When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’” (Matthew 3:13-17).*

If we read Matthew 3:13 again, it says, *“Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to*

be baptized by him.” This John spoken of here is not the Apostle John who recorded the Gospel of John; he is John the Baptist. Then, as soon as Jesus went to be baptized by John the Baptist, John the Baptist tried to decline His order, saying, *“I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?”* John the Baptist knew who Jesus was. The word ‘then’ here refers to the time when he was thirty. It is the age that one was able to perform the duties of a High Priest.

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy of the Old Testament are called *the Pentateuch* or the Five Books of Moses because they were written by Moses. If you read these Books, you can find that Aaron's descendants were to start their priesthood from the age of 30 (Numbers 4:3). However, the descendants of Levi usually obtained the qualifications to serve the Lord in the sanctuary when they turned 25, and they retired from the duty at the age of 50



(Numbers 8:24). The priesthood was given only to the descendant of Aaron among the Levites; the rest of the Levites were to do the works of serving the Tabernacle as it is written, *“But you shall appoint the Levites over the tabernacle of the Testimony, over all its furnishings, and over all things that belong to it; they shall carry the tabernacle and all its furnishings; they shall attend to it and camp around the tabernacle”* (Numbers 1:50).

But a person needed to be a descendant of Aaron and be without fault to be entrusted with the duties of a High Priest. It was determined in the Bible that one must be a male descendant of Aaron and thirty years old in order to perform the duties of a High Priest.

The Bible says, *“Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him”* (Matthew 3:13). The word “then” refers to the time when Jesus and John the Baptist were

thirty. The time that Jesus began His public life and took the sins of mankind on His head by being baptized in order to save mankind from their sins was exactly when He was thirty. That is because He promised in the Old Testament that sins would go over to the sacrificial offering if hands were laid on it. Therefore, Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist when He turned thirty in order to fulfill that promise.

“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?’” (Matthew 3:13-14) The representative of mankind and the representative of Heaven met each other here. Many people ask how it is that John the Baptist is the representative of mankind, but if they read Matthew 11:11, they would see that Jesus personally witnessed that there was no one born of women greater than John the Baptist. The



representative of mankind and the representative of Heaven met this way in the Jordan River.

Then, 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). Here, the words “all righteousness” refers to the state that all the sins of the world have been blotted out. Why did Jesus speak this to John the Baptist? Jesus spoke that way in order to save every single person from all his or her sins because all people had sins by being born as the descendants of Adam. As such, Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist in order to take all the sins of all people. So He said, *“Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness”* (Matthew 3:15). So, John the Baptist baptized Jesus. This is the true baptism that was performed by the laying on of hands.

There are two types of baptism: Baptism by immersion and baptism by effusion. Baptism by

immersion is the original and formal one. The person baptizing and the one being baptized entered the water up to their chests. But the first qualification of the person who is to baptize people is that he must be a person who believes and has faith that Jesus Christ received the transference of all the sins of mankind, including all his own sins, by being baptized by John the Baptist, carried the sins of the world to the Cross, was nailed to it and died, and was resurrected from the dead to save all mankind. More specifically, I’m speaking of those with duties in the Church, and those who are to be baptized are people who accept the same faith in their hearts. Therefore, only the born again have the qualification of baptizing and being baptized. Not just anyone is baptized.

We, the born again, baptize and are baptized for these reasons. But why did Jesus get baptized? Jesus being baptized by John the



Baptist was in order to fulfill all righteousness. Jesus Christ, the sacrificial Lamb of God was baptized by John the Baptist. It was to receive the transference of all the sins of mankind. Since Jesus, after taking all the sins of the world by being baptized, saved us by carrying them to the Cross, dying there, and being resurrected from the dead, we have been saved by believing in this Truth. My fellow believers, Jesus Christ was baptized by John the Baptist in order to fulfill all righteousness.

Let's examine the words in Matthew 3:15 through the original text a little more. 'All righteousness' in Greek is 'πάσαν δικαιοσύνην (*pasan dikaiosunen*),' which means the fairest state that has no defect at all. The word 'for thus' is 'οὕτως γάρ (*hutos gar*)' in Greek, which means 'just in this way,' 'most fitting,' or 'there is no other way besides this.' These words show that Jesus took the sins of humankind onto Him

irreversibly and most properly through the baptism He received from John the Baptist.

It wasn't that Jesus came to this earth as the Savior and saved all mankind by Himself; God sent out John the Baptist (who was born six months prior to Jesus) when he turned thirty and had him shout at the people, "Repent, you brood of vipers" and telling them to receive the cleansing of their sins. Then Jesus, because He wanted to be baptized, went to John the Baptist who was shouting thus and said to him, "Baptize Me! For thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15). Why did He say so? It was because His being baptized by John the Baptist is the most proper way to save all humankind from their sins.

Jesus is the Savior of mankind, but He needed to receive the transference of all mankind's sins through a representative of them. He absolutely needed this method because otherwise He



wouldn't be able to save us clearly and justly. Just as the record of debt is erased only after the debt is paid, there absolutely needed to be a way to bear the sins and pay them off.

“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). God the Father sent His Son to this earth. John the Baptist's role was absolutely necessary in order for His Son to receive the transference of all the sins of mankind, and therefore, God the Father had John the Baptist born into the family of Zacharias, a descendant of Aaron the High Priest. Therefore, Jesus said that John the Baptist was the greatest among those born of women. Zacharias also prophesied, having been inspired by the Holy Spirit, *“The Dayspring from on high has visited us; to give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death” (Luke 1:78-79).* John the Baptist

performed this role.

Jesus received the transference of all the sins of mankind when John the Baptist baptized Him. Therefore, He is the Lamb of God and the propitiation for the salvation of humankind; and John the Baptist, as mankind's representative, was the High Priest who transferred all sins to Jesus Christ. John the Baptist was the last High Priest and the last prophet of the Old Testament. Therefore, the Bible speaks of the advent of the John the Baptist as the end of the Old Testament era, saying, *“And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence” (Matthew 11:12).* That means that the Old Testament era ended by John the Baptist baptizing Jesus Christ.

Jesus received the transference of all the sins of mankind by being baptized by John the Baptist. Then, without regard to John the Baptist, He personally preached the Word, nourished His



disciples, spoke of the Kingdom of Heaven, and spread the gospel of the remission of sins to people who were lowly due to their sins. So, the Lord could say to the woman who was caught in the act of adultery, *“Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you? Neither do I condemn you”* (John 8:10-11). The Lord was able to say this because He took all the sins of mankind through John the Baptist.

How can you and I know that Jesus Christ is our Savior? How can we believe that He is our Savior? The question is: “How can we have a witness in our hearts that we have been saved?” Since John the Baptist baptized Jesus and Jesus saved us by receiving the transference of all your sins and mine by being baptized by John the Baptist, taking the sins of the world to the Cross, receiving the pain of being nailed there, and being resurrected from the dead, and since you and I believe in that witness, we can surely have

proof in our hearts and minds that we have been saved. The role of John the Baptist allowed all people to really obtain salvation through Jesus Christ, just like the rising sun shines on the entire world. Therefore, John the Baptist’s role is important. My fellow believers, is that true or not?

You must know well the roles of Jesus Christ and John the Baptist. If you intend to believe in Jesus as your Savior, you must know Jesus, but you also need to know the role of John the Baptist. The Israelites in the Old Testament took a sacrificial offering to the priest and offered it to receive the remission of sins. Because of their sins, they had to daily lay their hands on sacrificial animals to transfer their sins to them, kill them, give them to the priest, and return home. But they couldn’t receive complete remission of sins through such animals being offered up everyday.



If we read Leviticus 16, we can find the statute of the Day of Atonement. On the tenth day of the seventh month, the High Priest representing the Israelites took two goats to offer as the sacrifice for their yearly sins of his people. He chose one of them, and offered a sacrifice for the Tabernacle with it first. Then, he had to offer the other goat to atone for the yearly sins of the Israelites. Let's read Leviticus 16:20-22.

“And when he has made an end of atoning for the Holy Place, the tabernacle of meeting, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat. Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, concerning all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and shall send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a suitable man. The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to an uninhabited land; and he shall release the goat

in the wilderness.”

Here, we have to pay attention to the passage, *“Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, concerning all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat.”* All the yearly sins of the Israelites were transferred by the laying on of the hands of Aaron the High Priest, the representative of the Israelites. When the High Priest thus offered sacrifice as the representative of his people on the tenth day of the seventh month, the sins of the Israelites that had made them imperfect were completely cleansed. The Israelites could continue dwelling together in the Tabernacle through the High Priest offering sacrifice for them and cleansing their sins. They could receive God's help and be acknowledged as His people.

Just as there had been the High Priest in the



Old Testament named Aaron, there was Zacharias' son, John the Baptist, in the New Testament who, as mankind's representative, transferred all the sins of the world to Jesus Christ. So, John the Baptist's role was very important. My fellow believers, who is it who guides our hearts and souls into the way of peace? That Person is Jesus Christ. Who is it that let us know that Jesus Christ is our true Savior? That person is John the Baptist.

Many people of the world read the Bible now. The Bible records that Jesus Christ is the Savior of mankind and the Son of God, and that He came to this earth as the sacrificial Lamb of God. This is the Word of Truth. But if there was no servant of God today who knew the Truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, who on earth would preach this Word of the Truth so that you could receive the true remission of your sins? A person can't fully receive the remission of sins

even if he reads the Bible several thousands of times on his own.

Things were tough for me long ago because of my sins. I am a person who has believed in the Word of God. I am a person who has studied theology. I studied Calvinism, an orthodox theology. But I couldn't receive the remission of my sins even though I had studied theology and read the Bible countless times. In other words, I couldn't cleanse all the sins in my heart at once. The sins in my heart didn't leave even though I diligently offered prayers of repentance. It seemed that they had left momentarily, but when I looked at myself later, some seemed to be gone and others seemed to remain in my heart as they had been before. So, I agonized over that.

I frankly couldn't know why Jesus was baptized. I could know the literal meaning of the baptism, memorize it, and even write it in the original language, but I couldn't know it



spiritually. So, I asked and asked countless times and read many books, but no one or no books gave me any answers. So, I knelt before God and prayed. “Lord God! Please teach me. I am a person who knows nothing. I am a person who really knows nothing. I am lower than a little child. How can a person like me do your work or lead people to You? I have sin in my heart; how can a sinner guide others?”

Of course, I knew the doctrinal answers to this question very well. I knew the fact that people could be acknowledged as God’s people even though they had sins if only they believed in Jesus. I was versed in the Five Points of Calvinism. But none of these things were the Truth. They couldn’t eliminate the sins in my heart at all.

But God taught me the Truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit through His Word. I knew the literal meaning of the Word in Matthew

3:13-15, but I couldn’t understand its true spiritual meaning. God taught me that meaning. He let me know that all the sins of mankind went over to Jesus when He was baptized by John the Baptist just as all the yearly sins of the Israelites went over to the scapegoat when the High Priest in the Old Testament laid his hands on it.

“Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness” (Matthew 3:15). “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:17). These Words began to work in my soul. Jesus Christ, the Son of God the Father, upheld the will of the Father and took all the sins of all the people of the world through His baptism. He became the propitiation for all humanity by submitting Himself to God the Father’s will. Therefore, God the Father said He was well pleased in Him. No matter how precious of a son or a daughter someone is, if he or she absolutely never listens to what his or her



parents say, he or she can't become a child in whom the parents are well pleased. In those cases, we call them 'headaches' instead. But Jesus Christ, the Son of God the Father, obeyed His Father, even laying down His life, and He was totally loyal. So, He saved you and me.

John the Baptist witnessed to all people that Jesus Christ is the Savior who received the transference of all our sins. Through John the Baptist's witness that he transferred all the sins of mankind to Jesus Christ, you and I came to know this fact and came to be able to truly believe in Jesus Christ as the Savior.

My fellow believers, we have to know why God the Father sent John the Baptist to this earth first and why the Lord Jesus was baptized by him. We also have to believe that. We must believe that Jesus received the transference of all the sins of mankind through John the Baptist. We must be thankful by faith that Jesus became the Savior

who saved us by receiving the transference of all your sins and mine through John the Baptist, carrying the sins of the world to the Cross, being nailed to it, dying there, and being resurrected from the dead. In order to truly save you and me, the Lord first sent John the Baptist to this earth, took all the sins of mankind by being baptized by John the Baptist, received the judgment of sin on the Cross, and was resurrected from the dead.

The role of John the Baptist was this important in Jesus' ministry. His witness was like the rising sun. But if a person doesn't believe in either Jesus' ministry or John the Baptist's role, the sins in his heart cannot be blotted out, no matter how much he believes in Jesus as his Savior. My fellow believers, all your sins and mine become completely revealed when we find out the gospel Truth that Jesus came to this earth and took all our sins by being baptized by John the Baptist and that John the Baptist transferred the sins of



the world to Him. Therefore, we can also come to believe that Jesus received the transference of your sins and mine and bore the judgment of them on the Cross and that you and I are perfectly saved from sin. Therefore, you can be saved by complete faith and become the children of God. Therefore, you can go to the Kingdom of Heaven only if you go before the Lord with your faith in this Truth. The role and witness of John the Baptist are that important.

Our roles and witnesses are also very important. That's because you and I perform the role of John the Baptist today. I am not saying you and I have passed people's sins onto Jesus like John the Baptist; I am saying we are the servants of God who are to perform the role of John the Baptist. Like the role of John the Baptist, we make the crooked places straight, exalt the low mountains, make the high mountains low, and make people equal in God's grace.

My fellow believers, who are those who introduce to people and witness to them today that Jesus saved us by being baptized by John the Baptist and thus taking all the sins of mankind, dying on the Cross, and being resurrected from the dead? They are none other than you and I. My fellow believers, do you believe? If we say that Jesus Christ is the Sun or the Light, then John the Baptist is the person who was introducing the Sun in its brightness. The Lord admonishes you and me to take on the role of John the Baptist on this earth today. This is a truly great Truth. My fellow believers, do you believe in this fact?

Some people ask me, "What's so important about John the Baptist?" Some others ask us, "Are you the denomination of John the Baptist?" Those kinds of people are really ignorant. Even though Jesus Christ alone is our Savior, John the Baptist and his ministry are indispensable to our



salvation. God taught us this, appeared to us, and saved us through John the Baptist's ministry and witness. I give thanks to the Lord who taught us this truth. ☒



SERMON

3



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Believers in the Gospel of The Water and the Spirit Make Heaven Theirs

< Luke 1:24-38 >

“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 maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word.’ And the angel departed from her.”

John the Baptist Was Prepared by God to Pass Our Sins to Jesus

To save us from the sins of the world, God had prepared John the Baptist and Jesus. The mystery of their birth is revealed in today’s Scripture passage.

In order to save you and me from the sins of the world, God the Father had prepared John the Baptist to be born from the house of Zacharias, one of the descendents of Aaron the High Priest. Today’s Scripture passage says that Elizabeth, Zacharias’ wife, hid herself for five months when she conceived. As the wife of Zacharias,

Elizabeth praised the righteousness of the Lord for preparing John the Baptist, saying, “*Thus the Lord has dealt with me, in the days when He looked on Me, to take away my reproach among people.*” Since Elizabeth was an old woman, she was somewhat embarrassed of being pregnant, but she was nonetheless very grateful that God had given her a child. So she thanked God for doing this work on her, saying that her reproach among people was taken away in the days when the Lord looked on her.

When God promised Zacharias, Elizabeth’s husband, through an angel that He would give him a son and fulfill this promise, Zacharias did not believe it at first, but eventually he could not help but believe. He would have thanked God even more had he realized earlier the significance of the birth and ministry of the John the Baptist. But until John the Baptist was actually born, he did not know the importance of this birth. Once

the baby John was born, however, Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied that this child given by God was born in this world with the spirit of Elijah and that as a servant of God, he would turn the people of Israel to God.

In the Old Testament, Samson was a Nazarite especially set aside by God. Although he was born through his parents of the flesh, his birth had been specially prepared by God to deliver the people of Israel from their enemies' oppression. When God works, we see that He makes us pray and then works to answer our prayer. Samson's parents had also prayed to God asking Him for a son, and answering their prayers, God had allowed them to give birth to Samson. But before Samson was born, God had also told his parents of several prohibitions. First, neither Samson's hair nor his eyebrows were ever to be shaved. Second, he was not to drink wine or liquor. Like this, Samson was a Nazarite

especially set aside by God.

John the Baptist was also such a man in God's sight. It's written in Luke 1:15-17: *"For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, 'to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,' and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."*

John the Baptist was to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers. Like the High Priest, John the Baptist fulfilled the role of a mediator to turn God's heart to the people and the people's hearts to God. Such was the duty of the High Priest. The High Priest was a mediator between God and man. It was the High Priest's ministry to turn



God's heart to His people, and the people's hearts to God, by offering the sacrifice of atonement for the sins that the people committed out of their weaknesses. He played the role of a mediator for both God and the people. By fulfilling this mediating role, the High Priest brought reconciliation between God and man.

Like this, John the Baptist was the man who was to turn the fathers' hearts to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just. This means that John the Baptist fulfilled the duty of the High Priest before God and man. He was born to fulfill this ministry and carry out this work. God named him John, and He said to Zacharias, "*You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth*" (Luke 1:14). In fact, many people are exceedingly rejoiced over John the Baptist's birth on this earth. That's because John the Baptist is the very man who passed the sins of this world to the Lord by

baptizing Him. That's why God said that people would be rejoiced at his birth.

Jesus Said That John the Baptist Was the Greatest of Those Born of Women

Jesus said in Matthew 11:11, "*Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.*" However, many Christians still do not consider John the Baptist as a great man before God, even though Jesus Himself said in the Bible that John the Baptist was the greatest of those born of women. Today's Christians do not realize what a great man John the Baptist is because they do not understand the Word of God



properly. Our assessment of John the Baptist must be based on how Jesus described John in God's sight. Referring to John the Baptist, Jesus actually said, "He is Elijah who is to come." The role of John the Baptist was so important that Jesus said, *"If you are willing to receive it, he is Elijah who is to come. He who has ears to hear, let him ear!"*

This is demonstrated clearly in Matthew 11:11-14. *"Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if you are willing to receive it, he is Elijah who is to come."*

Do you agree with what Jesus said? Or do you still have doubts? As a Christian professing to

believe in Jesus Christ as your Savior, what do you think is more important: What Jesus actually said in the Bible, or what the preachers in your own denomination are saying? Whom would you choose? I am sure that you would choose Jesus Christ. If this is true, then your faith must be one that appreciates and believes in what Jesus said about John the Baptist.

In this passage, from Matthew 11:11-14, Jesus explained a few things about John the Baptist. First, He said that among those born of women, there had not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist. My fellow believers, it is based on this very Word of God that I've called John the Baptist as the representative of mankind in many of my books. John the Baptist is the greatest of those born of women.

I am sure that you know that all of us were born of women. Only Adam and Eve, the first human beings, were made by God personally and



came into being without borrowing a woman's body; everyone else was born on this earth through a woman's body. So we should pay attention to the passage where Jesus said, "*Among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist*" (Matthew 11:11). Moses, the Prophet Elijah, and King David were all born from the body of a woman. Isn't this true? Their mothers, too, were born into this world through a woman's body. People often say that the greatest prophet of the Old Testament is Moses. But Moses, too, was born of a woman. So in this light, John the Baptist is greater than Moses.

You need to pay particular attention to what Jesus said personally here: "*Among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist.*" What Jesus is testifying about John the Baptist is the truth. This passage was spoken to fulfill the Word of the Old Testament. When

Jesus said, "*It is written: 'Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You'*" (Matthew 11:10), He was quoting the Old Testament's prophesy in Malachi 3:1. Malachi 3:1 states, "*Behold, I send My messenger, And he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, Will suddenly come to His temple, Even the Messenger of the covenant, In whom you delight.*"

Here God had said, "*Behold, I send My messenger,*" and this Word of promise was referring to John the Baptist of whom Jesus was speaking. God the Father had promised to send John the Baptist to this earth before Jesus Christ, and He fulfilled this promise by indeed sending John the Baptist. In other words, by sending John the Baptist earlier than Jesus Christ for our salvation, God the Father prepared the way of salvation. Jesus was quoting this very passage in

the Old Testament when He said in Matthew 11:10, *“It is written: Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You.”* You shouldn’t gloss over the fact that Jesus was speaking of none other than John the Baptist.

The whole passage in Matthew 11:11-14 is the truth that Jesus spoke about John the Baptist. It’s not my own claim, nor is it what some theologians are saying. It is what Jesus Himself said about John the Baptist and his ministry. When our Lord said in Malachi in the Old Testament that He would send Elijah, He meant that He would send God’s servant who would lead the people of Israel to God and guide all the people of the world to Him—that is, John the Baptist.

What was John the Baptist to do when he was sent to us? He was to pass all the sins of mankind to Jesus by baptizing Him, and bear witness of

Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God who took away the sins of the world. In other words, he was to make this Truth of salvation known to you and me. God’s messenger means a servant of God. John the Baptist’s ministry on this earth was pointing out the sins of those who were disobeying the will of God, and the very important work of passing all the sins of the human race to the body of Jesus Christ through the baptism he gave to Jesus. John the Baptist had shouted to people, “Repent, you brood of vipers!” He fulfilled the work of passing the sins of the world to Jesus Christ—that is, he gave the baptism that fulfilled all the righteousness of God (Matthew 3:15). He also nurtured disciples and sent them to Jesus to become His disciples. Later on, he rebuked King Herod for his transgressions, and for this he was imprisoned and beheaded in martyrdom. This was his life.



Was the Ministry of John the Baptist That Great?

Yes. Jesus put a great deal of emphasis on the ministry of John the Baptist because his ministry was God's will that was indispensable for the passing of our sins today. That is why Jesus personally commended John the Baptist's ministry. To save us from the sins of the world, God the Father laid down the groundwork that was absolutely necessary beforehand, and He made this preparation by sending John the Baptist to this earth as Zacharias' son. So when we turn to the Four Gospels in the Bible, they all write about the ministry of John the Baptist first before writing about the ministry of Jesus Christ. In other words, John the Baptist's ministry is recorded first before the ministry of Jesus. Jesus' ministry appears later. So when we believe in Jesus Christ as our Savior, we must do so with

the realization that John the Baptist was the greatest man, the representative of mankind, and the one who passed all our sins to Jesus through the baptism he gave to Jesus. In other words, John the Baptist is the representative of mankind who passed its sins to Jesus once and for all by baptizing Him. That is why Jesus said that Heaven had suffered violence until now because His ministry of salvation couldn't have been completed if it had not been for the baptism He received from John the Baptist.

How Then Does Heaven Suffer Violence through the Ministries of John and Jesus?

This does not mean that John the Baptist is another Savior. Rather, it means that because



John the Baptist passed the sins of the world to Jesus by baptizing Him, he obeyed the will of God the Father so that whoever believes in the righteousness of Jesus Christ would be washed from sin and enter Heaven. In other words, it means that by baptizing Jesus, John the Baptist passed all the sins of mankind to Him once and for all. We call this John as John the Baptist because he is the one who baptized Jesus Christ. Didn't Jesus also call him *John the Baptist* in Matthew 11:12? This is because John the Baptist had passed all the sins of mankind to Jesus through baptism.

To find out about the ministry of John the Baptist, you should turn to Matthew 3:13-17. This passage records what happened when Jesus sought to be baptized by John. It's written, "*Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.*" Then he allowed Him. When He had been baptized, Jesus came up

immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'"

John the Baptist did this as his ministry. As John the Baptist baptized Jesus, all our sins were passed onto Jesus once and for all. After thus accepting the sins of this world through the baptism He received from John, Jesus then carried these sins to the Cross, shed His blood and died on it, rose from the dead again in three days, and has thereby become our Savior. Jesus shouldered our sins through His baptism and became the propitiation for our sins. Jesus the Son of God bore your sins and mine by being baptized by John the Baptist, died on the Cross in our place, and rose from the dead again. In other words, Jesus the Son of God shouldered our sins



by being baptized and became the propitiation for our sins, and to those of us who believe in this, He has become our Savior.

Who bears witness of this Truth then? It's none other than John the Baptist, and this is his ministry and our ministry today. So John the Baptist's role is extremely important, as it is written, *"From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force."* Therefore, those who invade Heaven by faith in this Truth make Heaven theirs. It is true that Jesus accepted all the sins of mankind once and for all when He was baptized by John the Baptist. All the sins of the world were passed onto Jesus once and for all when John the Baptist baptized Jesus. Those who believe in this Truth now will be washed from their sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and enter Heaven. The Bible says that the violent take Heaven by force. To express

this differently, those who enter Heaven do so by audacious faith. The phrase "take it by force" here is used to imply that those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit face no resistance in making Heaven theirs. This does not refer to a physical force, but it refers to taking Heaven by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. So this faith in the gospel of the water and the Spirit ultimately means the fail-safe faith that enables you to make Heaven yours.

My fellow believers, we have neither any righteousness nor any good deeds. We have nothing but only insufficiencies, and we can't help but commit sin every day until we die. Yet despite this, Jesus the Son of God came to this earth, took upon our sins once and for all by being baptized by John the Baptist, was crucified for our sins and shed His precious blood in our place, and rose from the dead again. Therefore, those who now realize and believe in this Truth



have no sin; instead, they have become God's people forever, and at the same time, they also have eternal life. The Lord has saved us once and for all by being baptized by John the Baptist, shedding His blood and dying on the Cross in our place, and rising from the dead again. As such, those who believe that Jesus has become their Savior by bearing their sins through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, dying on the Cross, and rising from the dead again, and those who actually take this Truth by faith, are saved from sin to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. That is why Jesus said, *“From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.”*

All the Prophecies of the Old Testament Were Until John the Baptist

Third, Jesus said, *“For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John” (Matthew 11:13)*. My fellow believers, the Pentateuch, the Books of the Major Prophets and the Minor Prophets, and the other Books of the Old Testament all spoke about the sacrificial system of the Tabernacle through the Law of God, teaching that salvation is attained through this sacrificial system of the Tabernacle. Ultimately, they prophesied that Jesus would come to this earth as the Lamb of God, and just as the sacrificial animals of the Old Testament had accepted the Israelites' sins through the laying on of their hands, He would also accept our sins and sacrifice Himself, thus saving us from all sins.



As such, that John the Baptist baptized Jesus means the end of the age of the Old Testament, and that Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist means the opening of the age of the New Testament, implying that Jesus became the Savior of mankind through this baptism received from John, His death on the Cross, and His resurrection. In other words, Jesus fulfilled the remission of sins for those who believe in the righteousness of God. In the Old Testament, salvation was attained by keeping the commandments, the Law, and the sacrificial system. But in the age of the New Testament, the gates of Heaven were opened to the believers as the sins of the world were passed onto Jesus Christ at the very moment John the Baptist baptized Him, because all those sins were paid off when Christ shed His blood on the Cross. Just as the sacrificial animals in the age of the Old Testament had accepted sin through the laying on

of hands, now in this age of the New Testament, we are able to be saved by believing in the written Word that Jesus accepted all the sins of mankind once and for all by being baptized by John the Baptist, that He died for our sins in our place, that He rose from the dead again, and that He has thereby saved us. As God has enabled you and me, who are living in the age of the New Testament, to also know this Truth through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, He has made it possible for the believers to be saved from all sins once and for all.

That is why the Lord said, *“All the prophets and the law prophesied until John”* (Matthew 11:13). My fellow believers, the last prophet of the Old Testament, the one who fulfilled the role of the last High Priest, is none other than John the Baptist. As John the Baptist baptized Jesus as the representative of mankind, he passed all sins to Him once and for all. That is how John

fulfilled all his calling. He bore witness of Jesus the next day after his baptizing Jesus in the Jordan River, saying, “*Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*” This means that Jesus had come to this earth to save man from the sins of the world, and that He had saved us by coming to this earth as our propitiation and taking upon our sins. John the Baptist left this world after completely fulfilling his role of transferring all the sins of the world to Jesus and faithfully testifying that Jesus was the Lamb of God who took away the sins of the world.

Many Christians refer to John the Baptist as the pioneer of asceticism because they lay emphasis just on his life-style when they read the Bible saying, “*John himself was clothed in camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey*” (Matthew 3:4). But, such a perspective is too

myopic, akin to throwing away the actual gift and keeping just the box. You must have the correct knowledge of the role of John the Baptist. The reason why John the Baptist was born on this earth, and why God had prepared Him to be born on this earth, was to pass all the sins of mankind to Jesus, all your sins and mine.

“Elijah to Come” Prophesied in the Old Testament Was John the Baptist

Fourth, it is written, “*If you are willing to receive it, he is Elijah who is to come*” (Matthew 11:14). In other words, Elijah to come is none other than John the Baptist. Who is this Elijah to come that Jesus spoke of? It is John the Baptist in the New Testament. We should always learn the Word of God and know it. Isn’t it because people don’t know the Bible that they don’t



know who Elijah really is, and when they think of him, they just think of Elijah in the Old Testament?

Let's turn to Malachi 4:5-6 here:

*“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet
Before the coming of the great and dreadful
day of the LORD.*

And he will turn

The hearts of the fathers to the children,

And the hearts of the children to their fathers,

Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.”

God the Father said here that He would send the Prophet Elijah to this earth before the advent of the end of this world, before judging it. However, Elijah the prophet had already died in the Old Testament. To whom does it then refer? It refers to the servant of God whom God had said that He would send: *“Behold, I send My messenger, And he will prepare the way before Me” (Malachi 3:1)*. Elijah was different from

ordinary prophets. Most prophets disappeared after making a few proclamations, but the Old Testament records that in God's sight, Elijah was a brave servant of the Lord who took on 850 prophets of Baal and Asherah all by himself and defeated them single-handedly. The people of Israel at that time were all worshiping idols, but by showing them that Jehovah was the only true God, Elijah had led these foolish people back to God again. Put differently, Elijah was a mighty servant of God.

In Malachi chapter 3, God had promised that He would send this Elijah, a mighty servant of God, to this earth again, and God fulfilled this promise by sending John the Baptist. John the Baptist carried out the work of passing all the sins of mankind to Jesus Christ by baptizing Him in the Jordan River. John then bore witness of the ministry of Jesus Christ, testifying, *“Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the*



world!” Put differently, John was testifying: “Look! He is the Lamb of God who shouldered the sins of the world by being baptized by me, and He is now going to the Cross to shed His blood. Jesus Christ is God the Father’s propitiation for our sins. He is the sacrificial offering prepared to save you and me from the sins of the world.”

Therefore, because of this testimony of John the Baptist, it was made possible for not only the people of Israel but also you and me to believe in Jesus Christ and serve Him as the Savior. On account of John the Baptist baptizing Jesus and passing our sins to Him, and through his testimony bearing witness of Jesus who gave Himself up as our own sacrificial offering, we were able to realize and believe that Jesus Christ is indeed our Savior.

My fellow believers, without the ministry of John the Baptist, how else would you and I have

been able to believe in Jesus Christ as our Savior? Could we have been saved perfectly just by believing in the crucified Jesus Christ? No, no matter how much we believed, we were still tormented because we kept sinning every day. However, because John the Baptist passed all the sins of mankind to Jesus Christ once and for all by baptizing Him, by realizing this Truth, we were able to believe in Jesus Christ as our Savior without any difficulty. Isn’t this true? Of course it is! When Jesus came to this earth, He did not take upon the sins of the world all by Himself. He needed a servant of God who would pass all the sins of mankind to His head. This servant was none other than John the Baptist.



The Ministry of John the Baptist Is Indispensable to All of Us

It's written, "*And he will turn The hearts of the fathers to the children, And the hearts of the children to their fathers, Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse*" (Malachi 4:6). This passage illustrates just how important the mediating role of John the Baptist was. It's because John the Baptist passed all sins to Jesus Christ that God could demonstrate His love in action.

"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 great love of God and all His righteousness were fulfilled by the ministries of Jesus and John the Baptist. In thus fulfilling all His righteousness by being baptized by John the Baptist and shedding His blood, the Lord proved

that He loved us. God the Father did this through His Son Jesus Christ. By making Jesus Christ His Son be baptized by John the Baptist and accept your sins and mine once and for all, by letting Him be crucified, and by resurrecting Him from the dead, God proved His love for you and me who now believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

As such, the notion that everyone can be saved just by believing in Jesus blindly without even understanding the Word of God is an empty claim stemming from the ignorance of the Word, and it is nothing more than complete nonsense. The reason why God the Father sent Jesus Christ to this earth was to deliver you and me from the sins of the world and save us. Like this, to save you and me from the sins of the world, God the Father had prepared John the Baptist, and this was to wash away our sins and save us from death as well. In other words, God the Father had



prepared His Son Jesus Christ as our propitiation, and He had also prepared John the Baptist. John the Baptist was to pass all the sins of mankind to Jesus Christ. If Jesus had to accept everyone's sins by being baptized on a daily basis, He would have turned bald. But He didn't do this, and instead, He accepted all the sins of the world once and for all by the means of His baptism.

To save us sinners from the sins of the world all at once, God the Father had prepared Jesus and John the Baptist. Who then gave birth to this John the Baptist in the flesh? It is Elizabeth, a descendant of Aaron and the wife of Zacharias. It's this woman who gave birth to John the Baptist

There is God's profound will hidden in this. In the age of the Old Testament, the duties of the High Priest could not be carried out by just anyone. Only the descendants of Aaron could fulfill its duties. The Bible states that both

Zacharias and Elizabeth, the parents of John the Baptist, were the descendants of Aaron (Luke 1:5). This is extremely important to the ministries of both John the Baptist and Jesus.

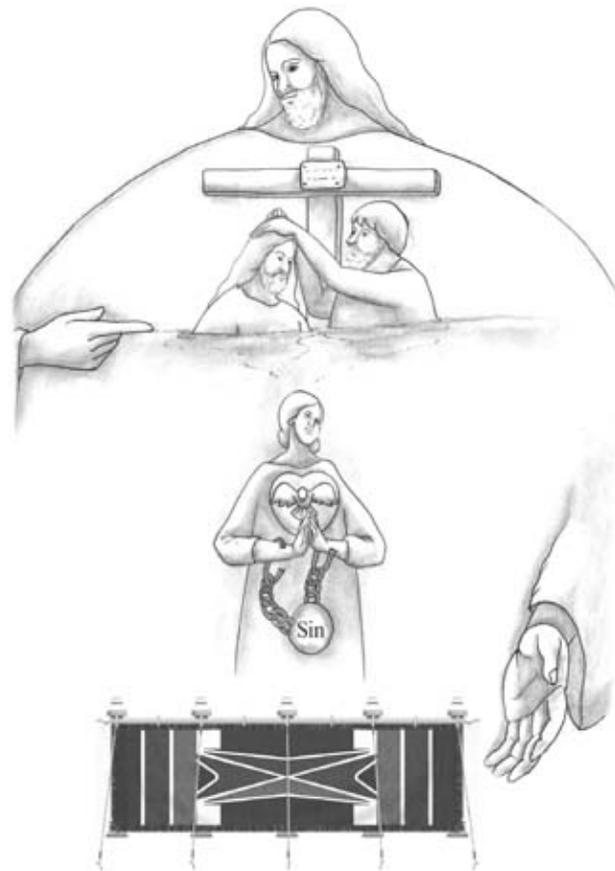
Nowadays, anyone who attends and graduates from a seminary is made an evangelist and a pastor. But pastors must minister with the knowledge of the ministries of John the Baptist and Jesus. We must all realize and believe that in order to save us from all the sins of the world, God the Father had prepared John the Baptist first, and then Jesus Christ, and thereby fulfilled all His love.

Hallelujah! May God bless you all! ☒



SERMON

4



CONTENTS



Jesus and John the Baptist Whom God Prepared For Our Salvation

< Luke 1:1-23 >

“Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus, that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed. There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah. His wife

was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both well advanced in years. So it was, that while he was serving as priest before God in the order of his division, according to the custom of the priesthood, his lot fell to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. And the whole multitude of the people was praying outside at the hour of incense. Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said to him, ‘Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. And you will have



joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, 'to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,' and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.' And Zacharias said to the angel, 'How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is well advanced in years.' And the angel answered and said to him, 'I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and was sent to speak to you and bring you these glad tidings. But behold, you will be mute and not able to speak until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words which will be

fulfilled in their own time.' And the people waited for Zacharias, and marveled that he lingered so long in the temple. But when he came out, he could not speak to them; and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple, for he beckoned to them and remained speechless. So it was, as soon as the days of his service were completed, that he departed to his own house."

Like the lyrics from a popular song that says, "I think of you whether I am standing or sitting," the things we have not accomplished completely yet, the work that we have not yet achieved though we have started, come to mind whether I am standing or sitting now."

Many negative ion products are on the market these days and they say the negative ion is very good for health. Humans need many kinds of



nutrition and elements, and the negative ion is absolutely necessary. Of course the positive ion is also necessary, but it is said that humans need the negative ion even more and it is better for health. All the things that produce heat are positive ions. On the contrary, you can think that humidity is from the negative ion. Put simply, the negative ion is such that when there is lack of humidity, the lack of moisture, the electromagnetic currents from the cell phones and computers accumulate in the body and people get sick because of the lack of negative ions. It is especially like that these days because we are surrounded by many chemical construction materials. The whole house is full of artificial chemical construction materials. There is almost no natural material. Is there any natural element in a house whether it is of yellow earth or wood? No, there isn't any.

It will soon be Christmas. Christmas is drawing near and it is not even a week away. After Christmas, the month of December will be over in a few days and we will enter the phase of concluding the year. We have the desire to organize the year serenely although we are prone to feel busy and restless during the holiday season. Before we greet Christmas, I want to share with you something about John the Baptist who was the person God had prepared; and when the Christmas comes around, it would be nice if we give praise with thanksgiving in our hearts for how our Lord saved us and blotted out all our sins and give glory to God.



Why Did Luke the Disciple of Jesus Pick up the Pen?

Look at the Word from the Gospel of Luke chapter 1 verses 1-23 that we have read today. I want to talk about this Word with the title, “Jesus and John the Baptist Whom God Prepared for Our Salvation,” and talk about the fact that God prepared John the Baptist for us.

First, we can see through the Gospel of Luke chapter 1 that God prepared John the Baptist in this world before sending Jesus Christ the Son of God. In this chapter, Luke talked about why God had to send John the Baptist, who would baptize Jesus with water, to this world and why God had to prepare him before the coming of Jesus. When we look at the Gospel written by Luke the disciple of Jesus, we know that the reason Luke recorded this Gospel was to tell us in detail about the life of Jesus and His Word that Jesus

witnessed amongst us. He also tells us about John the Baptist, and the things concerning it.

It says, “*Just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us.*” It says that many people picked up the pen to write in detail about Jesus Christ who fulfilled our salvation and its account. As such, Luke also had written the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of Apostles from this perspective. He picked up the pen to witness that Jesus is our Savior and that Jesus Christ came to this world and saved us was a true fact, and that the salvation Lord fulfilled was also true.

Not only did Luke pick up the pen for this, but Matthew, Mark, and John also picked up the pen. Peter and John among the 12 disciples as well as the Apostle Paul also wrote to share this blessed fact. So we are able to read the New Testament like this today. Luke also picked up the pen with such heart and he especially recorded the Gospel



of Luke and the Acts of Apostles in the form of letter sent to Theophilus. We don't know if this Theophilus was a person to whom Luke witnessed the gospel personally. In any case, Luke picked up the pen and recorded this Scripture because he thought it would be better to send the written document to Theophilus who must have been a person in quite a high position since he was addressed as the "most excellent Theophilus."

Simply put, Luke was doing literature ministry. Luke, the disciple of Jesus was doing literature ministry just as we share the gospel overseas through our Christian literature now. Luke did the missions just as you and I do literature ministry these days. We are now writing the sermons and translating them into English and then translating it into the languages of each country.

Luke recorded the Word to send it to the most excellent Theophilus because he felt the need to pick up the pen and record about Jesus in order to keep it and share it with people. Although Luke started to write for the most excellent Theophilus, he proceeded to record the things he saw and heard as the disciple of Jesus Christ personally, and the things he saw and heard following around the Apostle Paul, because he felt such need once he began to write.

When We Look at the Accounts about John the Baptist

Today's Scripture passage says, "*There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah. His wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. And they were both*



righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both well advanced in years.”

It is the part about God explaining the reason for sending John the Baptist to this world through the house of Zacharias. God also explains later why He had to send John the Baptist to this world and through whom He sent him. He was talking about Abijah, a grandson of Aaron the High Priest. Priests only came out of the house of Aaron the High Priest, and they were divided into 24 divisions at the time of King David because there were many descendants of Aaron. For example, there were many descendants of the High Priest and many matured to the required age. If three sons were born to one of the descendants, then more descendants were born through those three sons

and so on. Because the number of the priests became exceedingly great when King David was ruling over the Israelites, he divided them into 24 divisions to resolve this problem.

But only one person out of the descendants of Aaron could become the High Priest. For example, in Korea, the house of the eldest son takes authority over the ancestor worship and keeps the house together, right? The house of the eldest son takes full authority over everything in Korea because of the deeply ingrained Confucianism from the past. Anyway, as the eldest sons have such right, the male born from the lineage of Aaron the High Priest had the privilege to go before the presence of God and manage the sacrificial ritual as priests when they had received the proper education necessary and became 25 years old. But the descendants of Aaron prospered and there were too many of them. Therefore, they established the lineage in



that manner during the time of King David because at that time there were disputes between families. They managed the order of the priesthood by establishing 24 divisions. They all appear in the First Book of Kings and the Second Book of Kings, but I will just leave it at that because we wouldn't have enough time if I dealt with that matter exhaustively.

Anyway, the Bible says that John the Baptist will be born to the house of Abijah from the lineage of Aaron the High Priest. It's not an uncertain legend or a fictitious tale, although it was old history, and the Scriptures point to a historical event to explain its truthfulness as it says, "*There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah.*" The Account of the birth of John the Baptist is not a legend or a fable; it is a true story that has historical evidence. A legend or a fable does not have any historical evidence.

For example, we Koreans believe that our nation was originated from King Dangun's rule based on the legend of Dangun. The legend says that a bear and a tiger went into a cave to eat garlic for 100 days. The tiger could not endure this and ran out of the cave, but the bear endured this and became a woman who became the mother of King Dangun. Therefore, if that had been the case, we Koreans are all offspring of a bear. There isn't any realistic and historical basis to such stories.

For another example, you also know the legend of Park Hyukgeosei, don't you? This legend tells us that Hyukgeosei Park came out from a large gourd and became the ancestor of Park's family. Such stories are made up by the families with surname Lee, Kim, Park, and so on, to make their ancestors look good or to make the ruling over the people easier. They are fabricated



stories that were handed down through the word of mouth that are not verified.

But All the Accounts Recorded in the Scriptures Are Historical Events

John the Baptist was born to the house of Abijah; this is a historical fact. Abijah was a grandson of Aaron the High Priest. From the days of Aaron and Abijah to the coming of Jesus, about 1,500 years had passed. Therefore, there were many people from the house of the High Priest at the time when Zacharias performed his duties of priesthood. Think about how great the number of descendants of Aaron must have been born through thousands of years of lineage in Israel. We Korean people joke that if we go up to the mountain and throw a stone with our eyes closed, there is a great probability that we would

hit a person with one of three surnames of Kim, Lee, and Park. All of these three surnames are of the kings who ruled for a long time in Korea. Like this, there were many descendants of Aaron like that.

God especially took Zacharias who was born to the house of Abijah among many descendants of Aaron. God made John the Baptist born to this world through the house of Zacharias. Today's Scripture passage proves the fact that Zacharias and Elizabeth were the descendants of Aaron the High Priest and the High Priest is the representative of the Israeli people in the eyes of God.

These two people lived very faithfully according to the Law of the Old Testament before the presence of God and did not have fault in the eyes of God. They did not have blemishes according to the Law. So it says, *“And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the*



commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.” Actually the Law at the time was so complicated that it would be impossible to say that someone had no fault no matter how fervently he had kept the Law. It’s impossible because there is no one who can keep it perfectly. One may be able to keep it one day but he may offend it on the next day. That’s why we need Jesus Christ.

Anyway, that God sent John the Baptist through this couple, through Zacharias from the house of Abijah who was in the lineage of Aaron the High Priest, means that God already prepared for us the salvation for you and me. When Jesus Christ came to this world and said, “*Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,*” the Lord did not do the work alone and He needed the representative of humanity that would turn the sins of all humanity

over to Him, a representative that would transfer all the sins over to Jesus Christ.

That is why God prepared the representative. We need to know these facts correctly without any question. How much do we need such knowledge? We need it absolutely. The thing that is dealt with first in the Gospel of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John is the account about John the Baptist. The Gospel of Mark talks about this at the very beginning of the Book. We have to look at the Bible as a whole instead of clinging to the unessential issues. Then we can realize whether the account of John the Baptist is really true and important. All the Gospel writers wrote about this as an important matter and recorded in detail. Given this, we should also regard John the Baptist and his ministries as very important, just as the disciples of Jesus who wrote each of the Four Gospels considered it with great importance.



The thing we need to think about here is the fact that God the Father prepared the birth of John the Baptist 6 months before sending His own Son to this world. This is very important. The people who do not really understand the true gospel say that Jesus saves them unconditionally when they just confess that Jesus came to this world and saved them from all their sins. They say that Jesus has saved them without requiring anything. They insist that the Lord said, *“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,”* and therefore they say Jesus has saved those who believe in Him somehow. They are saying that Jesus saved us as Jesus came and died on the Cross.

How much preparation do we have to do whenever we are going to do some kind of work? For example, when we try to do even a little thing like a flower arrangement, we have to prepare a calyx to fix the flower and make some

designs, and we have to think about it beforehand and have the flower ready before we actually fix the flower. We also need to prepare the necessary tools such as scissors, flower basins, and some string to fix the flowers. We need to have an idea before we go and buy the flower. We need to put an effort into preparing everything. We need to buy these things and actually execute and express it according to the way we planned and prepared. It becomes a flower arrangement when it goes through all these processes.

Every work is like this. Not only in matters of life, but God also fulfilled the work of saving us from the sins of the world by preparing all things in detail. God already prepared and planned in Christ the salvation of all human beings even before the creation of the universe.

But what sort of works did God prepare beforehand to fulfill such work of salvation? First, God had to send John the Baptist to this



world as the representative of humanity, and God had to do the work of transferring over the sins of us human beings to His Son Jesus Christ. God showed this as a special work. God did not take this work lightly as His ordinary works, but instead considered it a special work and appeared to Zacharias beforehand through the angel and spoke of this and fulfilled this according to what He said. God made John the Baptist baptize His Son Jesus Christ and transfer the sins of all humanity over to His Son when He became 30 years old. God prepared all this beforehand.

When we do something, preparation is half of the work. It's like that with any work. There isn't anything that gets done just by starting it. Even a little thing like eating three meals a day takes a lot of preparation. You may think that cooking rice is as simple as just adding some water, heating it up, and the rice just cooks by itself. But when we really look into it, there are so

many processes of preparation for us to eat one meal of rice. People have to grow rice in the farm, and they have to save the seed in order to grow rice, and we finally can have a meal of rice through all these preparation processes and hard work. But we see ourselves jump into things without any preparation like that at times. What do we call such a person who just jumps into things without preparing anything? We call such a person who just jumps into things a foolish person. An ignorant one! That's right. Trying to live in this world without any preparation is really foolish.

But there are many foolish people these days. Some hospitals don't even have the surgical equipment ready and they haven't even washed or sterilized them, and they just sit around doing nothing. Then when a patient comes in, they say, "Have a seat first. Where are you hurting?" Then they try to get the feel of the hurting spot by



pressing it and then they tell someone to bring a knife and cut the patient's stomach with a knife that has germs all over it. The knife that was used to slaughter cows, pigs, and so on. If someone performed a surgery in such a manner as this, the patient would just die due to infection from germs.

Therefore, the salvation of the Lord needed as much preparation as this; actually even more. God had to prepare incomparably more things than the doctors sterilizing everything beforehand. God the Father prepared much to save us in this manner. God prepared John the Baptist. As such, God the Father also had to prepare John the Baptist, the representative of all humanity, who would transfer the sins of the world over to Jesus Christ to save you and me from sin. That's why preparation is so important. He really prepared in detail.

Most pastors these days proclaim, "Your sins are forgiven," when they hear someone confess Jesus as his Savior with faith in His blood. Such pastors are those who do not prepare the spiritual work. We could call such pastors as spiritual swindlers. We can compare such a person as a good-for-nothing fool. Isn't that so? When you and I think about this and see the process of God preparing John the Baptist to transfer over all our sins to Jesus, how precisely did God prepare all this?

The High Priest, the representative of humanity, had to be a descendant of Aaron. It had to be a descendant of Aaron and it had to be a person that God approved to set him up as the representative of all humanity and entrust him with the role of transferring over all the sin to Jesus. Then he would have the qualification to transfer all our sins over to Jesus Christ.



God the Father had to prepare these things. That's why He sent the angel. Zacharias went into the Holy Place of the Tabernacle where the altar of incense was. On the outside was the altar of burnt offering and the water basin of bronze. Priests went into the sanctuary everyday to manage the lampstand or burn the incense at the altar of incense. Zacharias was doing the work of burning incense to Jehovah God and he saw an angel standing next to the altar of incense. How shocking it must have been.

Have you ever seen an angel? Maybe you have never seen an angel before, but angels actually exist as the messengers of God. The Scriptures say that the angel that God sent at that time was the angel called Gabriel that.

The angel appeared and said to Zacharias, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard." We could know that God prepared like this to fulfill His will. Zacharias and Elizabeth

did not have a child between them. The angel said that his prayers were heard because the couple waited and waited for a child earnestly because the couple did not have a child between them, even though they had good relationship. Zacharias prayed earnestly. Zacharias was old enough already and his wife already reached the age of a grandmother. They waited more and more for a child and they became older and older without a child. It is a natural human desire to yearn for a child as a person becomes older. Therefore God heard this prayer. God did not choose a representative of humanity among the people who were born through the natural ability of some human being. Instead, God answered the request of His people through the special power of God, and at the same time He manifested Himself in human history and planned to use him for the work of fulfilling His will with His power. Who is that chosen person? It's John the Baptist.



The Scriptures say, *“Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb. And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God.”* Zacharias received God’s will through the angel like this. The angel said his name shall be called John and he will be great before the presence of the Lord. This person, John the Baptist, is the greatest before the presence of the Lord. He is the greatest representative of humanity among all human beings.

Let’s read the verse 17 again as it says, *“He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, ‘to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,’ and the disobedient to the wisdom of*

the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”

It is written that he would turn the hearts of the fathers to the children with the spirit and power of Elijah. Who is such representative of the humanity? It’s John. Which John? It’s John the Baptist. It’s not John who recorded the Gospel of John. Then, who is this person who is much bigger than them? It’s John the Baptist. John the Baptist is the greatest. John the Baptist is the greatest person who really played an important role in fulfilling our salvation. The Bible says this person does not drink wine or strong drink. It says that he will be clothed with the fullness of the Holy Spirit even from conception in his mother’s womb. This is telling us that he is a person especially sent by God. God gave John as a son to Zacharias through His abundant power.



Zacharias' wife Elizabeth did not have the ability to conceive a child. Her menstruation had already stopped. Is there any woman who can bear a child after the menopause? No, there isn't. It is impossible naturally and biologically. We must understand this. We must understand who the person that turns back so many sinful people to Jesus Christ is. It is John the Baptist who was born out of the Lord's will, not through human power. John the Baptist is that important.

How important is he? The Scriptures tells us about John the Baptist, *"He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."* It means that he worked with the spirit of Elijah. It tells us that he did the work that brings so many people back to God. John the Baptist is the spiritual father that leads us to God. John the Baptist is the

one even greater than Moses. This fact appears when we continue reading the Bible from now on. He is the one God had prepared.

John the Baptist is the person God prepared for our salvation, and Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God that God prepared to save us from all the sins by taking all our sins and receiving the judgment in place of our sins as the sacrificial offering. John the Baptist is the representative of all human beings. He is the representative of humanity who would transfer all our sins over to Jesus the Lamb of God, the sacrifice. These two persons, Jesus Christ and John the Baptist, were prepared especially by God the Father for our salvation. One Person was the Son of God who was prepared as the Lamb of sacrifice, and another was the person who would transfer over the sins to Jesus as the representative of humanity as a creature, a human being just like



you and me. Do you understand this now? You must understand how important this is.

Christmas is coming soon. John the Baptist was born 6 months prior to the birth of Christ. Jesus was born to the world 6 months after this incident. So, John the Baptist was born first and Jesus was born 6 months after John the Baptist. John the Baptist came to this world and asked people to repent crying out vehemently, “Repent! Children of serpents.” He performed the work of transferring the sins of the humanity to Jesus Christ by baptizing Jesus in the Jordan River. Therefore, Jesus was able to become our true Savior through that baptism when He became 30 years old. He could become the true Savior from the moment He received the baptism from John the Baptist. Up until the age of 30, His life didn’t have much significance because He had not yet taken our sins upon Him even though He had come as our Savior.

We must not just say we believe in the Word blindly because it is the God’s Word. Instead, we must think firmly about what we believe and what the Scriptures say about John the Baptist. We must ponder on the process of how God planned our salvation and how He fulfilled this plan. Do you know what happens when we don’t think about these things? We come to see that Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, became a mute. He became a mute because he did not believe the Word of the angel. He did not believe the Word the angel told him personally. Therefore, he became a mute as the angel had warned. He believed this only after John the Baptist was born. His wife conceived and had the child just as the angel told him. Only then did he finally believe. His mouth and tongue were finally loosened after he named the child John.

Like this, you cannot say that you believe in Jesus or preach the gospel of Jesus if you do not



believe in this fact. It means that we cannot evangelize the gospel. As Zacharias had become a mute, we cannot do anything when we do not believe in God's Word of Truth even after hearing it. We can do so if we believe: We can evangelize the gospel and we can receive the salvation too when we believe in God's Word. On the other hand, we cannot even receive salvation if we do not believe. When we look at the things people do, we can see how so many people believe in Jesus wrongly, believe without any basic knowledge of the salvation the Lord had prepared in detail for us. They just believe arbitrarily without even following the Word that tells them to evangelize the gospel. Because of this, they still have sin, and they can't even receive the transformation of their hearts and so on because they believe wrongly.

“He Will Bring Back the Disobedient to the Wisdom of the Just”

It says that John the Baptist would make ready a people prepared for the Lord. It is John the Baptist who brings you and me back to the presence of God. It is John the Baptist who fulfilled the role of turning you and me back to Jesus. You and I could not know and believe in Jesus if not for the ministries of John the Baptist. How could we have known? Could we believe in Him blindly just confessing that Jesus died on the Cross to become our Savior without understanding the reason? Maybe we could believe it, but we should really know about it specifically. Consequently, believing in Him without correct understanding is like a one-sided love because it is believing without even knowing how the sins were transferred over. Such people consequently will be cast away.



Therefore, we must understand the historical fact, the Word of the Truth, and what God says and what God has done for us. It is that important. Zacharias became a mute because he did not believe God's Word. There must have been people waiting outside of the sanctuary, right? They must have thought, "It's strange. Why isn't he coming out?" Then Zacharias came out after a long while. He came out, but he had become a mute. He could not speak. He just used hands and feet to try to communicate. He was using the sign language. Then people realized, "Something must have happened in the sanctuary."

God sent angels to Zacharias. God often sent angels before Jesus came to this world. The Archangel Gabriel was the angel messenger of God's good news, while the Archangel Michael was the angel of war. That's how the priests knew what was going to happen. When we read

the Word, we could see specifically that John was born exactly according to the Word.

The scriptures show to us that John the Baptist was prepared for you and me; that Jesus took all our sins and received the judgment in our place as the Lamb of God for our salvation; and that He consequently is the sacrificial offering prepared to blot out all our sins. You and I could receive salvation because of the sacrifice offered by these two prepared persons. God the Father prepared His Son and also prepared John the Baptist, the representative of the humanity. I am speaking to you about the love of God. Do you understand?

We can receive the true faith and true salvation by knowing this Truth firmly. We now know well about John the Baptist, the person God prepared, and Jesus Christ the Son of God. But of course, we cannot compare John the Baptist with Jesus because Jesus was God



Himself and John the Baptist was the creature of the Lord just like you and me. Jesus was God who became a Man. By the way, we have come to know John the Baptist. They had to come in that manner and they had to be prepared that way to take all our sins upon Him and save us. We must understand this, think about it deeply, believe it sincerely, and see whether you and I have such faith. I want you to believe with the realization of whether you just believe because people urge you to believe or whether you really believe with correct understanding.

John the Baptist rebuked the disobedient, “You, children of serpents!” We were really sinners. We were sinners eternally, but all our sins were transferred over to Jesus at once through the baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist. Therefore, you and I were able to receive salvation by believing in the gospel of the water

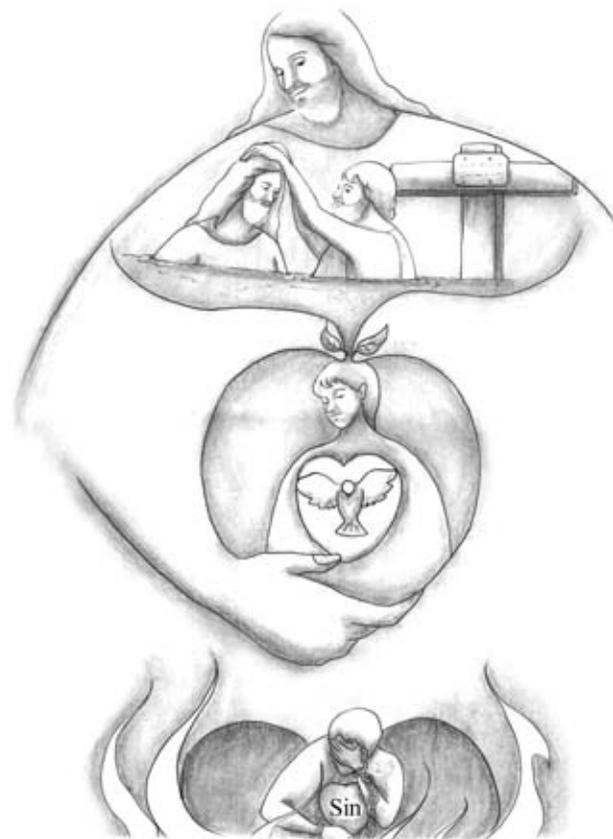
and the Spirit. We were able to receive the salvation through the faith in this Truth.

Do you now believe in this Truth? ☒



SERMON

5



CONTENTS



Follow the Righteousness Of the Lord

< Luke 1:1-25 >

“Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus, that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed. There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah. His wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name

was Elizabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both well advanced in years. So it was, that while he was serving as priest before God in the order of his division, according to the custom of the priesthood, his lot fell to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. And the whole multitude of the people was praying outside at the hour of incense. Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said to him, ‘Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his



birth. For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, 'to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,' and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.' And Zacharias said to the angel, 'How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is well advanced in years.' And the angel answered and said to him, 'I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and was sent to speak to you and bring you these glad tidings. But behold, you will be mute and not able to speak until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words which will be fulfilled in their own time.' And the people

waited for Zacharias, and marveled that he lingered so long in the temple. But when he came out, he could not speak to them; and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple, for he beckoned to them and remained speechless. So it was, as soon as the days of his service were completed, that he departed to his own house. 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 1:57-80 >

"Now Elizabeth's full time came for her to be delivered, and she brought forth a son. When her neighbors and relatives heard how the Lord had shown great mercy to her, they rejoiced with her. So it was, on the eighth day,



that they came to circumcise the child; and they would have called him by the name of his father, Zacharias. His mother answered and said, ‘No; he shall be called John.’ But they said to her, ‘There is no one among your relatives who is called by this name.’ So they made signs to his father—what he would have him called. And he asked for a writing tablet, and wrote, saying, ‘His name is John.’ So they all marveled. Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, praising God. Then fear came on all who dwelt around them; and all these sayings were discussed throughout all the hill country of Judea. And all those who heard them kept them in their hearts, saying, ‘What kind of child will this be?’ And the hand of the Lord was with him. 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. And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Highest; For you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways, To give knowledge of salvation to His people By the remission of their sins, Through the tender mercy of our God, With which the Dayspring from on high has visited us; To give light to



those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, To guide our feet into the way of peace.’ So the child grew and became strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his manifestation to Israel.”

My fellow believers, we must think well. I mean that we must think of spiritual matters first. How and what a person thinks about determines everything about him, including his actions and faith. Therefore, the issue of how a person thinks is very important. A person can have an optimistic view or a pessimistic view about the same thing depending on the way he thinks. He can go down the blessed path or down the path that leads to death according to how he thinks.

In the Bible, our Lord said, *“For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.”* This shows how

important the way we think is. Because we are independent individuals, we can think whatever we want. We can freely think anyway we like. There are two realms of thoughts; they are the spiritual realm and the physical realm. People think in both ways, but they can’t think of both of them simultaneously, so you must choose which one should be placed first when you think about something.

Machines and certain kinds of equipment are things that move according to how they have been programmed and have no will of their own, but God made people as independent individuals. Therefore, people can take one matter and think about it in different ways. It is extremely important to think well, and controlling one’s thoughts is likewise important. Even though we can think however we like, our thoughts must ultimately be right in order to live a proper life.



If you look again at what we have read here, you can see it is about John the Baptist and that it says at the end of chapter 1, “*So the child grew and became strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his manifestation to Israel.*” John the Baptist actually lived just as this prophecy.

People of course act according to their thoughts, but they are often swayed by their circumstances. One’s circumstances can even change his thoughts. I see people lately and think, ‘Why do people act like that nowadays? I really don’t understand why they think the way they do.’ The world has changed a lot in the last few years. It seems I’ve come to think this way because I haven’t changed, but since the world has changed, so have those people’s thoughts.

People are thus swayed by their circumstances, and their thoughts are also ultimately swayed by those circumstances. I can feel when I look at

young people that they have grown more distant from God because they are being swayed by their circumstances. Computers that have advanced so much are swaying them. I can also feel that the world has turned its back on God a lot. Since people are swayed by their circumstances, ultimately, the more they are obsessed with computers, the more they are swayed by those computer programs.

People were influenced a lot by other people long ago. They were swayed by others. There is a Korean proverb that says, “A tree cannot grow under a big tree, but a person can grow under a great person.” People were swayed by others, protected by others, and were brought up by others. People made extremely intimate relationships and there was a lot of peace and unity in these respects. However, it is apparent that people today are living by being swayed by machines and computers. As is happening,



people can think extremely narrow-mindedly and bleakly, and the result is that many people today, especially young people, are becoming distant from God. They don't want to become distant, but they come to see themselves involuntarily becoming so. I think, 'Oh, I guess that's the way young people are these days. One would expect them to have the same nature as us, so why do they think like they do?' Even though I think that way, I ultimately come to feel that they are like that because they are being swayed by their circumstances. My fellow believers, I'm not saying that computers or machines are bad things of themselves. They are good if those who use them do so usefully. All the tools of civilization made by man are that way. They are useful if those using them use them well. However, since people's thoughts are swayed by their circumstances, a person can think incorrectly or go down the wrong path if they become totally

obsessed with computers or other things and are swayed by them.

There are quite a lot of channels on cable television. There are some channels that teach us things we didn't know before. There are channels that teach us things we haven't personally come in contact with, such as the animal kingdom, the course of nature, and the history of the 20th century. There are other channels that spread other kinds of information. Gaining knowledge long ago was done through books; but people nowadays do so through newspapers, television, and computers. Even though they are watching television or using computers the same, the people who watch them are different. Some people think well and choose well what to accept. Those things are controlled by the person who saw them and can thus be used well by them. But some people are instead swayed by those things and can be swayed by machines through the



influence of their circumstances. The influence of one's circumstances is important as you can see above. But a person can ultimately stay near God and live a very sound and blessed life of faith according to the way he thinks. The way a person thinks is that important.

People must think in an even better fashion because they are ultimately swayed by their circumstances. But since they are swayed by their circumstances, they can think poorly because of them. The most central culture in today's world is the culture of the Internet. The result is that many people have become addicted to it, can't form relationships with others, and are consumed by selfishness. Put simply, they only think physically.

We must think both spiritually and physically. We must think about things in both ways, but what is critical must be determined by our spiritual thinking. So, if we think about

something only in a physical aspect, then such an unbalance of our thought leads us to be carnally minded. However, it is regrettable that many people are only fascinated by physical things. They think, 'Wow, this computer is much better than my personality or thoughts. The guy who made this program is much better than me.' The person who thinks this way is not controlling his sensitivities, knowledge, and personality; he is being controlled by that computer program. They incorrectly think that being swayed by a computer isn't bad at all.

But if you think about it just a little, it's apparent that not everything in a computer is good. There are quite a lot of things that aren't good. It would be really good to use computers appropriately, but there are a lot of people who can't do so and blindly accept everything. If we think well when we use the computer, use only that which we need, and can just control it, we



can guard our thoughts and hearts, too. Because people are existences that are swayed by their circumstances, we see a lot of situations of people being completely obsessed with those things instead of controlling them.

My fellow believers, there are quite a lot of people who blindly accept the computer and people who worship it. They don't socialize with people; they only play on the computer. If they want to play chess or card games, all they have to do is turn on the computer. I have never formally learned how to play chess. I just play for recreation. I have played a chess program on the computer once. There are four characters in the program. There is an old man, a guy who looks like he's in his mid-forties, an old woman, and a young woman. I chose the one who had the highest skill: the old man. I played one game of chess with the old man. While playing, I made a mistake and that old man clicked his tongue,

laughed, and said, "Ha, you messed up." When I made my first move on the game board, this old man threw back his head and hooted. So, even though it was just a computer, I was upset. That old man in the computer threw back his head and ridiculed me after just a few moves, so I looked up and grumbled on uselessly, 'The two years I spent learning this was a waste. I guess I should learn more.'

My fellow believers, it isn't important whether I won or lost against the computer. That program is made to entice people so they get addicted to it. People who make computer programs made them such that people would get on the computer, play to their heart's content, and relieve stress.

My fellow believers, what is so good about struggling against the computer and winning, or what is so bad about losing? The problem is being swayed by the computer after ultimately becoming addicted to it. It suffices to just turn



off the computer if things don't turn out as they want; but they are swayed so that they can't even do that. Almost all young people nowadays are like slaves to the computer.

My fellow believers, today's Scripture passage says that John the Baptist was in the desert. He was not swayed by the circumstances I spoke of earlier. My fellow believers, since it is so easy for people to be swayed by their circumstances, they must stay away from those that may affect them badly. It's all right if they are people who can be in those circumstances and triumph over them. But since people are generally swayed by their circumstances, and since they are swayed by bad things if they are in bad circumstances, it is good to totally stay away from there. If they don't want to turn out bad, they mustn't be in circumstances that aren't good.

People easily think that they may not be swayed by their circumstances if their wills are

firm. They may think they'll be OK no matter where they go. But that is never the case. Because people are easily swayed in some circumstances, they should totally stay away from there. Our thoughts are the same. People are existences that are swayed by their circumstances, and so are their thoughts. If one's thoughts are consumed in things that aren't good, they keep going in that direction. Those thoughts become set in stone. Therefore, before our thoughts are set in stone that way, we must do what we can to not be tainted with things that aren't good.

My fellow believers, we must think of spiritual things. We must have spiritual thoughts like the following: "Wouldn't it be really nice if all the people of the world received the remission of their sins? More people would receive it if I used the strength and means that I have and worked for this gospel." Then we will be swayed



by spiritual thoughts. Our hearts are gratified and we feel good. My fellow believers, thoughts sway people a lot. A person can become lovely according to what they think. They can become loathsome, they can become very physical, or they can become spiritual and upright.

A person can become physical or spiritual according to what they think. My fellow believers, if people think of spiritual things, they become extremely wise, and they think and make judgments to their great benefit. The Bible also said, “For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.” My fellow believers, if people think of world missionary work, they will use their substance for it. When they think of spiritual things this way, they are led in the right direction by those thoughts. Do people who do that receive the remission of their sins or not? They do. If we go out by thinking properly and having upright faith

(even if it is small), I can’t describe how much we can accomplish. My fellow believers, we can preach the gospel to the whole world.

Most ministers think, “What do I need to do to expand my church? What do I need to do to bring a lot of people to my church? What do I need to do to build a big chapel here, become a pastor in this place, reign over the believers, and increase my annual salary?” Most people think that way and wonder what they have to do to be respected and acknowledged. They are extremely satisfied if those things are accomplished.

But think about it a little differently for a moment. We could do an amazing amount of work for God and our physical problems would also be resolved very well, if we devote ourselves to the work of spreading the gospel to the whole world, even if our Churches are small, and if we let all the people of the whole world know the gospel and receive the remission of



sins by mobilizing all we have in obedience to the Word. We have two choices; to follow after the desires of our flesh or to follow after those of the Lord. We must think of spiritual things to follow after the Lord's desires. Souls are saved if we think of spiritual things.

A hospital in the United States is sending us a lot of e-mails and ordering a lot of our books these days. In fact, we will have to send about ten books to them tomorrow. The hospital to which we are going to send them is a very big one. It's so big that it has many smaller hospitals under it. They said that they would like to get this book as a sample and, if the reaction is good, get a lot of them and share them with people there.

I feel really good when I hear that. What is there for patients to do lying in a hospital? If our books are there, couldn't those people who are admitted to that hospital get some interest and take a look at them? It's a really easy read, so if

they take it up and just read it, they can read it to the end. What will happen if they read it all? They will receive the remission of their sins. If our books were in a lot of hospitals, a great many people could come in contact with the gospel and be saved. I am very happy when I think of that. We can become blessed people or people not blessed according to whether we think spiritually or physically. Is that true or not?

My fellow believers, you shouldn't think narrow-mindedly. If you look at the Gospel of Luke, chapter 12, you'll see a story of a rich man. He had a farm and it was very successful. So, he built a bigger storehouse, put all his grain in it, and said to himself, "*Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.*" But what did the Lord say to him? The Lord said, "*Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?*" We are



prone to think about just physical matters like this rich man. My fellow believers, when it comes to the question of how we must think, the answer is that we must think spiritual things. Even if we are a little insufficient, our thoughts must be spiritual ones. Only then can you be swayed by those spiritual thoughts and live according to them.

But since we are people who are also swayed by our circumstances, we must take good care of ourselves. We must only have upright spiritual thoughts because we are people who are swayed by our thoughts. My fellow believers, do you know how many people there are who have been ruined because they made a mistake in thinking? People are ruined by thinking incorrectly even just once. People aren't ruined any other way. They are ruined if they think incorrectly. There were also ministry workers who left the Church because they thought incorrectly when doing the

ministry. There were people who thought, 'If I'm in the Church, I'm busy and things are always hard in order to spread the gospel. It would be better to leave and work and live for myself than to have such a hard time surviving now.'

My fellow believers, wouldn't it be great to think that way? They start thinking that it would be really nice to not spend any of their money on others but use all of it for themselves, their wives, and their children. That's how they end up leaving the Church. But they can't even save \$10,000 a year by working themselves to death and using the money they earn in a month to pay this and that and feed themselves.

They can't do righteous work because they thought incorrectly. My fellow believers, a person can't do a single righteous work if he leaves the Church. They can never do righteous work if they leave the Church, even if they are powerful men with the ability to influence this



world. Why? It's because their thoughts are all physical, and not spiritual. It's because they are swayed by their thoughts of the flesh. There are many people who spend their lives vainly that way. They aren't that way because they haven't been saved. They are that way because they thought incorrectly in all their thoughts. So, the Bible said that to be spiritually minded is life and peace. That means that spiritual thoughts give people life, peace, and joy.

But to be carnally minded is death. Not only do people who think that way die themselves, but they come to kill others, also. Who would ever want to be like Hitler? Who would ever want to be like Kim Il-sung, the former dictator of North Korea? Who would ever want to be a person who committed a holocaust and was condemned by everyone? Everyone wants to be upright. But one doesn't become upright just because he wants to. A person becomes who he is according to how he

thinks.

Therefore, we have to think well. Do you understand? All of us have to think well, including the students and young adults here. People become shaky if their thoughts are shaky and they are ultimately ruined. If they think ruinous thoughts, they will be ruined. Even if you didn't do anything through your actions, you will turn out that way according to how you think. Therefore, we have to think well.

A person will be ruined even by thinking incorrectly just once. It was really hard for me a long time ago taking this gospel and doing God's work. I thought, "Should I just water down the gospel? If I didn't speak of baptism and just covered most of the gospel when I preach sermons, it wouldn't be so hard and people wouldn't fight against me. They'll probably be fooled if I don't teach the true gospel but only go as far as saying people have no sins and that they



will get the Spirit if they pray, make a show of things, and excite their emotions.”

My fellow believers, can people blindly receive the Spirit in their hearts? Can the sins in one’s heart disappear by blind repentance only? They can do absolutely nothing if someone tells them, “You have no sins in theory, but you have them in actuality, and you’re that way because you’re insufficient.” People are totally bound if someone says to them, “You have to be spiritual. You need to repent more.” They cannot help but be bound if that happens. So, a preacher that preaches that sort of thing ultimately comes to rule over the saints. People below him become just like imbeciles, and the preacher is held up like a god. He is seen as a god that people must hold up in their hearts. So, what will happen in that situation? That preacher is received wherever he goes, he gets greedier, collects money inappropriately, buys land, buys a house,

buys buildings, and buys stuff in the names of his wife and son because he still isn’t satisfied. Then, when he retires, he takes his retirement money and retires loaded with honors.

My fellow believers, a person who behaves that way may be full, but ultimately he dies himself and kills others. He doesn’t work with the intent to save others; what he does is just like working with the intent to kill. He kills everyone just as if he stabbed them in the gut with a knife or stuck them repeatedly with needles. He kills everyone’s souls, makes them go to hell, and makes them cursed before God just so he can eat and live well.

How a person thinks is important. My fellow believers, I also have a lot of temptations like that. I thought, ‘I’m insufficient, but I’ll never be like that. I couldn’t be that way even if I did the worst jobs because I had no money.’ If I hadn’t done God’s work, I probably would have worked



hard to make money like you do. People must tenaciously earn money somehow and use it appropriately when they spend it, just like the proverb that says, “Narrow gathered, widely spent.”

My fellow believers, people are swayed by their circumstances and by their thoughts. Even though you received the remission of your sins, you must think correctly to live yourself and live a life of saving other souls too. You must also pick your circumstances well. My fellow believers, we must govern our thoughts and circumstances well. No matter what we do, we must think spiritually, do spiritual work, and put ourselves in spiritual circumstances. Only then can you and I become blessed people before God and people who share those blessings with others. That is how extremely important it is to put your and my thoughts and circumstances into spiritual things.

If John the Baptist had not been in the desert, but was instead among other people or was in the ranks of the corrupt high priests, he probably could not have done the work of salvation of transferring all sins to Jesus as the representative of mankind. John the Baptist was actually the descendant of Aaron. Therefore, he was a person with the qualifications to perform the duties of a high priest. That was his station in life. But if he had been in the ranks of the corrupt world, he would have become just like the people of the world. Jesus would not have gone to him. He would have thought, ‘I can’t go to him. I guess I’ll have to send another of My servants.’

That’s right. My fellow believers, God therefore clothed John the Baptist in the fullness of the Spirit from the time he was in his mother’s womb. Of course, he can’t be compared to Jesus who was absolutely perfect, but God blessed him so that the Spirit entered his heart from the time



he was in his mother's womb and from the time he was conceived. Therefore, John the Baptist thought differently than most people. He was in the desert and when he had come of age, was able to shout at people, "Repent, you brood of vipers!" He could speak to people boldly because he was bold. He could speak boldly and clearly according to the Lord's will, saying, "You are a brood of vipers. Repent! The ax is laid to the roots of the trees and whoever does not bear fruits of repentance or those who only repent by word will be cut down and cast into the fire." He was such a bold servant of God that everyone who heard him preaching and yelling returned to God. He accomplished all the responsibilities he was given by the Lord to meet Jesus and transfer all the sins of this world to Him.

My fellow believers, what causes your faith to enter onto the wrong path? Why do you not follow the Lord but instead get caught up in the

perdition of the world? It is because of thinking incorrectly. Blessings or curses come according to how you think.

Six months prior to Jesus Christ, God the Father sent the representative of mankind to this world: He was John the Baptist who would baptize Jesus and transfer all sins to Him. His name was John, and he was called John the Baptist because he baptized Jesus and the people of his day. God loves us and sent two servants to this earth in order to save us from all our sins. One of them was Jesus Christ and the other was John the Baptist. I can't express how fortunate it is that God sent them, and I can't describe how thankful I am. I am very thankful to the Lord.

My fellow believers, God the Father sent two servants to this earth. He eliminated all your sins and mine by first sending John the Baptist, the representative of mankind who would transfer all their sins to Jesus and then sending His Son who



is the Savior of mankind. God the Father accomplished all the work of our salvation by sending these two servants. My fellow believers, I can't express how grateful and thankful I am when I think spiritually about these facts.

If you think that God the Father really didn't send John the Baptist or that Jesus Christ didn't come to this earth, how could you or I become sinless people? God sent these two people in order to make you and me sinless, to make you and me righteous, to give you and me the Kingdom of Heaven, and to give us the blessing of becoming His children. God the Father prepared two people in Heaven and sent them to this earth in order to make you and me blessed and to make you and me workers in righteousness.

One of those two was John the Baptist. He was a descendant of Aaron. Aaron was the older brother of Moses and the first high priest in the

Old Testament era. He was the first. There was a High Priest senior to him, and that was Melchizedek in Genesis. He was Jesus Christ of Heaven. The Bible says that Abraham tithed a tenth of what he had to the high priest, Melchizedek. Melchizedek was Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the High Priest of the Kingdom of Heaven, and He eliminated all the sins of you, me, and all mankind. Jesus Christ was in Heaven from the beginning. He was there from the beginning as the High Priest in Heaven who eliminates all our sins.

If you look at the Old Testament, God gave the Sacrificial System of the Tabernacle to Aaron, the older brother of Moses, and He made him the High Priest. But Aaron had children, they had children, and those children had children, and the people in that family became so many over time that David set an order for the duties of the priests. He set an order that several priests would



do the duties each half-month. This is usually referred to as the division of priests, but there was a priest named Zacharias who was a descendant in the division of the priest Abijah. When his turn came and he was in the Sanctuary to do his duties for the Israelites, God spoke to Him through the angel Gabriel. God said, *“Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John.”* He also said, *“And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. For he will be great in the sight of the Lord.”* God the Father first sent His servant John the Baptist to Israel six months prior to Jesus Christ.

It was completely a time of Dark Ages in Israel because the Israelites had no prophet for about 400 years after Malachi. There were no servants of God. So, the Israelites couldn't help but wander like a lost herd of sheep, and they served any god that came around. The Israelites

had been invaded frequently by their enemies before Jesus came, and they fought to the death under the command of the Maccabees in order to preserve their nation. Those soldiers ultimately all died. It was a rough period for Israel for 400 years before Jesus came, and there were no servants of God.

In those circumstances, God sent John the Baptist who would become the representative of mankind. God told Zacharias, *“Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. You will also have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink.”* Who is it here who is called a great person as the representative of mankind? He is John the Baptist whom God sent to this world through Elizabeth.



Why did God send him then? He did so in order “to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.” He had the role of making all the people of the world know God’s heart.

People of those days didn’t know God’s heart. So, God had the Holy Spirit come into John the Baptist’s heart, and the Spirit let the Israelites know how much He loved them and the whole world, and how angry God would be if they didn’t return to Him. John the Baptist turned “the hearts of the fathers to the children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just.” God said He would make the disobedient into the righteous and bestow compassion on them.

All people disobey God. They can’t obey Him. All mankind is disobedient, and John the Baptist is the person who makes them receive the blessing of becoming the righteous. John the

Baptist is the person who helps us enter the Kingdom of Heaven and live there by making us become God’s people. We must spiritually think of and awaken to John the Baptist whom God sent. Spiritually speaking, it was very fortunate and useful for us that God sent John the Baptist, and we can know how upright that decision of God was. We can realize how beneficial God’s plan and the execution of it are to us.

My fellow believers, God, through John the Baptist and the work Jesus would do, had us serve God without fear and in holiness and righteousness before Him our whole lives. He made us sinless people our entire lives and for eternity, and gave us blessed salvation to serve Him in righteousness without fear. God let people who would believe in Him know of the remission of sins through John the Baptist. We came to know through John the Baptist that God the Father sent Jesus Christ and saved us.



Therefore, we are very grateful that He planned to send John the Baptist prior to Jesus Christ and executed that plan exactly as He planned.

John the Baptist transferred all the sins of mankind including all your sins and mine to Jesus by baptizing Him. We have become sinless people in faith because of him. We can now stand with sure faith through what he did. God made us righteous people as it says in the Bible, *“Through the tender mercy of our God, with which the Dayspring from on high has visited us; to give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.”* He has made us into His people who have no sin. He has made us into very blessed people. He rescued us from death and destruction, and He guided “our feet into the way of peace.” God the Father did these things by sending John the Baptist and Jesus.

We are truly able to give thanks this Christmas

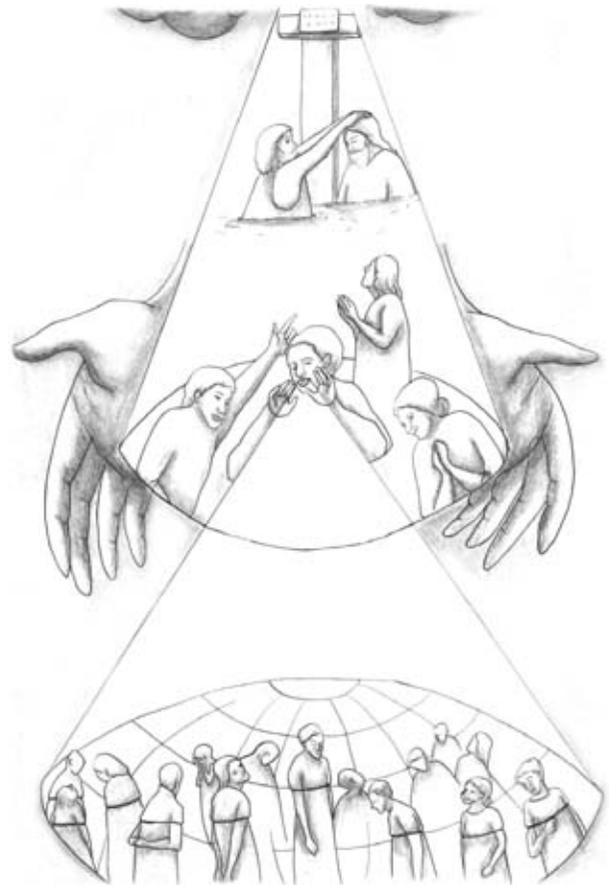
by thinking spiritually and looking at things spiritually. We are able to know that God personally sent John the Baptist in order to transfer all our sins to Jesus, that He by His power had John the Baptist born in this world and had him transfer all our sins to Jesus Christ, and that He sent John the Baptist because He loves us. The more we awaken to that grace, the more truly grateful we are.

My fellow believers, I hope you think really well. We can get blessings and live with our feet and hearts on the path of peace for the rest of our lives by thinking well spiritually. God gave us these kinds of blessings. Therefore, we must not make our thoughts according to the value system of this world; we must make them at least a little spiritual. This Christmas, let’s be grateful that God sent Jesus Christ and John the Baptist to this earth. Hallelujah! ☒



SERMON

6



CONTENTS



Jesus Who Became The Savior of the Lowly

< Luke 1:1-17 >

“Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus, that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed. There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah. His wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name

was Elizabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both well advanced in years. So it was, that while he was serving as priest before God in the order of his division, according to the custom of the priesthood, his lot fell to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. And the whole multitude of the people was praying outside at the hour of incense. Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said to him, ‘Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his



birth. For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, 'to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,' and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.'"

Luke, one of Jesus' disciples, was a person who spread the Word of the Lord and left a record of the Apostles' activities by recording *the Gospel of Luke* and *the Acts of the Apostles*. He recorded Jesus' ministry and teachings in *the Gospel of Luke*. He recorded in detail the works that Jesus' Apostles and disciples had done through the Holy Spirit after Jesus went back to

Heaven because he wanted to leave them to future generations. Thus, Luke was a person who had a great interest in leaving behind in writing the works of the Lord, His Apostles and disciples. He wanted to clearly tell that Jesus is the Savior and all the work that the apostles performed through the Spirit. So, he left behind all the facts by meticulously recording them in writing.

He wrote, "It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus, that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed." It seemed he taught a man named Theophilus (a man in high position because he was addresses as 'most excellent') the gospel and the Word. But he worried greatly that others reading it may be suspicious of the gospel of the Lord that he told Theophilus, and that someone



might later misunderstand it and degenerate it by some religion, doctrine, or denomination.

At any rate, many disciples, including the apostles John and Mark and the tax collector, Matthew, recorded the gospel of Jesus Christ with the purpose of what I just said. Luke also thought that he had to take a close look at, write, and spread this gospel in detail. So he picked up his writing instrument, wrote the account in detail, and sent it to the person named Theophilus. He came to hear about Jesus and His gospel through the disciples in this fashion. Since he wanted to send it to this person who was in a high government position, Luke wanted to speak concretely of the gospel from its beginning and whether it actually happened or it was just a supposition. He wanted to write something that would give Theophilus a correct faith.

So, Luke, the author, first wrote about the birth of John the Baptist by saying this of

Zacharias, “There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah.” While speaking of how John was the messenger of God, he started recording these facts: Elijah prophesied of in the Old Testament is John who was born as the son of Zacharias; that time was the time when Herod was the king of Judea; John was born as the son of Elizabeth and the high priest, Zacharias; God sent an angel to Zacharias who spoke to him and, through the power of that Word, his wife Elizabeth obtained a son who would become a great prophet. These things were not done by the power of man but were done by God. The angel said to Zacharias, *“And your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth”* and *“He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, ‘to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and*



the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.’’ Luke wanted to write these facts and clearly bring light to the fact that Jesus is the true Savior, not only to Theophilus, but also to generations to come.

Luke thus wrote the beginning of his gospel in the style of a narrative and biography. If someone intends to write a biography of someone else, he needs to record the background and history of that time, record that person’s birth along with his youth and adulthood, and record his family history which tells who his parents are. Luke recorded all these parts in the style of a biography.

We can also know in detail that the Savior, Jesus Christ, came and how it was that He came through the biographical account recorded in the Bible. Brothers and sisters, the most joyful news to mankind is probably the fact that the only begotten Son of God was born on this earth as

our Savior to save the people who sat in darkness and were sinners. We were first born once as sinners and have been born again through the Word of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We have thus been remade into the people of God. We were born once as sinners from our mothers’ wombs and afterwards were born again through God as the righteous. God thus performed the work of having us to be born again as the righteous by making us once on the earth and afterwards making us once through His Word.

The Lord who is God came to this earth once in order to accomplish that work. If there were one thing that is the biggest news on this earth, it would be the fact that Jesus who is God came to this world to save all humanity. There are quite a lot of incidents that occur in this world and many things that happen in our lives. But even so, the biggest news to us is that Jesus Christ came to this earth to save us. This is also the biggest joy



to us. Jesus Christ took a body and came to this earth once to save you and me and all the people of this world. This is really the biggest news; something we must remember and not forget and something we must ponder over again.

So, how did Jesus Christ come to this earth? Who did He come to? I, like Luke would also like to give an account of those things today. I would like to give thanks before the Lord who saved us from sin and made us into the people of God. God sent John the Baptist to this earth before Jesus Christ came. He sent John the Baptist and then sent His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ through Mary. Jesus Christ who is God was born by borrowing the body of the Virgin Mary to save us. The Spirit prophesied in advance through the Virgin Mary's lips that Jesus Christ would come to this earth by borrowing her body, and He told her what Jesus would do after coming to the earth in the future.

Let's read Luke 1, verses 49 and 50. *“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.”* The Lord of Salvation came to this world. He is Jesus Christ. It says, *“And His mercy is on those who fear Him from generation to generation.”* Brothers and sisters, God has mercy on those who fear and acknowledge Him, and He gives salvation to them from generation to generation. God clothes with salvation those who fear Him. Jesus the Savior came to this world and said He would save all those who feared God.

Jesus, who is the Savior of all humankind, came to this earth and “has shown strength with His arm and has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.” Brothers and sisters, this means that Jesus the Savior, came to this world, showed His strength, scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts, and put down



the mighty from their thrones. He exalted the lowly, filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. Brothers and sisters, this means that the Savior came to this world, drives away those in the world who are proud in their hearts, those who trust in the power of the world, and those who trust in money and do not fear God, and He judges them all. The Person who came to this world to become its Savior and save it is our Lord Jesus.

Our Lord came to this earth and does not tolerate all those in the world who are proud and do not fear God. God judges all of these kinds of people by putting them down. In answer to what He who became the Savior of the world did after He came, our Lord never just passes over those who are proud because they are rich or who are adamant that they will never become an orphan or widow. God judges and curses people who boast of themselves without God, those who do

not acknowledge God even though they are His creations, and those who say they're fine without God because they are rich in materials and mundane things.

Then, for whom did Jesus Christ come to this world? He came to save those who are really poor and lowly and those whose hearts are humble. That means that the Lord who came to save this world came to save the lowly people of the world. He came to save the poor, those who feared God, and the humble. The Lord regards with pity those who regard others with pity, and He always judges those who are proud and those who are evil. Jesus, who is the Savior who saved this world, regards with compassion those who should be regarded thus, regards with pity those who should be regarded with pity, and judges those who need to be judged. He is Jesus Christ who came to save the world.



Brothers and sisters, do you believe that the Savior who came to the world is Jesus Christ? It is truly amazing grace that He came to this earth. The Lord did not come to save one or two people; He came to save this world. The Lord who came to save this world is the God of power. He did not come to just save you and me; He came to save all the people of this world. Jesus Christ is the Person who came to save mankind that had fallen into the sins of Satan and were struggling there.

He came to save all the people of the world like that, but there are people who do not believe in Him. There are people who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ. There are people who are that proud. But the Person who will judge these kinds of people is also Jesus. He is God. Jesus Christ is our Savior who made us the people of God by letting us be born again and who saved us personally. He came to this earth

and did all these things Himself. Brothers and sisters, our Lord came to the hearts of people who are poor and lowly and people who are humble and know how to fear God, and He became their Savior.

Jesus Christ was born in a small village called Bethlehem when Herod was the king of Judea and Augustus Caesar was the emperor of Rome. He was born in a shabby manger where animals dwelt because there was no room at the time in the inn. The Savior who came to save this world was born in the lowliest place; a manger where animals were fed and slept. However, many people of that time, just like people today, were not pleased with Jesus Christ. Those who were proud were especially not pleased with Him and did not accept Him as their Savior. They judged by outward appearances Jesus Christ who sincerely came to save their souls from sin, and they did not receive Him.



Brothers and sisters, how did Jesus Christ deal with people who were proud like this? Yes, He drove them away. Jesus Christ comes to the hearts of the lowly and becomes their Savior. The Lord comes to people who are dirty with sin, have nothing to boast of, and sincerely wait for the Savior who will consider their lowliness. He came to save people in this world who are in bondage, mistreated, and have no hope. Jesus Christ never comes to those who are rich in material things or can live without God because they are great as to things of the world. Even if the Lord has come to them, they do not receive Him.

Luke 2 says that Jesus was born in a stable because there was no room in the inn. Just as He was not born in a glittery and magnificent place, Jesus Christ can never enter the hearts of people who, in His eyes, are great and wealthy in spirit. He cannot become their Savior. Jesus came as

the Savior of all people in the world, but they do not accept Him as their Savior, and they reject Him. So, Jesus Christ became the Savior of people who are especially lowly in this world. He became the Savior of the poor and of people who long for God and ask for His help. Everyone who lives in this world, no matter who they are, come to meet Jesus Christ who is God without fail if they acknowledge Him, long for Him, and seek Him. Jesus Christ is the Person who saves from sin those who follow and believe in Him.

Brothers and sisters, Jesus Christ who is our Savior came to this earth and saved lowly people. Therefore, we must give thanks and praise as we admit that we were born as lowly people, have nothing good, and have nothing of which to be proud. Likewise, if we were proud, as if we had become someone who was great, even though we were lowly, we may reject Jesus Christ if He came to us. But you and I give thanks to God that



the Lord came to you and me, was born in our hearts, and made us His people because we are really lowly people in this world, and because we know that fact. Is that true or not? It surely is.

Brothers and sisters, we must also give thanks for the fact that we were not born into homes of people who have seized power on this earth. Those kinds of people are all lowly in the eyes of God. But if they have just a little earthly power or are rich, they become proud and nothing fazes them. Brothers and sisters, it is easy for the son of the president to reject Jesus Christ by ultimately becoming proud because the honor of being the son of the president, and the power measured by the world is attached to him. There are many people that reject Jesus by ludicrously claiming to be descendants of the champions of independence, sons of generals, and grandchildren of generals. On the contrary we must give thanks that we do not have those kinds of famous people in our

families. Are there many famous people in your families? Brothers and sisters, famous people's families continuously reference their fame until they go to hell. So, we must give thanks that there is no one like that among our close relatives. Mankind becomes very proud by even the smallest things. Jesus came to this world to save it, but all people do not receive Him.

But the lowly people among them did. People who realized that they were really lowly received the Lord. People poor in spirit received Jesus Christ. But, brothers and sisters, who is it talking of here when it speaks of proud people? It says the rich, but which ones? People who are satisfied even without God are the proud and the rich. These people are abandoned. Brothers and sisters, could we be satisfied without God, no matter how much we had? Brothers and sisters, we are not rich. We are nothing if we don't have God. When we think about it, we are nothing. It



seems that life is wonderful and something has become important, but a life without God is really nothing. A life that has not received the remission of sins is something that really has absolutely no value.

Brothers and sisters, we must give thanks for the Lord saving us who are really nothing in this world. There is no need to be jealous of the things seen in the world or to think they are important. No matter how much of the things of the world one has, they are ultimately nothing. The honor of the world is nothing; the wealth of the world is nothing; the proud people who seem to have the whole world are nothing, and the power of the world is nothing.

Brothers and sisters, people are puffed up at being elected once as just a member of a provincial assembly. The son of a provincial assemblyman is likewise puffed up. It is even easy to become proud of the trivial power of

merely becoming the son of a chief of a village office, the head of the subdivision of a city's district, or the son of a neighborhood association. When Jesus, the Savior of this world, comes to their hearts and knocks, they reject Him, saying, "I'm OK. Why did you come? Please don't come in." They do not accept Him but fall into pride and reject Him, even though they only have a little honor and power. Brothers and sisters, they reject Jesus even by thinking they are only a little rich. If they have a lot of possessions and have high status, their hearts become proud and they reject Jesus. Worse yet, people who believe in Jesus and those who have been born again also become proud if they have a few possessions, and they lose all heart when even just a little is gone. We see many instances of people being tossed back and forth on the waves of material possessions.



Anyway, mankind is that kind of existence. But the Lord is the Person who came as all those people's Savior. Our Lord came to save this whole world that has a lot of sins. Jesus Christ came to save all the people of this world, but most people don't receive Him. I can't explain how thankful I am when I think of the fact that our Lord came to save us. It is truly the grace of God for us to give thanks for this. If the Savior had not come, how could you and I have been able to receive salvation? How can you put on airs? Brothers and sisters, how could we be full of joy and shout like this? How could we laugh? If not for Him, how could eternal life be guaranteed to us? Brothers and sisters, how could we be liberated from sin? We were able to obtain liberation from sin because Jesus Christ came to this earth. Since Jesus who is the Savior came, eliminated our sins, and saved us from them, the wiles of Satan and damnation, we can laugh, can

be truly thankful, and can live peacefully. Since the Savior came to this world, we have now become the people of God. I hope that you all give thanks before God.

We must truly give thanks. You and I are no different than the people of the world and are just lowly. Jesus Christ came to us who are like this and saved us. Brothers and sisters, what is there for us to be proud of besides Jesus Christ? Do we have anything we are great at or anything to be noble for? Brothers and sisters, do we have any wonderful person, goodness, or refinement other than Jesus Christ? No, we don't. Only Jesus Christ who came to this world as the Savior is a Person perfectly commendable, good, and refined. Brothers and sisters, if we truly know Jesus Christ, we can quickly know that we are nothing. If He had not come to this world as the Savior, this world would be hell. If the Savior had not come to you and me, there would



probably be a lot of people who would have died because they could not endure. Only Jesus Christ who came to this world is a truly commendable Person, a refined Person, and the Person who is truly the God of love. Mankind is really lowly. If you think about it, we are all lowly and poor. Who is there among us who is truly rich? Who is there that is great? There is no one. Brothers and sisters, Jesus is the Savior of us who are like this. We must think for a moment if there is truly anything we have that is great before the Lord, abandon our pride, and give thanks to Him.

Brothers and sisters, while Mary was praising the Lord, she called herself a lowly maidservant. Aren't you and I this kind of lowly person? Brothers and sisters, Jesus came to this world as the Savior and put down the rich and those who had power. He saved the poor and lowly. Aren't you and I lowly and poor? Aren't we truly poor in body and spirit in the world? We cannot forget

the fact that our Lord saved people who are lowly like this. We have not received salvation for being great. The Lord regarded us with pity and saved us. He saved us from our lowliness, exalted us, and sat us in seats of glory because we are so lowly. Since God is a glorious Person and we are, on the contrary, really lowly, He did that to us through love. If we were great people in this world, if you and I were people who were bold before others and had great things, we would not have accepted the Lord even if He came to our hearts. Since you and I were existences that were nothing, we could humbly receive the Lord because of the fact that He saved us. We must praise the Lord who came to this world as the Savior. Is that right or not? Do not put on airs.

We are existences that are nothing. Dear fellow believers! Don't try to have a lot of power in the world. I am afraid you will be driven out of the



presence of the Lord. Power itself doesn't matter to you. People can truly be humble who know God even though they have power. But people who are not like that are proud. Those kinds of people are driven out by the Lord.

We must give thanks in sincere humility to the Lord who saved us. We must give praise to the Lord who came to this world as our Savior. I once more give thanks and praise to Jesus Christ who came to this world as the Lord and Savior.



SERMON

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John the Baptist

< Luke 1:1-16 >

“Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus, that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed. There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah. His wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. And they were both righteous

before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both well advanced in years. So it was, that while he was serving as priest before God in the order of his division, according to the custom of the priesthood, his lot fell to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. And the whole multitude of the people was praying outside at the hour of incense. Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said to him, ‘Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. For he will be great in the sight of the



Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God.”

The Genealogy of John the Baptist

Let's read John 1:5-7. *“There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah. His wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both well advanced in years.”*

The tetrarch of the region of Judea of Israel at

that time was King Herod. First, let's take a close look at Israel's historical background at that time. Israel had been defeated in a war with Roman Empire that was the biggest power in the known world at that time. Therefore, Israel became a tributary to Rome. Even though there were tetrarchs in Israel, they had no actual power; the Roman governor had real power, and the Israelites had to pay taxes to Rome. That was the time when Augustus was Caesar, the Emperor of Rome. The Roman Emperor sent Pilate as the governor of Judea.

OK, I will now talk about John the Baptist. Today's Scripture passage says, *“There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah. His wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth” (Luke 1:5)*. Luke, the disciple of Jesus who recorded the Gospel of Luke, intended to describe the historical



background of the nation of Israel and about John the Baptist's parents first, and then about what kind of man John the Baptist was before God, what he had done for us, and who he was. He intended to talk about how important John the Baptist's ministry was.

It says that Zacharias, John the Baptist's father, was a priest "*of the division of Abijah*" (Luke 1:5). A priest of God in Israel was qualified only if he had been born into the family of Aaron. God had the descendants of Aaron, who were of the tribe of Levi from among Jacob's 12 sons, to have the qualifications of priesthood. God chose Aaron, Moses' elder brother, and gave him the duties of High Priest. He gave Moses the duties of His prophet. That is how Aaron's descendants became the family of priests.

So what kind of family was the tribe of Judah? It was the family of kings, generation after generation. Because the tribe of Judah was the

family of kings, God the Father had Jesus Christ born into that tribe.

Luke 1 that we read today says that John the Baptist was born as the son of Zacharias. "*There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah. His wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth*" (Luke 1:5). Zacharias was born to the family of "Abijah" that was able to officiate in the priesthood as the descendants of Aaron. Therefore, John the Baptist, who was the son of Zacharias, could inherit those duties. In other words, the descendants of Aaron the High Priests could enter God's sanctuary everyday to take care of the instruments such as the golden lampstand, the incense altar, and the table of the shewbread. Each priest performed his duties from 30 years old to 50 if he had no spiritual or physical problems.



Let's take a look at 1 Chronicles 24:1-4. *“Now these are the divisions of the sons of Aaron. The sons of Aaron were Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. And Nadab and Abihu died before their father, and had no children; therefore Eleazar and Ithamar ministered as priests. Then David with Zadok of the sons of Eleazar, and Ahimelech of the sons of Ithamar, divided them according to the schedule of their service. There were more leaders found of the sons of Eleazar than of the sons of Ithamar, and thus they were divided. Among the sons of Eleazar were sixteen heads of their fathers' houses, and eight heads of their fathers' houses among the sons of Ithamar.”*

Aaron had four sons: Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. Nadab and Abihu died because they offered profane fire before the Lord (Leviticus 10:1), and Eleazar and Ithamar ministered as priests in the presence of Aaron their father. However, as time passed by, the descendants of

Aaron kept on increasing. So King David had to determine the order of priests who would perform the priesthood. He divided all the descendants of Aaron into 24 divisions according to their branches; Eleazar had 16 sons while Ithamar had 8 sons. King David made 24 divisions of priests according to the families of 24 grandsons of Aaron the High Priest.

John the Baptist Who Was Born in the House of Aaron

Priests in the Old Testament era had to offer the regular burnt offerings everyday and take care of all the instruments of the sanctuary. So, Zacharias entered the sanctuary to perform his duties. Then, an angel appeared to him all of a sudden. The angel said to him, *“Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your*



wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John” (Luke 1:13). What is this talking about? Zacharias still had no children at that time. He and his wife had no children yet even though they were both very old.

Among the Israelites, it was a shame to a family if the generation ended with no children. So, Zacharias desired to have a son of his own. It seems that the priest Zacharias prayed to God because he had a lot of time there. The angel of God appeared to Zacharias at that very moment.

My fellow believers, what would people’s reactions be if an angel suddenly appeared in a very dark place? Most people would have been very startled. There was no one in the sanctuary and Zacharias was performing the duties of a priest there. But something appeared all of a sudden and it wasn’t a person; it was an angel. Then, the angel spoke to him, *“Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your*

wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb. And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God” (Luke 1:13-16). This was telling of the birth of John the Baptist.

As such, John the Baptist had to be born into the family of Zacharias, and God wanted to use Zacharias’ son to fulfill His Providence. Zacharias was a person who offered sacrifices according to the Law of God and who kept God’s commandments and statutes. God had John the Baptist born on this earth as the son of Zacharias in order to make him serve God’s righteousness. Now, it was possible for John the Baptist to baptize Jesus because he was a descendant of



Aaron. All these were the will of God the Father.

God established in the Old Testament the sacrificial system that remitted all people's sins; it was fulfilled through the sacrificial system. God made it so that the Israelites could be saved by the sacrificial system that He established. And God planned in the New Testament era to save all mankind from their sins according to the Law of salvation that He had established on Mount Sinai. So, before the birth of Jesus Christ, He sent an angel to Zacharias, the descendant of Aaron, and told him that He would give him a son.

God had John the Baptist who would become the representative of mankind born through the priest Zacharias and, on the other hand, He had Jesus conceived in Mary's womb six months later. He made Jesus Christ perform the duties of High Priest when He was 30 years old. Therefore, when Jesus was 30, He had the qualifications of

the High Priest of Heaven. He was ready to be baptized by John the Baptist. On the other hand, John the Baptist also became 30 years old and, as the representative of this earth, was able to baptize Jesus, the High Priest of Heaven. God permitted it to happen.

John the Baptist laid his hands on Jesus' head, and Jesus was baptized with the baptism that received the transference of all the sins of mankind at once. God the Father completely fulfilled the work of cleansing the sins of all humanity by having His Son receive the transference of those sins by being baptized. So, God had Jesus baptized by John the Baptist. This was the providence of God that was planned in order to fulfill His righteousness. The Scripture writers of the Four Gospels always recorded the ministries of John the Baptist in the introduction before Jesus' ministry because it was so important. That was because John the Baptist had



to transfer mankind's sins to Jesus by baptizing Him. God the Father prepared the representative of mankind who would transfer the sins of the world to His Son, Jesus Christ.

God clothed the Israelites in the grace of salvation in the Old Testament by having them receive the cleansing of their sins by the descendants of the High Priest Aaron transferring those sins to the sacrificial offerings. The priests of the people of Israel in the Old Testament had to ceaselessly transfer the sins of each person to the sacrificial offerings and sacrifice them. But it sufficed in the New Testament era in the way of salvation appointed by God for Jesus to be baptized by John the Baptist once, die once on the Cross, and be resurrected once.

People could receive the remission of sins in the New Testament era by faith in the ministry of Jesus Christ that was the same as the offering of atonement for sins in the Old Testament era.

Only the method and effect of salvation was different from that of the Old Testament. Thus, there had to be the role of John the Baptist that connected the Old Testament era with the New Testament era. When Jesus came to this earth, He had to be baptized by John the Baptist who was the representative of mankind. Not everyone could perform that duty; only someone like John the Baptist who was sent by God as a descendant of Aaron could do the duty. Only Jesus' body could be the sacrificial offering for all our sins. Therefore, the first thing to think of is that there had to be a representative of mankind among the descendants of Aaron who was the first High Priest of this earth. So, God the Father sent and prepared John the Baptist as a descendant of Aaron and as the representative of mankind before Jesus.

The angel said, *"Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John"*



(*Luke 1:13*). This gospel of the water and the Spirit started from the time the angel appeared to the priest Zacharias and promised the birth of John the Baptist. John the Baptist became a great one in the sight of the Lord and became the representative of mankind. He was greater than Moses and greater than the prophet Isaiah.

Let's continue with the next passage: *“For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God”* (*Luke 1:15-16*). John the Baptist here is the same as Nazarites who were given to God in the Old Testament era. A Nazarite in the Old Testament was a person who had already been dedicated to God. It says that they didn't drink strong drinks.

John the Baptist was actually the person who would personally transfer all our sins to Jesus

Christ by baptizing Him. He was a man of God sent to this earth by God. What does it say about him in the Bible? It says, *“He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb”* (*Luke 1:15*). We receive the Holy Spirit only after receiving the remission of our sins, but God said that John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother's womb.

John the Baptist who baptized Jesus was later conceived in Elizabeth who was the wife of the priest Zacharias. Afterwards, Mary went to see Elizabeth. But Jesus was conceived in the Virgin Mary's womb then. Jesus and John the Baptist met while they were in their mothers' wombs. John the Baptist leapt in his mother's womb at that time.

We can't just think of John the Baptist as one of the prophets of the Old Testament. He was the representative of mankind who would baptize Jesus in order for God the Father to save



mankind. He was prepared and used because he was indispensable to fulfill God's righteousness. God's will was fulfilled through the process with which John the Baptist transferred mankind's sins at once to Jesus by baptizing Him. In other words, Jesus received the transference of all the sins of mankind by being baptized by John the Baptist. So, people who ignore the ministry of John the Baptist thus become unable to receive salvation from all their sins.

I have met a lot of Christians who say they truly believe in Jesus as their Savior. But most of them totally ignore the ministry of John the Baptist. They trample on the ministry of John the Baptist who baptized Jesus. They totally devalue the ministry of John the Baptist in that fashion. They say, "What's so important about the role of John the Baptist?" That's why they haven't received the remission of sins.

But John the Baptist Was Treated with Importance in the Four Gospels

However, the words of those Christians aren't of the Word of God; they are merely the words of man. What does the Word of God say about the ministry of John the Baptist? If we read the Four Gospels, they all begin with descriptions about John the Baptist. For example, the Gospel of Mark starts with the passage that John the Baptist prepared the way of the Lord, and then describes how he baptized Jesus Christ according to the will of God the Father. At the beginning of the Four Gospels, John the Baptist always appeared prior to Jesus, crying, "Repent, you brood of vipers," and he cried out true repentance to bring people back before God. It is recorded that he did the work of fulfilling God's righteousness by baptizing Jesus. So, we can't try to know the righteousness of Jesus while



ignoring the work of John the Baptist.

In regards to the work of John the Baptist, Jesus personally said that he was specially sent to this earth in order for God to save mankind from all their sins. John the Baptist was the person who, as mankind's representative, transferred the sins of the world to the Savior Jesus by baptizing Him. If John the Baptist had not been born on this earth and if it had not been for his role of baptizing Jesus, we would still have our sins. That's because it wouldn't have worked for Jesus to just hang on the Cross and die without the ministry of John the Baptist. God needed the ministry of John the Baptist in order to accomplish man's salvation. So, we must know that the gospel of the water and the Spirit given by the Lord is God's plan of salvation.

God has spoken to us of such salvation starting long ago through the sacrificial system of the Tabernacle. People who broke the Law had to

take a sacrificial lamb or goat before God, and they transferred their sins to the sacrificial offering by laying their hands on it. Then they could receive the remission of sins by killing the animal, cutting it into pieces, and offering it to God. This is the lawful system established by God in order to save us from the sins of the world.

For atonement of the yearly sins of all Israelites, God had given them a sacrificial system for the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16). On the tenth day of the seventh month every year, the High Priest had to lay both his hands on the head of a scapegoat to transfer the yearly sins of all the Israelites. Then the scapegoat was sent away into the wilderness by the hand of a suitable man (Leviticus 16:20-22). God thus appointed the law of salvation; in order to properly blot out all the Israelites' sins according to that system, the High Priest had to offer the



offering of atonement.

Likewise, there had to be a High Priest in the New Testament era, too. So, God the Father sent John the Baptist to this earth six months before He sent His Son.

We are now carefully considering the root of Jesus' gospel of the water and the Spirit. We are looking at the advent of John the Baptist as God's servant and the ministry that he did. The Lord said, "*Among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist*" (Matthew 11:11). John the Baptist was the representative of mankind as is written in the Bible.

Matthew 11:12 states the following; I can't memorize Bible verses very well, but I have memorized this one perfectly: "*And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence*" (Matthew 11:12). The gospel was initiated from the advent of John the

Baptist who was a descendant of Aaron and from the advent of Jesus. It started when John the Baptist baptized Jesus as it is written, "*And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence*" (Matthew 11:12). All the sins of all mankind went over to Jesus by John the Baptist transferring them to Him all at once by baptizing Him. We come to receive the remission of sins by faith in the fact that all your sins, my sins, and all the sins of all people in the world went over to Jesus all at once when He was baptized by John the Baptist. Whoever believes in this gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the remission of sins and can enter the Kingdom of Heaven by faith in God's righteousness.

So, the Bible says, "*And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force*" (Matthew 11:12). In other words, the affair of



invading the Kingdom of Heaven and occupying it by faith has occurred as a blessing to those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit from the day when John the Baptist baptized Jesus in the Jordan River. Therefore, we must know how accurately the knowledge of the Truth was taught from its beginning to Theophilus by Luke, one of Jesus' disciples.

Luke preached to Theophilus that the gospel was initiated from John the Baptist. He also told Theophilus that Jesus received the transference of all mankind's sins through John the Baptist. Therefore, Luke also told Theophilus that Jesus also received the transference of all his sins that he had committed over his whole life through the baptism He received from John the Baptist. Today, we also must know and believe in this gospel of the water and the Spirit to be able to surely abide in Jesus.

We must accurately know who John the

Baptist was. There are lots of passages in the Bible that speak of John the Baptist. Let's look up some of them.

In Malachi 4:5-6, it says, *“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.”* Through the passage above in Malachi, God said, “I will send My servant prior to My Son. I will send you my servant Elijah who will transfer all the sins of mankind to Jesus and who will lead all the people to Me, and My heart to them.” Elijah spoken of here is John the Baptist who appeared at the beginning of the New Testament. He is John the Baptist who transferred all the sins of mankind to Jesus by baptizing Him.

Let's read the Word in Luke 1:17. “He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of



Elijah, ‘to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,’ and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.’” This means that John the Baptist comes to us by the spirit and power of Elijah. Elijah was the servant of God who showed who the true God was by fighting all alone against 850 priests of Baal and Asherah. And he defeated and killed all 850 of those idol-worshipping priests. He thus brought all the Israelites back to the Lord God. Elijah thus witnessed before the Israelites that the Lord God was the only true God. He was God’s servant of power who brought them all back to the Lord God.

So, “Elijah” is synonymous with “servant of power.” The Bible says John the Baptist would “*go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah*” (Luke 1:17). We must know how much Elijah loved the Israelites and how much he wanted to lead them back to God. Elijah had so

much power that it didn’t rain for three years because of his prayer. The sins of this world went over to Jesus at once because of Elijah who was to come.

The Lord said that John the Baptist was the Elijah of this generation. Therefore, John the Baptist performed the same ministry as Elijah. He was a servant of God with the duty and power to transfer all the sins of mankind to Jesus. Zacharias and Elizabeth both rejoiced when John the Baptist was born. But it wasn’t just his parents. The Bible says that a lot of people rejoiced at his birth. My fellow believers, I am also actually very happy at his birth and I rejoice in his work. What would have happened to us who believe in Jesus if John the Baptist had not come to this earth? Things would be very awful if that were the case.

I give thanks that God the Father sent His servant John the Baptist to this earth through



Zacharias and his wife as the initiation of this gospel. My fellow believers, we must now be thankful that John the Baptist baptized Jesus. We must go before God the Father in faith and give thanks for that. We must know and be thankful that God sent John the Baptist and that John the Baptist baptized Jesus as the beginning of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. That is upright faith. It is faith that truly knows and believes in the really concrete Truth.

We also give thanks that God sent John the Baptist first. God the Father, through John the Baptist, made many people, including you and me, return to Christ by faith and allowed us to receive true salvation. We give thanks to God the Father who gave us this grace.

We could actually meet Jesus who is the Savior and get faith in God's righteousness by the witness of John the Baptist. Through the ministry of John the Baptist, we found out and

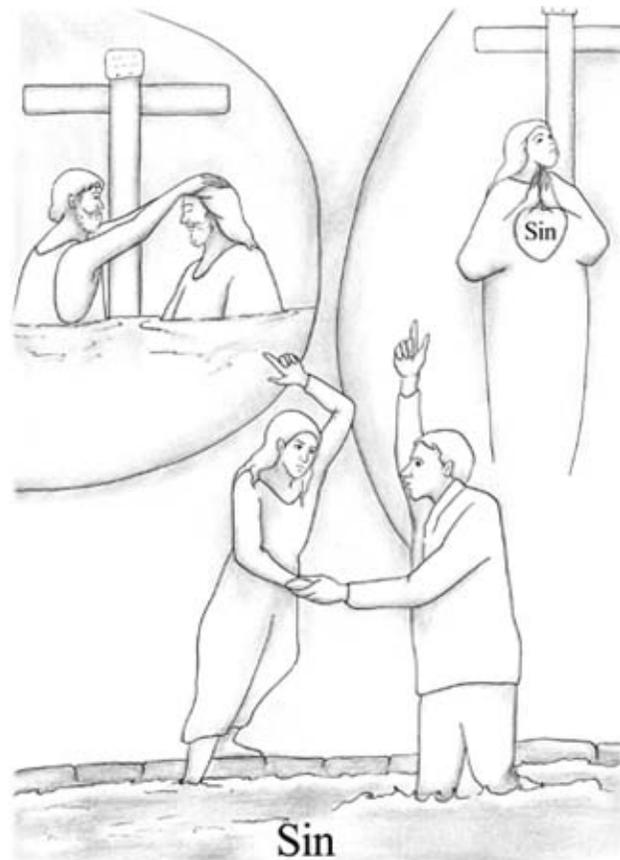
came to believe that Jesus is our true Savior. We absolutely need to believe in the ministry of John the Baptist and that of Jesus, and remember how important they were in the beginning and working of this gospel of the water and the Spirit, and in us being saved and receiving salvation from God. We must give thanks before God once again and forever by faith. We must be thankful to God the Father who sent us John the Baptist and we must be saved by faith today.

The ministry of John the Baptist is absolutely necessary in us being saved from all our sins by believing in Jesus Christ. We aren't just thankful to John the Baptist today. We eventually are thankful before God who sent him. So, I hope you don't misunderstand. I hope that you all receive the remission of sins and eternal life by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.



SERMON

8



CONTENTS



God Planned Our Salvation in Advance

< Luke 1:24-38 >

“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 maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word.’ And the angel departed from her.”

Do You Know God’s Plan and Providence?

In today’s Scripture passage, Elizabeth conceived John the Baptist and was hiding for five months. We know that the Virgin Mary also conceived Jesus when six months had passed since John’s conception. This fact holds a very important meaning. People are born after being in their mothers’ wombs for ten months; Jesus was conceived exactly six months after John the Baptist and born into this world accordingly. The angel Gabriel appeared to and spoke to Zacharias, John the Baptist’s father, when he performed his duty of priesthood in the sanctuary. Six months

later, he appeared to the Virgin Mary who was betrothed to Joseph, a descendant of David. This shows that God’s preparations were very detailed.

It says in the Old Testament that Jesus Christ would come to this earth as a descendant of David. Israel considers King David as the greatest king. There is no other king of Israel as famous as King David. He facilitated the unification of all the tribes of the nation of Israel, and there was no other king who feared God as much as King David. There was no other king besides him who was as close to God, pleased Him, and walked with Him. It was also prophesied of and continually said in the Old Testament that Jesus, the Son of God, would be born into this family of Judah.

The angel Gabriel appeared and spoke to Mary who was betrothed to Joseph, a descendant of David. He said, “*Rejoice, highly favored one*” (*Luke 1:28*). Why was Mary, who was highly



favored of God, blessed? That is because Jesus Christ who was to come to this earth in order to save us from the sins of the world was born through Mary's body. So Mary was a blessed person among many people. The angel Gabriel continued to speak to her. It is written, *“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).

At that time, Mary was engaged to a young

man named Joseph. The angel Gabriel appeared to her and said, *“Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you. You will bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS”* (Luke 1:28, 31). The birth of John the Baptist was also exactly as God had planned. The angel Gabriel appeared to Zacharias and said, *“Your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John”* (Luke 1:13). God prepared these two Persons in order to save you and me from all our sins.

Jesus Who Was Prepared by God

It is written, *“He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest”* (Luke 1:32). Jesus is the only begotten Son of God the Father. He is our God. He is the King of kings. That God has given Him the throne of David means that Jesus



is the King of kings. *“And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end”* (Luke 1:33). Jesus Christ is the King of the descendants of Jacob. Jesus Christ will reign forever and there will be no end to His royal power and all His glory. They will never end.

There are people who rely on the Lord’s righteousness because they have no righteousness of the flesh. They receive the remission of their sins by having knowledge of and faith in the ministries of John the Baptist and Jesus Christ. The Lord has saved us from the sins of the world because He had pity on us who could not help but go to hell. Jesus eternally reigns over the people who believe in Him and He protects and blesses them. Jesus came to this earth to perform this role.

Today’s Scripture passage says, *“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’” (Luke 1:34-35). The angel was saying that the Spirit would come upon her, and Jesus would be conceived by the power of God. Therefore, He who would be born through her would be called Jesus, the Son of God; the Son of God actually put on the flesh of man and was born on this earth through Mary. So Mary bore Jesus Christ who saved us from the sins of the world; indeed, she was used for this precious work. The angel was speaking from that context.

At that time, the angel Gabriel gave a more detailed explanation for Mary to more easily understand because she doubted and was perplexed. *“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” (Luke 1:36-37).

All these things came about according to the Words of prophecy in the Old Testament. Gabriel brought God’s will, and delivered it and this Word of God was fulfilled just as it says. Mary said, *“How can this be, since I do not know a man?” (Luke 1:34)* Then, the angel Gabriel said, “He that will be born of you is holy and will be called the Son of God. Elizabeth also was called barren but she conceived a son in her old age some time ago. For with God nothing will be impossible.” Then, Mary understood the will of God. She accepted it, saying, “I have known no man, but I believe if God says His holy Son who will be called the Savior will be born through me, I believe it will happen according to what He says.” Eventually, Mary obeyed by faith saying, *“Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to*

me according to your word” (Luke 1:38). And the angel departed from her.”

We give thanks that God the Father first prepared John the Baptist and then prepared Mary. Jesus Christ put on the flesh of man and came to this world as the Savior through Mary. God the Father thus provided for your salvation and mine. Mary was highly favored before God and used by Him. You and I also receive the remission of sins by faith in the Word of God’s righteousness, and then the Holy Spirit came upon you and me as He did to Mary. Just as Jesus was conceived in Mary’s womb, the Spirit of the Son of God has come into the hearts of you and me who now believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. You and I who now believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit have also become people who have been specially favored of God like Mary.

Mary said she was *“the maidservant of the*



Lord” (Luke 1:38). Everyone is lowly before the Lord, including Mary. She said she was “*the maidservant of the Lord” (Luke 1:38).* Are you and I lowly before God or aren’t we? We are lowly. Human beings were originally created in the image of God’s likeness and were very precious; but we became lowly people by always being weak and committing transgressions because we were born as descendants of fallen Adam and Eve. Therefore, the Lord made us glorious by making us into the children of God by saving you and me who are lowly from the sins of the world. He came to this earth to become our Savior so that He could make us happy. God the Father prepared John the Baptist and Jesus Christ in order to save you and me from the sins of the world. This is the love of God. Christmas is around the corner. So we must know what things God made preparations for in order to save you and me, and we must give

thanks for that. We shouldn’t just do lip service, singing, “Joy to the world, the Lord is come, let earth receive her King,” and be thankful with no sincerity.

God Is the God of Justice and Love

God is a Person who speaks His Covenant and fulfills what He says. In the Old Testament, He established the sacrificial system where the High Priest would definitely transfer sins to sacrificial offerings through the laying on of hands, and had the High Priest transfer all the sins committed by the people over a year on the Day of Atonement. Jesus also received the transference of all the sins of mankind by being baptized by John the Baptist who was the representative of mankind.

The angel said, “*For with God nothing will be impossible” (Luke 1:37).* The Lord is an honest



and faithful Person. The Lord is so “faithful and just” (1 John 1:9) that He doesn’t lie and do false acts. The Lord fulfills whatever He promises to us.

God the Father said that He would send His only begotten Son to this earth. If you read Isaiah 53, God’s servant Isaiah said, *“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”* (Isaiah 53:2). There was no one who loved Jesus Christ in a physical sense. But in a spiritual sense, *“Surely He has borne our grief and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted”* (Isaiah 53:4). He suffered from our sins and grief.

We must know that God had to prepare John the Baptist and His only begotten Son in order to save all sinners on this earth from the sins of the world. Just as Jesus Christ was able to be conceived in Mary’s womb by her faith in the

Word of God that was delivered by the angel Gabriel and thus was able to be used in God’s precious work, you and I, by faith now in Jesus Christ’s righteousness and the Word of God, were able to be saved from all our sins, become the children of God, and receive the Holy Spirit as a gift.

We have received the Holy Spirit as a gift by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The Holy Spirit does not come by tumultuous prayers, chanting gibberish, and acting crazed and mad like the Pentecostal ministers do today. 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). We can receive the Spirit of God when we receive the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. God the Father first prepared John the Baptist and then sent Jesus Christ afterwards



and had Him to be baptized in order to save you and me from the sins of the world.

Therefore, we must know that Jesus was born through Mary and was baptized by John the Baptist. When Jesus was 30, He received the transference of all the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John the Baptist. He carried all the sins of this world, went to the Cross, was nailed to death saying, *“It is finished”* (John 19:30), came back to life, and ascended to Heaven. Just before His death, Jesus said, *“It is finished”* (John 19:30); you and I must apply to ourselves and believe in these words that He saved us perfectly from the sins of the world.

My fellow believers, God the Father is our God. Jesus is also our God and the Holy Spirit is also our God. They are all the same God to us. But it is hard for people who still don’t believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit to

accurately know this fact. They might know it, but it’s hard for them to believe it.

“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). The God in the passage, “For God so loved the world,” refers to God the Father. And ‘the world’ refers to you and me and all mankind. The above verse is speaking of the infinite love of God that saved us who believe in God the Father. He has loved us by preparing His Son, sending Him to this earth, sending John the Baptist to this earth, making him transfer all sins to Jesus, and having Jesus receive that transference of sins, die, and be resurrected from the dead. God’s unconditional love means the love by which He regarded us with pity and saved us. God has saved us from the sins of the world by that kind of love.

My fellow believers! You must know how



much God already spoke of our salvation through His servants and planned it before Jesus was born. Jesus wasn't the One who was born all of a sudden one day. The Bible said He would die for our sins but be resurrected; and the Bible said He was our Savior. God is not an irresponsible Person like that. Starting several thousand years ago, He promised through His servants in advance that He would save all mankind from the sins of the world and fulfilled that promise through John the Baptist and Jesus Christ. He is the God of the Truth. Do you understand?

God the Father prepared His only begotten Son and John the Baptist in order to save you and me from the sins of the world. The Lord also prepared Mary and Elizabeth. The Lord planned for several thousand years in order to save us from sin.

In John 14, our Lord Jesus said, "You believe in God, believe also in Me. I go to prepare a

place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself." Our Lord went to prepare a place for us in the future. Jesus went to prepare the Kingdom for His people because He is God.

Our Lord is honest and faithful as it is written, *"God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do?"*

Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?" (Numbers 23:19). He is very honest and faithful. He is a Person who never lies. He makes promises and fulfills them one after another. Therefore, we shouldn't believe in God like one believes in superstition or idols. We shouldn't easily think, "The Lord came to this earth anyway and saved us from sin." If that was the case, why has God given us such a thick Bible? It would suffice for us to have just a one-paged Bible if that was the case. All the Word of God



in the Bible is God’s promise to us, the record of those promises being fulfilled, and promises that will be fulfilled in the future. The Bible is divided into these three parts.

I am truly thankful. I don’t know how many more Christmases we will have while living on this earth, but my heart is warm just thinking of our Lord coming to this earth. December 25th isn’t actually the Lord’s birthday; it was known to be the Winter Solstice by the Roman Julian calendar and the birthday of Mithras, the Roman god. Therefore, Christmas can be said to have pagan origin. But all the people in the whole world think December 25th is Christmas, the day Jesus came. Nevertheless, we have to make one day a year into the day we commemorate Jesus’ birth. By the way, my heart is warm and I am thankful just thinking of Jesus.

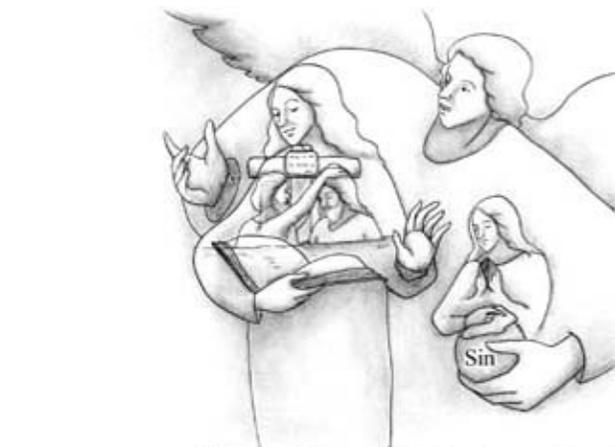
I feel good and am thankful whenever I think that the Lord made plans in detail for you and me.

We have spread the gospel a lot this entire year. The Lord said, “*Pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks*” (1 Thessalonians 5:17-18). When I look back this year, I can’t describe how many things there are that I am thankful for. Many of the world’s pastors, missionaries, and lay believers received the remission of sins all throughout this year. Our books went into over 150 countries all over the world and many people are receiving the remission of sins. They might also joyfully spread this blessed gospel to those around them now. I cannot thank God enough when I think of all these things. ☒



SERMON

9



We Must Know and Believe in Jesus' Righteousness Correctly Through the Word of God

< Luke 1:39-55 >

“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.”

What Relationship Is There between Mary and Jesus' Birth?

The angel Gabriel appeared to the Virgin Mary and spoke to her six months after Elizabeth had conceived John the Baptist. Just before today's Scripture passage, it is written, “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 1:26-38).

By this time it had been six months since Elizabeth conceived John the Baptist in her womb. Mary believed in the Word of God, but she especially obtained courage, believed, and accepted that Word because she heard that her relative Elizabeth, who was called barren, conceived a child by the power of God. When Mary heard that it had already been six months since Elizabeth conceived, she confessed,

"Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word" (Luke 1:38).

The angel told Mary, *"A Son will be born to you. You are a blessed woman. The Son that will come forth from you will be called the Son of the Highest."* That means that the Son of God was born from Mary's body. Hearing this, Mary considered by human logic that it was something that could never happen, so she refuted it. Then, the angel Gabriel said, *"Your relative Elizabeth was known to be barren, but when the Lord spoke to her, she has come to have a baby. It's already been six months. There is nothing lacking in the Word of God and it will all turn out as it says. God has promised to work through your body."* Mary accepted that Word. She said, *"Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word" (Luke 1:38).* She confessed that if it was God's will that she would believe it surely would happen. The angel then



departed and Mary went to Zacharias' house.

The account continues: *“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’ (Luke 1:41-45).* Elizabeth said this to Mary.

Mary had heard the Word of God a little while before through the angel Gabriel and confessed, *“Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word” (Luke 1:38)*, and soon she went to visit Elizabeth. The baby in

Elizabeth's womb knew that Mary had come and leapt for joy. Elizabeth spoke to Mary in a loud voice, saying, *“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” (Luke 1:42-45).* Mary had heard the Word through the angel that same day, and Elizabeth already knew what happened to Mary. God told her, also.

Elizabeth and Mary met each other. Elizabeth knew that our Lord would come to this earth through Mary and said that the woman who believes was blessed. She said, *“But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? Blessed is she who believed” (Luke*



1:43, 45). Elizabeth also knew that Mary had conceived Jesus Christ, the Son of God the Father. So, she told Mary the Words inspired by the Holy Spirit.

My fellow believers, it is a natural principle for men and women to marry and have children. But Elizabeth knew that the Baby was conceived in Mary the moment Mary accepted the Word of God, saying, *“Let it be to me according to your word”* (Luke 1:38). Mary was engaged to Joseph who was of the House of David from the tribe of Judah. The House of David was of the tribe of Judah, therefore, so was Joseph. Elizabeth was a descendant of Aaron from the tribe of Levi, as was her husband Zacharias who was a descendant of Aaron. Thus, the earth's High Priest came through the descendant of Aaron and the King of kings was born through the Virgin Mary who was engaged to a man of the House of David.

Jesus came to this earth as the High Priest of Heaven, and not as that of the earth or by the statute of the earth. He saved us by being baptized to take all our sins, dying on the Cross, and being resurrected from the dead. This happened because God appointed it that way.

Mary was full of the Holy Spirit and prophesied like Elizabeth and Zacharias had. She prophesied in verses 46-55, 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; 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.”

Mary praised the Lord, confessing her faith by saying, “*My spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior*” (Luke 1:47). Elizabeth and Mary knew their lowliness before God and were therefore thankful that the Lord met them and used them.

The Bible Said That the Lord Scattered the Proud in the Imagination of Their Hearts

Jesus Christ was born on this earth through Mary, and the Bible said that He scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. In other words, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came to this

earth as the Savior, showed His power, and scattered those who are proud in the imagination of their hearts. God scatters those who are proud before Him. He sends them to *Sheol*; that is, to hell. The Bible says He has put down the mighty from their thrones.

My fellow believers, who can be said to be mightier than the Lord? There is no one. There is no one in this world higher than the Lord. “*He has exalted the lowly, filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent away empty*” (Luke 1:52-53). All these things happened in this world because the Lord came. He exalted the lowly, made them God’s children, but He scattered those who were proud in the imaginations of their hearts. He put down the mighty from their thrones by smashing them to pieces with an iron hammer; He filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty.

Alexander the Great was called a great king



because he had done many great achievements. However, when he died, he said, "Even though I have taken possession of many countries and lived as the king of this empire, my time to die has come. Make holes in both sides of my coffin and place my arms through the holes, and show this to the people. I have possessed and taken this world so much that I have received the appellation of "the Great," but I am dying with nothing." So, it's said that Alexander's arms flopped around outside of the coffin when it was brought out at his funeral. He wanted to show to others that he who had conquered such a vast territory, was called great, and had enjoyed a lot of power left empty-handed when he died.

My fellow believers, all of these things are realized when the Lord came to this earth. If He had not come, the rich would remain rich, those who were proud in the imagination of their hearts would be proud even as they go to hell. The

lowly would remain lowly, and those who hungered and thirsted would remain miserable forever. But the Lord came and rejected the proud, exalted the poor, and filled the hungry by His power. In other words, people who believe in the grace of salvation, that is the gospel of the remission of sins, receive these amazing blessings before the Lord. Only the Lord did these things. These events happened on this earth by Jesus Christ coming to this earth through Mary. The Lord did these things out of His own power.

Mary Said That the Lord Regarded the Lowly

Mary praised the Lord 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; for behold, henceforth*



all generations will call me blessed.” It was the confession of her faith. My fellow believers, we have the same kind of faith as Mary. The confession of yours as well as mine is the same as Mary’s. Your souls and mine magnify the Lord, and your spirit and mine rejoice in Him. We rejoice because of Him. The Lord regarded our lowliness and made us into the children of God. You and I were really lowly people, but the Lord exalted us. Just as Mary acknowledged before the Lord that she was a lowly maidservant, every one of us who has met the Lord was by nature a lowly one.

We originally had no joy and we absolutely had no goal to live for. We had no answer for the question of what life is. We were such lowly people. We were lowly people who lived with no purpose and just lived because we were born, ate in order to live, and lived in order to eat. But the Lord blessed us by meeting us who were so

lowly. The Bible said, *“And holy is His name. And His mercy is on those who fear Him from generation to generation”* (Luke 1:49-50). This passage means that the Lord gave eternal salvation to those who acknowledge God and His Word, believe in and fear His Word, and accept it as it is. People are regarded with pity and saved by God from generation to generation if they are humble people who obey whatever is the Word of God without asking for reasons like Mary who said, *“Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word”* (Luke 1:38). God saved those kinds of people.

Mary said, *“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”* (Luke 1:51-52). The Lord put down the proud before God. The rich and those who believe in the power of this world are put down and go to hell. The proud who, like



men of power, only depend on the power of the world and do not obey God ultimately go to hell.

We must think about what it is that God has said. We must give ear to the Word of God and we must obey the Word when the Scriptures say so. The Lord says, "*The wages of sin is death*" (Romans 6:23) and that a person will be judged and go to hell if they have sins. Those who acknowledge these Words will be saved before God. Romans 6:23 continues, "*The gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*" We are people who truly cannot help but go to hell. But we believe in the fact that we come to be saved and obtain eternal life if we believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and the Word of the Truth. We are saved if the Lord said that He saved us through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the Word of the Truth. We are saved if the Lord says He saved us, but we cannot be saved no matter how hard we try if He says He didn't

save us. My fellow believers, people who acknowledge God and His Word are saved out of His mercy, but those who do not acknowledge Him are put down from His grace.

Lowly People Have Been Saved by the Lord Coming to This Earth and Fulfilling God's Righteousness

These things did not happen before the Lord came to this earth. The Lord made the proud be filled with their pride until they died; the rich remained rich until they died; the mighty enjoyed their power until they died; and the Lord made the powerful to sustain their power by handing it down to their descendants and made them wield their power generation to generation. The Lord came to this earth in such a context. He remitted all mankind's sins and saved us from them.



Therefore, those who wield power and the rich who are proud and powerful are now to be judged before the Lord. The Lord definitely judges them for their sins. But the pitiful are saved and the lowly are exalted.

I think about myself once in a while. There is a saying in Korea that goes, "A frog can't remember when he was a tadpole." But I look back upon my early Christian days as often as I can. A long time ago, I believed in Jesus but still had sins. I was a lowly person who was perplexed with the problem of sin in my heart.

My fellow believers, people who have sins in their hearts are truly lowly people. They are not the children of God and can't get answers to their prayers. I was a miserable person, even according to the standards of the world. We didn't have anything to eat because my parents had fallen into a cult and had given all their money to it. I was truly lowly.

After I was born again, my older sister died. So I met my nephews. They were also very lowly. But they didn't know their lowliness. I was the same a long time ago. When I grew up, I tried to do something but had no money, no power, no backing, and was truly lowly. I am now bold because I believe in and seek after God's righteousness after having met the Lord, but I myself am still lowly as before. People are fundamentally lowly. If the Lord did not exist and take care of us, we would be lowly forever because we are originally miserable beings.

Mary said she was a "lowly maidservant" to show her humility, but she also was really lowly one. At that time, Israel was a colony ruled by Rome. They sold their services to other houses in order to live and barely lived a hand-to-mouth existence. Theirs were lives that had no hope. My life was really lowly like that. No matter what I looked like or whether or not I had money,



my heart was lowly. I looked at myself everyday and was weighed down because I had sins. I thought I should read books because it seemed that was what one must do if they didn't know very much, but I didn't have any money to buy books. So, I went to the local bookstore and read books whenever I had time. I used to read books all day and left the store when it got dark outside. It was OK at that time to stand reading books all day. I was lowly because of the sins in my heart even though I read books and studied hard.

I sometimes even bought books by saving my lunch money. Nowadays, I can buy lunch for someone else, but a long time ago I had to save my lunch money to buy books. I wanted to eat lunch but couldn't. Restaurants for the rich and those for the poor were separate. The difference is night and day between the feelings of people who have money and go to a cheap restaurant and the feelings of those who cannot but go to a

cheap restaurant. People are really miserable if they go to cheap restaurants because they have no money. It isn't that they are miserable because of what they eat; everything is considered lowly because their hearts are poor and lowly and they have absolutely no money. My thoughts were lowly at that time.

At that time, I wandered in confusion and emptiness because of my many thoughts. The Apostle Paul said, "*For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith*" (Romans 12:3). But I used to think over and over again whenever I couldn't come to a conclusion. When I thought about the same problem over and over but couldn't find the answer no matter how long I pondered on that issue, I felt like I was going to go crazy.



For example, a long time ago, I thought doctrinally about how I could have no sin. I thought, "I have sins in my heart now. Does God just close His eyes to my sins and then regard me as sinless blindly? Does it make sense for Him to do so?" I was really miserable a long time ago. I was poor, but that wasn't why I was miserable; I was miserable because I had no answer about the problem of my sins.

Are people OK just because they eat and live well? Are they OK if they drive a nice car? People are existences that are fundamentally miserable. They have nothing. People who haven't received the remission of sins live in vain and die without purpose. They die and go to hell after being born with sin, committing more sins, and not being able to receive the remission of those sins. So, they are lowly lives with no hope.

What did Mary say, pointing to herself? She

said she was a maidservant. She said that the Lord exalted the lowly. She said that the Lord took her and made her into a child of God and that all generations would henceforth call her blessed. We think Mary is a blessed woman. But Mary is not a god. God made you and me into His children by exalting us, just as He made Mary His child. He truly exalted us.

The Lord Saved Lowly People

The Bible said, "*He has filled the hungry with good things.*" That is truly the case. We are full when we read the Word of God, when we preach it, and when we share fellowship with one another in His Word. We shouldn't interpret this passage in physical terms only; the Lord is telling us the spiritual things first. Therefore, this means that He filled our souls with His righteousness. We have



received the remission of sins because the Lord has made us know His righteousness and made us believe in it. My fellow believers, God did righteous works for us and we have been saved by knowing and believing in those things. That righteousness is in our hearts. We have held to it. We have become God's children through it. We also know that we will go to the Lord's Kingdom in the future. We have been filled with truly good things.

If we read Matthew 5, it says, "*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled*" (Matthew 5:6). That means that people who yearn to do righteous works will come to do the righteous works to their hearts' content after they believe in God's righteousness which is the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

My fellow believers, God saved the Israelites, saved us, exalted and blessed Mary, and exalted

and blessed us. You and I have been blessed just as Mary was when God sent an angel to her: We are blessed as she was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied. But people who do not believe are cast off and destroyed instead of having these kinds of blessings. People who are proud before God; those who don't believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit even though God speaks of it; those who are stiff-necked pointing to themselves with the thought that they are God's people even though they have sins, and those who say that their faith is acknowledged by their respective denominations—all these people will go to hell.

The Bible states that Jesus Christ is the stumbling stone by the wayside. He said that people who meet Him and believe in His Word are saved, obtain eternal life, and receive all blessings. On the contrary, people are destroyed if they still don't believe in Jesus' Word, stand



against it by the logic of man, and advocate their own thoughts even though they have seen Him in His Word. Those kinds of people are judged by Jesus Christ and are eternally cursed. So, Jesus Christ becomes some people's Savior, but some people are destroyed after coming across Him. If a person believes in Jesus but doesn't know Him correctly, they are completely ruined, cursed, and go to hell. They are completely ruined even in this world.

My fellow believers, we are all truly thankful to God. Just as Mary confessed that God had come to her and eliminated all her sins by the Word of the Lord, I believe that the same thing will happen to us who are lowly, according to the Word of the Lord to which nothing is impossible. We obtain salvation by faith in those Words with which the Lord saved us. After we met the Lord and obtained salvation, we came to be able to make confessions of faith just like Mary's. We

magnify the Lord forever and our spirits have come to rejoice in our Lord and Savior.

My fellow believers, don't you rejoice when you think of our Lord? Just as the Lord said, "*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God*" (*Matthew 4:4*), the Word of God is the best and people who partake of it will enjoy eternal life. I am very thankful to God.

This Christmas, I Think of the Way I Was Before

It was Christmas Eve, and I had returned home from school and gone to sleep because I was tired. But all the saints gathered at church were worshipping and went Christmas caroling during the night. I can't explain how ashamed I was when I found out I had been sleeping when



they were doing so. What was worse was my gloomy heart on that Christmas Eve. Even though I had believed in Jesus Christ for a long time, I thought His coming to this earth had nothing to do with me and didn't really rejoice in it. If I looked at my heart at that time, I thought it was good that the Lord had come but that it really had nothing to do with me. I felt very ashamed later when I took a look at my heart.

What is it like now? My heart truly rejoices because of my Savior. I rejoice in the fact that He came even if I don't know what time of the year is truly His birthday. My fellow believers, my heart rejoices whenever I think of the Lord's coming to this earth; whenever I think of His being baptized by John the Baptist; and whenever I think of Him being nailed to the Cross, shedding His blood, and dying. It rejoices because those things are relevant to me. Before I was born again, I felt sympathy for the Lord

saying, "How much pain did He suffer?" whenever I thought of Him. But I now rejoice in Him who has saved me. Our hearts rejoice just as Mary when she said, "*My spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior*" (Luke 1:47).

The Lord was planning and preparing mankind's salvation before He came to this earth. He prepared Zacharias and Elizabeth in the House of Aaron before He actually came. Elizabeth was advanced in years, but she conceived John the Baptist by the power of the Word of the Lord. The angel said of John the Baptist, "*He will be great and will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God*" (Luke 1:15-16). The Lord prepared John the Baptist and had him born on this earth. He also prepared Mary, spoke to her, and fulfilled all things by His Word.

God said, "*Let there be light*" (Genesis 1:3), and there was light. The Word that God spoke all



comes to pass because it is His Word. Because the Word of God has power, when He said, "Let the fruit tree yield fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself" (Genesis 1:11), those trees are growing even now and yielding fruit whose seed is in itself. God created the universe by His Word, made promises by His Word, came to this earth in the flesh of man and fulfilled all His will as He promised, He speaks to you and me by having recorded the Word that He fulfilled and will fulfill. God saves people through this Word.

He sent an angel to Zacharias and Elizabeth, had that angel speak to them as it is recorded in God's Word, and saved those who believe according to the Word. So, God is the God of the Word. He planned, prepared, and fulfilled our salvation and met us. I truly give thanks to the Lord. The Lord who is the King of kings prepared John the Baptist, Mary, and Joseph in order to save us. He prepared them all and

fulfilled our salvation in His time.

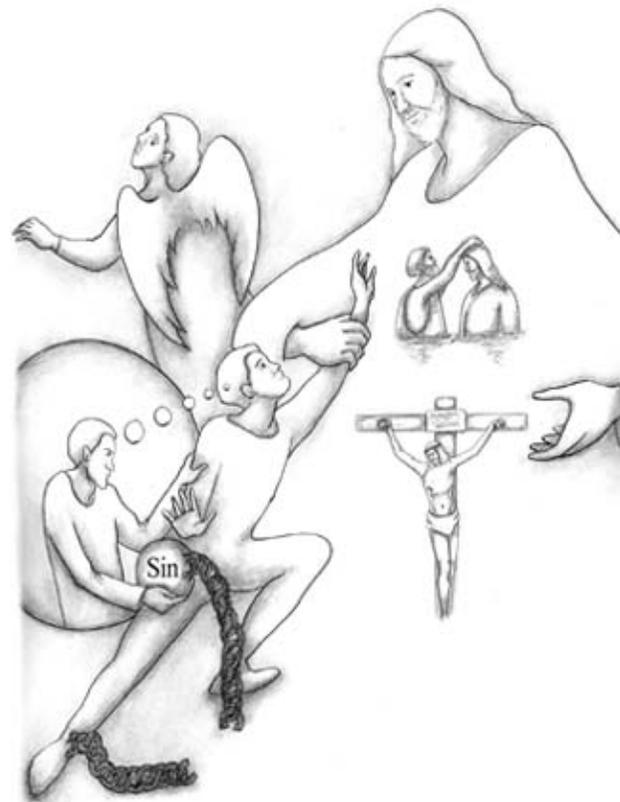
God spoke through the prophet Isaiah: "*Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel, which is translated, 'God with us'*" (Matthew 1:23, Isaiah 7:14). God promised that He would put on the flesh of man and be born through the body of a virgin. When the time came, He came as your and my Savior as He promised. He became our Savior by taking all our sins through His baptism, being nailed to and hanging on the Cross, shedding His blood, and dying. The Lord is alive even now. He lives eternally. He dwells with us with His Word by the Holy Spirit. I give thanks to God.

My fellow believers, the thing that we must definitely know and meditate on this Christmas is the fact that God prepared a lot of people before He sent Jesus Christ to this earth. We must know this and give thanks to God. ☒



SERMON

10



CONTENTS



What Does It Mean to Walk with God?

< Luke 2:40-52 >

“And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him. His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast. When they had finished the days, as they returned, the Boy Jesus lingered behind in Jerusalem. And Joseph and His mother did not know it; but supposing Him to have been in the company, they went a day’s journey, and sought Him among their relatives and acquaintances. So when they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem,

seeking Him. Now so it was that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers. So when they saw Him, they were amazed; and His mother said to Him, ‘Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously.’ And He said to them, ‘Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?’ But they did not understand the statement which He spoke to them. Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.”



Where Can We Meet Jesus?

Where can we meet Jesus Christ? It is in His righteousness that we can meet Jesus, who is God Himself. The saints encounter God nowhere else but in His righteousness. The righteousness of God here implies that our Lord took upon Himself our sins once and for all by being baptized, and that those who believe this are made sinless and find God. This means that God has completely blotted out our sins all at once with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We had always been sinners, but to make us sinless, our Lord God took away all our sins by being baptized by John the Baptist and blotted them all out with His righteousness. It is when we realize this and believe it that we are able to meet the Lord.

As we carry on with our busy lives in this world, we often forget that we have received the

remission of sins thanks to the righteousness of God. In many aspects of our lives, we also forget that the Lord is walking with us. My fellow believers, what do you think is the way for us to truly walk with our Lord? Where can we meet the Lord, dwell with Him, and live with Him? It is none other than the Church where we are now abiding. By fulfilling the righteousness of God, our Lord took away all our sins, and because of this righteousness, each of us has become a sinless member of the Church by faith. We can find God and walk with Him by faith in this salvation, whereby our Lord took away all our mistaken thoughts and our smallest sins once and for all by being baptized by John the Baptist, thus remitting them all away.

My fellow believers, do you have the conviction that our Lord took away all your sins and mine, including the smallest ones, through the baptism He received from John the Baptist?



Leviticus 2:4-6 states, *“And if you bring as an offering a grain offering baked in the oven, it shall be unleavened cakes of fine flour mixed with oil, or unleavened wafers anointed with oil. But if your offering is a grain offering baked in a pan, it shall be of fine flour, unleavened, mixed with oil. You shall break it in pieces and pour oil on it; it is a grain offering.”* This implies that the Lord took away all our detailed sins. When we know and believe in the righteousness of God, we are able to meet our Lord and also walk with Him.

It is extremely important for us to realize and believe that our Lord has at once blotted out all the sins we commit in our lives by being baptized by John the Baptist and shedding His blood. How has our Lord eradicated all the sins of mankind once and for all? Jesus, God Himself, completed this by coming to this earth to save us from the sins of the world, accepting all our sins through

the baptism He received from John the Baptist at the age of 30, and shedding His own blood. That is how He has made us sinless once and for all. The Lord has saved us once and for all by shouldering the sins of this world through His baptism and shedding His blood on the Cross to bear the condemnation of these sins of the world. Rising from the dead again in three days, He has become the Lord of everlasting life to us.

If you don't believe in this, and believe instead that the Lord took away only your original sin, then how could you ever be washed from all the sins that you mistakenly commit out of your insufficiencies? If one believes that the Lord took away only original sin, then such people cannot walk with the Lord. Even worse, they will remain as the Lord's enemies because they do not know that He is the Savior who has brought the righteousness of God to them. With the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the Lord



has at once blotted out all our sins, even the minutest of all, and all the iniquities ever committed with our hearts and acts alike. It is when you realize this that you are able to receive the everlasting washing of sins. It is then that you are able to meet the Lord, share an even closer fellowship with Him, and walk with Him.

Jesus in the Temple

Here in today's Scripture passage, we can see that Jesus' parents of the flesh went up to the Temple of Jerusalem at the Feast of the Passover. Jesus also participated in the Feast of the Passover when He was twelve. After finishing all the rituals of the Passover, Joseph and Mary returned home in a large crowd. Thinking that the Boy Jesus was following them, they were on their way home talking with their neighbors

about the many things that had happened while in Jerusalem. After traveling like this for a while, they looked back but did not see the Child. The parents had thought that since the Boy Jesus was twelve years old, He would have no trouble to find and follow them, and so they had been talking with their neighbors without any concern, but now they discovered that the Child was not in the company.

Taken aback, Joseph and Mary looked for the Child and went back to the Temple of Jerusalem to find Him. When they went into the Temple, they saw the Boy Jesus, only twelve years old, sitting face to face with the scholars of the Law and conversing with them. It was in the Temple that Mary and Joseph found Jesus.

This passage speaks to our saints and servants of God who have met Jesus Christ by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We are prone to assume that since we have received the



remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the Lord is naturally walking with us. However, while carrying on with our lives of faith after being born again, for some reason we sometimes feel as though the Lord is not with us; that we are all alone. In other words, in our everyday affairs, there are times when we feel that we are all by ourselves, reaching our own judgment, making our own decisions, and acting on our own.

Why is this so? It's because we don't do the work of God together with the other members of God's Church. It's because even though in our hearts we clearly believe that the Lord is our Savior, we drift away from God's Church that draws and provides the water of this salvation to us. When we drift away from God's Church or the Word flowing from it, it's then that we realize we are alone. So rather than really walking with the Lord, each of us ends up trying

to do God's work all by oneself. How, in such a case, could we ever minister united with Jesus Christ? It's impossible!

In times like these, we must recognize once again that our Lord took away all our sins once and for all by being baptized by John the Baptist, and we must unite ourselves with the people of God. We must once again admit the fact that Lord shouldered all our sins, whether they are grave or minute, whether they are committed in our thoughts, hearts, or acts, whether they are known to others or not, whether we ourselves realize them or not, and whether we recognize them or just gloss over them. We should turn our hearts to come closer to God's Church and unite our hearts with the Church. This is the implication of the account that Jesus' parents in the flesh met Him again in the Temple. If we are otherwise engulfed in our own affairs, the lustful sins of the flesh are bound to spring forth from



our hearts in no time. If you are leading such a ministry, then you are following your own lust rather than walking with the Lord, and yet you still think that you are walking with the Lord.

Admit Even Your Minute Sins

Where can you and I meet the Lord who has fulfilled the righteousness of God? We can meet the Lord in God's Church that preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit. For us to meet our Lord, we must acknowledge His righteousness that took away even our minute sins. However, we often just gloss over our everyday sins. Although the Lord took away all sins, we sometimes don't take seriously the small sins that we commit in our everyday lives, and we become indifferent to the righteousness of the Lord that has remitted away our sins. As a result,

we end up losing the righteousness of God and wander off.

However, the Lord took away all our sins through His baptism, even the minutest of all. We must realize that because we believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, our sins have been blotted out and we ourselves have become sinless, and we must be always conscious of this fact. We can then meet the Lord of righteousness. Just as Mary and Joseph found the Lord in the Temple, when we realize that we ourselves have no sin, we can also follow the Lord of righteousness and walk with Him.

When do we lose the righteousness of the Lord? It's when we forget in our lives the fact that the Lord took away even our everyday sins. It's in times like this that we feel as though we are away from the Lord. We should never forget the fact that our Lord took away all our sins by being baptized. Everyday, we need to be



cognizant of the fact that there is no sin in our hearts. We can then meet the Lord where there is no sin, have fellowship with Him there, and be led by Him as well.

The place where we meet the Lord is inside the gospel of the water and the Spirit, in the holy Temple. The holy Temple was the place where the Israelites, who committed sins every day, met God with their sacrificial offerings. Therefore, we can meet the holy God who has remitted away all your sins and mine whenever we reaffirm the gospel of the water and the Spirit. When we believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that has blotted out all our sins, when we believe that the Lord took away our everyday sins, and when we recognize that the Lord took away all our sins even if our hearts go astray, our hearts can always be holy.

It is in this kind of faith that we are able to have fellowship with the Lord. Through His

baptism, the righteous Lord took away all our sins once and for all. As such, we can walk with the holy Lord the very moment we reaffirm that we have no sin, and that the Lord has made us sinless. We can then walk with the Lord and be led by Him in our lives, never losing His righteousness.

After you and I believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, haven't there been quite a few times when we forgot all about the righteousness of the Lord, and so we did everything according to our own wishes? Mary had lost the Boy Jesus on her way back home, and yet she had no idea. She just thought that the Boy Jesus was somewhere in her company. Aren't we also leading our lives like this? By realizing and believing that the Lord has blotted out all your sins and mine, we are able to find the Lord once again, have fellowship with Him, and walk with Him. The gospel is what makes it



possible for us to meet the Lord and walk with Him. Because the Lord has blotted out our sins, once we realize that we ourselves are sinless, we can walk with the Lord. When we realize that our hearts are clean and sinless, we can walk with the Lord all the time.

Although we are now sinless, we are still insufficient, and therefore we still commit sin constantly. However, we must grasp here that the Lord took away all such sins. Unless we realize this we cannot walk with the Lord even though we have received the remission of sins. Because there is dross in our hearts, we can't help but end up looking at something else and lose the sight of the Lord, only to wander all alone. That's why we must constantly affirm the fact that there is no sin in our hearts. This must be confirmed always. This is the very life of faith that we lead while walking with the Lord.

At the beginning of this sermon, we read the

passage from Leviticus 2:4-6. And the next passage records, *“You shall bring the grain offering that is made of these things to the LORD. And when it is presented to the priest, he shall bring it to the altar. Then the priest shall take from the grain offering a memorial portion, and burn it on the altar. It is an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD”* (Leviticus 2:8-9). It is written that the priests had to take from the grain offering a memorial portion, and burn it on the altar. Then the Lord God accepted that sweet aroma.

My fellow believers, all of us who have received the remission of sins are priests before God. When we recognize that the Lord took away even our minutest sins, when we realize that the Lord took away all the sins committed every day in our thoughts, hearts, and acts, when we believe that the Lord has blotted them out entirely, and when we always affirm that we



ourselves are now sinless, we can carry out our priestly tasks and duties, live out our faith, and walk with the Lord. It's when we grasp that the Lord took away all our sins, even our smallest ones, we are able to walk with Him. However, if we think, "The Lord took away all these minute sins, and so what more is there to think? The answer is simple: I am sinless," and neglect to reaffirm the Truth every day, then dross will accumulate in our hearts, we will drift away from the grace of the Lord, and we will come to act on our own.

Cleanse Your Heart with Your Faith

A mirror reflects well when it is clear; if it gets dirty, your reflection looks even dirtier than it actually is. What's clear must be kept clear. My fellow believers, thanks to the Lord, we have

been truly cleansed by receiving the remission of sins. The Lord took away all our sins. He carried away all the sins of the world. By taking away all our sins as thick as the mist and the cloud, He has made us sinless. Our hearts are therefore like clear glass. It's like a mirror. Even though dust may settle in our hearts, we must be conscious of the fact that the Lord has taken away all our sins.

It's then that we can be thankful to God always. We can pray to Him and have fellowship with Him. We are able to walk with the Lord all the time. Our hearts spring forth with the desire to pray to the Lord and walk with Him, and we actually come to walk with the Lord and be led by Him. So we pray on every occasion: "Lord, what should I do? Help me with this, and protect me as well."

My fellow believers, the Lord said that when we meet Him in the Temple, we would be able to walk with Him. Because we are born-again



people, we can lead such a life of faith. Our Lord had this passage written in the Bible so that those of us who have become God's people would once again find our way home and return to our nest. Although most Christians think that they are now walking with the Lord in their lives of faith, in reality they are actually living in this world all by themselves according to their own wishes. Therefore, through the Word, the Lord is explaining to us the way Christians can meet the Lord again and walk with Him in the Temple, in the gospel.

My dear fellow saints, didn't our Lord take away all our sins? Yes, He indeed took them all away. The Lord took away not only the great sins that we admit, but also the tiniest of all sins. However, we are prone not to admit what we consider to be trivial sins. This is wrong; we have to admit our smallest sins as sins as well. Since we know that a sin is a sin no matter how

great or small it is, we should never leave it alone, but instead, we must realize clearly and believe that the Lord took away even this sin.

However, for those who have committed many grave sins, when small sins enter their lives, they don't take them seriously nor admit them sincerely; just absentmindedly assuming that the Lord took them away also. They think that since the Lord took away their great sins, He must have also taken away their small sins as a matter of course. Without really confirming this, they say in complacency, "Well, the Lord took away all our sins anyway." Like this, they carry their sins around in a corner of their hearts, and when these sins eventually weigh them down heavily, they consider in their minds that the Lord took them away also. Many people don't take what they consider to be small sins seriously, thinking to themselves, "The Lord took away even my greatest sins, and so I am sure He won't get so



picky over my small sins. Since the Bible also says, ‘Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world,’ every sin is included in these sins of the world. So why should I argue over this with my obtuse mind?”

In reality, however, it is precisely these small sins that cloud us in darkness and make us drift away from the Lord. Although grave sins also cloud us, we tend to resolve them right away as we can’t bear to leave them alone, because we find it intolerable unless these sins are resolved. Therefore, you must remember that it’s not because of our great sins that we drift away from the Lord, but it is because of our small sins. It’s when we can’t see small things properly, when we can’t lead a holy life as Christians, that we end up drifting away from the Lord. So, not knowing where we lost the Lord, we wonder why we are so miserable when we clearly believe in the Lord. Also, when it comes to praying, we

pray only as a matter of duty rather than out of deeply felt necessity, and we discover ourselves leading a lethargic life of faith.

Why does this happen, my fellow believers? It’s because you have not actually offered a grain offering. That’s why you can’t walk with the Lord every step of the way.

Our Lord Is Jesus Christ

Jesus is clearly Mary’s Son born from her body. However, although Jesus was born from Mary’s body, He was not made by her or her husband Joseph. Jesus was not born by any human being. Rather, God the Creator was born by borrowing the body of a human being in order to save mankind.

The Bible says that the Boy Jesus, only twelve years old, carried on a conversation with the



great scholars of the Law in the Temple. It's written, *"They found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard him were astonished at His understanding and answers."*

Whenever the Passover came around, all the scholars of the Law in Israel gathered in the Temple. Jesus was twelve years old at that time, and so in today's terms, He was no more than a sixth grader. Mary and those gathered in the Temple were truly astonished to see such a small Child carrying on a conversation with the scholars of the Law and answering their questions. After all, Jesus was only a Boy back then. How could He have learned all about the Law, mastered this field, and known everything about the Scripture? However, we should not forget the fact that Jesus is the very God who created the universe and everything in it just with

His Word. He is the omniscient and omnipotent God who came in the flesh of man for a while to save us out of His love. The main protagonist of the Bible is none other than Jesus Christ.

It was in the Temple that Mary found Jesus. This implies that the place where we meet Jesus Christ is also the Temple. We have received the remission of sins at the altar of burnt offering where the Lord offered an eternal sacrifice for our sins. Thanks to the gospel, we have been cleansed from all our sins. Jesus was baptized as the Lamb of God who took away all our sins, and He fulfilled all righteousness. The Bible says, *"Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin" (Hebrews 10:18)*. It is in this gospel through which Jesus has remitted away our sins—that is, at the altar of burnt offering—that we are able to meet the holy Lord. My fellow believers, every sin must be condemned without exception, whether it's big



or small. But the Lord took away all these sins.

However, in our minds we don't really give much thought to our small sins. Even though the Lord took away all these sins by being baptized and was condemned to death for them, we are too indifferent to such sins. So we end up falling into a dusty life of faith that cannot see properly. For us to escape from such a life of faith, we must enter the Temple again. We must reaffirm and acknowledge once again that the Lord took away all our flawed sins, whether committed intentionally or unintentionally, including those sins that we did not consider seriously. We must also realize that our hearts have no sin. When we realize that there is no sin in our hearts, that our conscience is completely free from sin, we can call on the Lord boldly, find Him, and have fellowship with Him. Unless our hearts are clear, how can we call on God and have fellowship with Him?

Let's turn to 1 John 3:21-22 here: "*Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God. And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.*" It's said here that if our hearts do not have anything to be condemned before God, then we will have confidence toward God, and whatever we ask, we will receive from the Lord.

What should we then do if we want our hearts to have nothing to be condemned before God? We should admit our sins in detail and cleanse them by reaffirming the gospel Truth every moment we realize our sins. If we don't confess in detail all the sins that we commit in our lives, and just pass over them without being aware of them, ultimately we will end up losing the Lord. If this happens, we ourselves will lose our hearts' confidence before the Lord, unable to find Him



and going on our own way, only to lose the Lord forever.

We Christians are actually very sensitive. Although Christians may seem quite sturdy, they are actually very sensitive. That's because the Spirit of Jesus Christ in us is sensitive and perceptive. We are able to have fellowship with the Lord and walk with Him only when we believe that the Lord took away even our minutest sins and realize that there is no sin inside us.

If we don't recognize that the Lord took away even our smallest sins, and instead just paper over them, then we are not really walking with Jesus in our lives, although we have received the remission of sins to enter Heaven. If we have been born again, then we have to walk with the Lord in our lives. Just as Mary here walked with the Lord both when she went up to the Temple and came down from it on the Passover, so must

we also walk with the Lord in whatever we do, whether we are running our businesses, working at our jobs, living our everyday lives, engaging ourselves in some projects, or doing the work of God. It's absolutely imperative for us to walk with the Lord in our lives. We can live only if we walk with the Lord on this earth. Unless we walk with the Lord, we are nothing on our own. Those who walk with the Lord are the honorable ones. In contrast, those who do not walk with the Lord even as they have received the remission of sins are not honorable.

A dog is cherished pet when it's walking with its owner. A dog without an owner is a wild dog, and it's inevitable for such homeless dogs to be abused, impounded, and even put down. No dog without an owner can be a cherished pet. A dog is protected as a cherished pet only if it's accompanied by its owner. Even when it comes to a dog, it needs an owner before it can be



cherished. For us as well, it is when we walk with the Lord that we are made His cherished saints. It is then that we can shine the light on the world as the precious saints. My fellow believers, if you really want to be honored, you must walk with the Lord.

It's possible for you to harbor wrong desires and wrong thoughts in your heart, and it's also possible for you to do whatever you want to do. However, if the Holy Spirit points out to you that this is wrong before God, then you must admit this and confirm that the Lord took away this sin. You can then walk with the Lord. My fellow believers, how closely are you and I really walking with the Lord? As we are all insufficient, we make mistakes every day. But how much do we really recognize in our lives that our Lord took away all these flaws? How assured are we that we have no sin? We need to ponder on these questions carefully, and entering the Temple

again, into the gospel with which the Lord has blotted out our sins, we must confirm that the Lord took away all the sins committed by us, and thus find the Lord and walk with Him in our lives. Do you understand this? Our hearts are darkened precisely when we are unable to walk with the Lord because of the dross in our hearts.

Two Disciples on the Road to Emmaus Met the Lord

Shortly after the Lord's resurrection, two of His disciples traveled to Emmaus, and they were joined by the Lord. However, although the Lord appeared before these two disciples on the road to Emmaus, they did not recognize Him. When they stopped near the village to spend the night, the Lord broke bread with them and blessed it, and He explained to them in detail the



prophesied Word of the Old Testament and how it was all fulfilled in the New Testament. This was none other than the gospel. When the two disciples heard this gospel, they realized that the One who broke and gave the bread was Jesus Himself; but by then Jesus had vanished from their sight.

Clearly, the disciples of Jesus believed in the Lord. They were born-again people. Yet despite this, the two disciples here failed to recognize Jesus all the way to Emmaus. They had lost their spiritual sight so completely that they couldn't recognize Jesus until He broke bread with them. Like these disciples, we also lose the sight of the Lord or fail to recognize Him sometimes. Why is this so? The problem is not our Lord, but our hearts.

How frequently have we affirmed the gospel? How much have we ruminated on the gospel, just as a mirror needs to be wiped everyday to be

clean? This is what the Lord is asking us. We have many flaws. We don't just offend others with our wrongdoings, but we are too tolerant of the many evil things that come into our hearts. We can't help it because we are too weak as human beings, but that is why it is so important for us to always recognize that the Lord took away all our sins. This is the proper life led by those who have realized the real Truth, and the right way to live out your faith. This is what faith is all about.

It's written in today's Scripture passage: "*His mother said to Him, 'Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously.'* And He said to them, '*Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?'*" This means that Jesus Christ was in His Father's house. God the Father wanted to blot out our sins and make us His own people, and Jesus Christ fulfilled this



will of God the Father. He has saved us from sin in this will. Jesus Christ has done this all in the will of God the Father.

Everyone around the World Must Return to the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

For us to meet the righteous Jesus, we must return to the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Although we have received the remission of sins, we must once again ruminare on the gospel of the water and the Spirit. When we look at ourselves carefully, just how many sins do we commit in our lives? When we are asked to give our testimony of salvation after receiving the remission of sins, we always talk about only our past sins. We talk about how we used to get

drunk, do bad things, and get into fights. But we are now sinless because Jesus took away all these sins. But we actually need to admit even the sins we commit now, and give our testimony of salvation in the present, not just in the past. We have to confess like this: “I admit that I’ve committed such sins today. But the Lord took away even such sins. There are so many times when I am wrong, but the Lord took them all away.” Like this, if we really testify in detail, there is so much to testify.

Of course, we must not follow a legalistic faith. We should shed the light of the Law to recognize our sins correctly, but this does not mean we have to be bound by the Law. The Law fulfills wrath to us, but the salvation of Jesus Christ removes wrath and gives us true salvation. Just how much hardship, big and small, do we come across while living in this world? Just how many large and small obstacles do we come



across? Sometimes we come across still waters, other times we come across filthy sewage, clean ice fields, asphalt, and green pasture. Just how many things do we go through while living? In all these things, there are also sins. However, the Lord has blotted out all these sins. He took them all away. This is what we must recognize whenever our hearts are darkened.

It is by offering a burnt sacrifice to God, by accepting the gospel of the water and the Spirit by faith, by which our hearts can find the Lord. We must walk with the Lord in our lives, always affirming and recognizing that there is no sin in our hearts. Do you understand this, my dear saints? Do you understand what kind of life is the life that walks with the Lord? We can walk with the Lord when we admit even the smallest of our sins and affirm that the Lord took them all way. We have to recognize that the Lord took away not only our great sins exposed outwardly, but

also the smallest sins that we've committed just in our hearts, and our future sins also. Then our evil thoughts and acts are rendered obsolete. If one commits sin, this sin remains with him. But because the Lord has remitted away all our sins and made us sinless, because the Lord took away even the sin of planning evil schemes, this plan and its wickedness are both rendered obsolete.

We, the born-again, can always start anew before the Lord. Only when we build our house on the rock of the gospel like this can we lead an unwavering life of faith that never falters. What's not right is always wrong. But we can always begin anew. We can always meet the Lord, walk with Him, and thank Him all the time, and that is why it's so wonderful. Do you now realize what's wrong with your faith and mine? It is a mistake for you to think that everything is okay now that you've received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the



Spirit. Whoever has received the remission of sins must from then on live a life of faith that truly walks with the Lord. To this day, we have walked with the Lord ever since we first received the remission of sins, and we can continue to walk with Him forever.

The Life of Faith That Offers a Grain Offering

The Bible says that Enoch walked with God for 300 years. The true life of faith begins from the moment one receives the remission of sins. To ensure this, we must recognize that there is no sin in our hearts. We have to realize this. We must keep this Truth in our hearts always. We must clean the heart, the temple of the Holy Spirit, all the time so that our hearts may not be defiled. This cleansing of faith takes place not

because we have sin, but rather, because we have the faith to believe that the Lord has already blotted out all our sins. It is from then on that we come to walk with the Lord. We can then live out our faith until the end. I have every confidence that you can all achieve this. Having been saved, you can now lead a life of faith that offers grain offerings everyday. You can walk with the Lord in every detailed aspect of your life.

The Lord has bestowed us with such grace. He has saved us. Far from forsaking us, the Lord walks with us, protects us, blesses us, and is always with us. He has made us God's people and become our own Lord. He has become our Shepherd. I give all my thanks to the Lord!

If there is something wrong with our faith, if we have offered just the flesh and blood of the sacrificial animal on the altar of burnt offering, then we must now offer grain offerings of fine wheat flour. This is the life of a mature Christian.



We have to admit our daily sins in detail and reaffirm the gospel of the water and the Spirit to maintain the perfect cleanness of our hearts. A spiritual life of fine wheat flour is what we need. Realizing that the Lord took away even the minutest of all our sins, we should all be thankful to Him for this.

Although we are sensitive and keenly aware of sin, this does not mean that we are able to always live a clear and clean life. Because we are all in the flesh as human beings, it's unavoidable for our flesh to commit sins, large and small alike. That's why it's necessary to cleanse the heart with faith.

A venerated Buddhist monk in Korea called Sungcheol Lee famously said, "Mountain is mountain, water is water." But this saying has no meaning at all. The Lord said, "*That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit*" (John 3:6). He is speaking

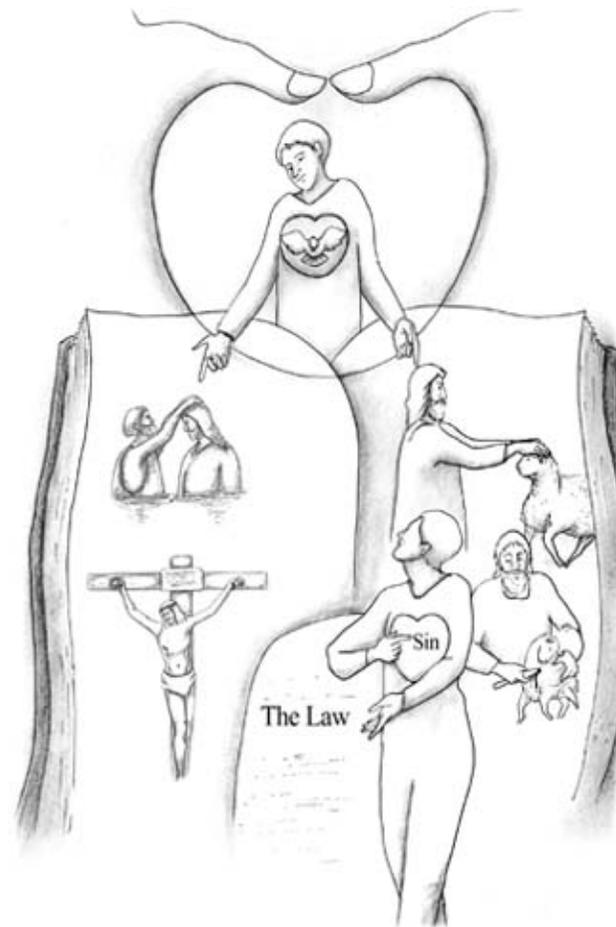
of the nature of the flesh. The flesh still feels only carnal senses and demands only what's good for it; but the spirit doesn't do so. The spirit always demands what's clean. Although the spirit is not detectable by our physical senses, it actually does exist. The spirit is also sinless, and it is different from the flesh and the worldly. This is what the Lord is saying.

We must always give the grain offerings of fine wheat flour. We must offer a detailed sacrifice every day. Our Lord has taken away even the smallest of all our sins so that we may be able to offer such an offering every day. He has made us sinless. We have no sin. I give all thanks to the Lord! The Lord has permitted us to offer a grain offering every day and walk with Him more closely in every aspect of our lives. ☒



SERMON

11



Acknowledge Yourself As a Sinner, Then...

< Luke 3:1-17 >

“Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, while Annas and Caiaphas were high priests, the word of God came to John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. And he went into all the region around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, saying:

‘The voice of one crying in the wilderness:

**‘Prepare the way of the LORD;
Make His paths straight.
Every valley shall be filled
And every mountain and hill brought low;
The crooked places shall be made straight
And the rough ways smooth;
And all flesh shall see the salvation of
God.’”**

Then he said to the multitudes that came out to be baptized by him, ‘Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.’” So the people asked him, saying, ‘What shall we



do then?’ He answered and said to them, ‘He who has two tunics, let him give to him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise.’ Then tax collectors also came to be baptized, and said to him, ‘Teacher, what shall we do?’ And he said to them, ‘Collect no more than what is appointed for you.’ Likewise the soldiers asked him, saying, ‘And what shall we do?’ So he said to them, ‘Do not intimidate anyone or accuse falsely, and be content with your wages.’ Now as the people were in expectation, and all reasoned in their hearts about John, whether he was the Christ or not, John answered, saying to all, ‘I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather the wheat into

His barn; but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire.’”

Our Salvation Was Being Fulfilled through Jesus Christ in the World History

Today I would like to share with you the Scripture passage from verse 1 through 17 in Luke’s Gospel chapter 3. According to the passage, the history of Jesus Christ was unfolding with the world history. The history of Jesus Christ did not originate from ancient myth or anything like that. It started in the Word of God and His prophecies with clear historical background. The evidence for this is what Luke, one of the Jesus’ disciples, wrote in Luke 3:1-2 as, *“Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of*



Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene while Annas and Caiaphas were high priests, the word of God came to John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.” Here, Luke is recording the work of God in detail in a chronological form. It is written that the Word of God came to John, the son of Zacharias in the wilderness, while Annas and Caiaphas were high priests.

The story of Jesus Christ, including His birth, did not spread by word of mouth like legends. The history of Jesus Christ was based on actual history and His work began in history. Jesus came to the world to do His work while Pontius Pilate was governing Judea and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee.

Therefore, we shouldn’t treat the Word of God as a folk tale or just a religious myth. Myth was

written to glorify any country or family. The ancestor of the Parks in Korea is said to have hatched out of a large egg, which is a myth. There are many other similar myths to this. These are all for them to mystify their ancestors and to praise themselves.

Jesus Christ Is the One Who Existed in the History of the World

When we look at the history of Judea around the time of the birth of Jesus Christ, she was a colony of Rome. Israel was under the colonial rule of the Roman Empire. God put Caesar Tiberius as a Roman Emperor and Pilate as the governor of Judea when Jesus Christ and John the Baptist were fulfilling the ministry of human salvation. At that time, John the Baptist was already working, and Jesus Christ was about to



save people from the sins of the world. Our Lord actually came to this earth, and He was about to work as He determined to save people from sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The writer of Ben Hur wanted to challenge the admiration of people all over the world for Jesus Christ and prove that Jesus was a fictitious figure who originated from groundless Jewish myths. He challenged to save people in the world from such fiction. After he traveled with archeologists and invested his own money to do some research on the time period when Jesus Christ was alive, he found so many evidences of historical Jesus and finally knelt down before God acknowledging that Jesus is alive and He is the Savior to all human beings. He started out his research to disprove the Bible as a groundless story, but he ended up kneeling before Jesus and confessing his faith in Him.

As such, the Bible is the Book of Truth

recording the history of Jesus within world history. The Bible is telling us that Jesus Christ is the Savior, who came into the history of human races. That is why Luke 3:2 says, “*While Annas and Caiaphas were high priests, the word of God came to John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.*” Zacharias is a descendent of the High Priest Aaron. That the word of God came to John the Baptist means he reached the age that he could carry out the duties of the High Priest on earth. That is why John, the son of Zacharias, went into the entire region around the Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.



What Does Luke Say about John the Baptist?

Luke introduces John the Baptist by quoting from the Book of Isaiah, *“The voice of one crying in the wilderness:*

‘Prepare the way of the LORD;

Make His paths straight.

Every valley shall be filled

And every mountain and hill brought low;

The crooked places shall be made straight

And the rough ways smooth;

And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.”

Luke 3:4-6 says John the Baptist went into the entire region around the Jordan and preached the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. “Repent, the brood of vipers!” he cried out the baptism of repentance like this. Repentance is turning from the wrong ways. “You are going in the wrong way. You walked away from God

servicing the idols and drifting farther and farther away from God. If you keep walking in the wrong way and do not turn around, you will surely perish. Turn away from the path. Turn back to God’s path.” His message was something like this.

The Prophet Isaiah said, *“The voice of one crying in the wilderness:*

‘Prepare the way of the LORD;

Make His paths straight.

Every valley shall be filled

And every mountain and hill brought low.”

What was he talking about? He was prophesying the coming of the Christ. In other words, John the Baptist told the Israelites to repent and to be washed from their sins by quoting the prophecy of Isaiah. Through the baptism of repentance by John the Baptist and the gospel of the water and the Spirit, all human races were meant to turn away from evil and be



washed from sins. From now on whoever believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the salvation from sins and becomes God's people.

All people were born from Adam and lived based on their instinct that only gives birth to sin. However, there have been different classes in the world. India, for example, has class system. Not to mention India, Confucianism was dominant in Korea in the past. According the Confucianism, man is the sky and woman is the ground. High-class people were treated with respect, but people in the lower class were neglected.

Jesus Christ, however, turned everything around. He came to wash away all the sins of the human race, and everybody can turn away from the wrong paths and receive salvation by believing Jesus Christ as their Savior. Whoever receives the remission of sins equally become the people of God. This is the truth that the Bible

tells us here. *“And all flesh shall see the salvation of God” (Luke 3:6)*. Before Jesus Christ came to the earth, the lowly were always lowly and the lofty were always lofty. But, everybody can equally be saved when he or she believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Christianity Abolished the Confucianistic Notion of Man Being Sky and Woman Being Ground

However, there are still some people who have such notions. Is that true? Aren't women human beings? They are same humans. They are more detail-oriented. Women seem weaker outwardly, but in reality their motherly instinct makes them stronger than men. Most men die when they starve for ten days. Women can go without food

for ten days and some can survive without food for forty days. Some Christians drink only water and survive forty days of fasting, which is impossible from the scientific aspect. People die after starving for forty days.

Anyway, such a mislead ideology or class system were removed when the Lord came. In other words, the coming of the Lord made them collapse. That is how everyone and all flesh will see the salvation of God. Brothers and sisters, before the Lord came to this earth, John the Baptist was born. John the Baptist came ahead of Jesus Christ and preached the baptism of repentance and baptized Jesus as the Old Testament prophesied.

The proof of their repentance was to come to be baptized by John the Baptist. Then what does John's baptism of Jesus mean? It was to pass over the sins of the world onto the body of Jesus once and for all. On the other hand, people were

baptized as a profession of their spiritual vows that they had turned away from their wrong paths and come back to God. Therefore, according to Luke 3:7-9, John the Baptist shouted to people, *“Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”*

Would you feel okay if I called you ‘brood of vipers’? What we preach is so mild compared to John’s message. He talked about what is more fundamental. We are fundamentally “a brood of vipers!” Among all poisonous snakes, vipers are the most deadly. “Brood of vipers! Children of Satan! Repent!” He pointed out the most



fundamental problem by saying so.

As a matter of fact, those who are not born again, are ruled by the evil spirits. Consequently, they are spiritually no different from vipers. So we should watch out for them. They appear as human but the inside of their hearts is the slave to evil. He said to Jews, *“Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’”* They had to repent and turn around not to be subject to the curse. They had to come to God.

John the Baptist cried out, *“Even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees, and therefore, do not just say you would come back to God, but bear the fruit suitable for the repentance. Leave what is wrong and return to God.”* He is telling them to abandon their idols, stop suppressing others, stop being bossy, stop stealing, turn away from

all evil and come to God. Swearing to turn away and showing remorse only verbally cannot be true repentance. It doesn’t make any sense. When John the Baptist said, *“Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire,”* the people asked him, saying, *“What shall we do then?”* (Luke 3: 9-10)

Let’s look at verses from 10 through 14 in Luke 3. *“So the people asked him, saying, ‘What shall we do then?’ He answered and said to them, ‘He who has two tunics, let him give to him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise.’ Then tax collectors also came to be baptized, and said to him, ‘Teacher, what shall we do?’ And he said to them, ‘Collect no more than what is appointed for you.’ Likewise the soldiers asked him, saying, ‘And what shall we do?’ So he said to them, ‘Do not intimidate anyone or accuse falsely, and be content with your wages’”* (Luke 3:10-14).



Brothers and sisters, whoever wants to return to God should give up his or her evil practices. *“He who has two tunics, let him give to him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise.”* Those who claim they believe in God, but still do evil things such as suppressing others and killing people, are not genuine believers of God.

When people become born-again, they may still be hysterical, but they are no longer able to do evil since they lost the ‘venom’ that used to be in their hearts. They just have momentary emotional surges. What the Lord said is all correct. He didn’t just talk about these things; He also let us leave what was wrong in our hearts and come back to God. So whoever comes back to the Lord has to share their clothes with those who have none. Do you practice this? We should do the same thing with food.

“Tax collectors also came to be baptized, and

said to him, ‘Teacher, what shall we do?’ And he said to them, ‘Collect no more than what is appointed for you.’” He was saying they shouldn’t overcharge people and put the extra money into their pockets. *“Likewise the soldiers asked him, saying, ‘And what shall we do?’ So he said to them, ‘Do not intimidate anyone or accuse falsely, and be content with your wages.’”* Soldiers used to take people’s possessions any time they wanted to. John the Baptist told them to be content with their wages and not to intimidate people.

Brothers and sisters, John the Baptist is so great. There were no such prophets in the history of Israel as powerful as him. People started to think he might be the Messiah whom the Old Testament was talking about.

Most of God’s servants delivered messages from God, but John the Baptist was scolding people, “Repent, brood of vipers!” as soon as he

started his ministry. Anyway, John the Baptist preached the baptism of repentance to people saying, “Brood of vipers, repent and come back to God.” This made people think that he was the Messiah. Luke 3:15 says, *“Now as the people were in expectation, and all reasoned in their hearts about John, whether he was the Christ or not.”* “There was no prophet like him in the past. He must be the Messiah.” As people whispered to each other, John the Baptist heard them.

So he answers them in Luke 3:16-17. *“John answered, saying to all, ‘I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather the wheat into His barn; but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire.’”*

He said, “I am baptizing you with water, and

this baptism is for you to repent and come back to God from serving gentile idols and walking in the wrong paths. But a Person mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose.”

John the Baptist Witnesses Jesus

John the Baptist declared, “I am not worthy of even tying and loosing His shoelaces. I am such an incapable man, but a Man with greater ability is coming; He is so able that He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather the wheat into His barn; but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.”

Baptism has the meaning of ‘washing’ and it



is said that Jesus Christ will wash us with the Holy Spirit and fire. Here “baptizing you with the Holy Spirit” refers to the event that happens in the hearts of believers when they believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and receive the remission of sins. God gives the Holy Spirit as a gift and puts a seal on the hearts of those whose sins were removed by sincerely believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. In other words, those who believe that the Lord washed their sins clean with the gospel of the water and the Spirit receive the Holy Spirit as a gift. That is why we may not feel with our senses even though the Holy Spirit has come into our hearts.

But the Holy Spirit in our hearts makes us become God’s people. So those of us who believe in the righteousness of God are called Christians. God gives the Holy Spirit to people who belong to Christ, and He gives fire to those who do not. Fire refers to the judgment. Our

Lord loved the world so much that He came to this earth, took our sins to make us sinless, died on the Cross and rose again from the dead. However, those who do not believe this He will baptize with fire. That is why it is said Jesus will baptize people with the Holy Spirit and fire. For those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit He will adopt them as God’s children and bless them, but those who do not believe He will punish with fire. This is what ‘baptizing with the Holy Spirit and fire’ means. Those who receive the Holy Spirit believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and they are happy people. On the other hand, those who receive fire from God are cursed people.

Luke 3:17 says, *“His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather the wheat into His barn; but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire.”* When all people were under



the judgment because of sins, Jesus Christ came to this earth, was baptized by John the Baptist, died on the Cross and rose again from the dead to save us all once and for all. Jesus Christ gives the Holy Spirit, eternal life and all other blessings to those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit; He punishes with the fire of hell those who do not believe.

“His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor.” In the past people used to put the grain in a stone mortar before threshing with a flail, and winnowed up and down; then the wheat stayed and the chaff fell out of the winnow. The Lord will gather the wheat into His barn and burn the chaff with unquenchable fire. The Lord is the Judge of all sinners. The Lord is the Savior who saved us all from the sin of the world, the Creator who made us, the loving God who always loves us, and the Shepherd who will always lead us

with love. But to those who make God a liar, consider Him evil and disbelieve God, He will punish them as the Judge. The Man whom John the Baptist introduced as mightier than him was Jesus Christ. He is the Judge who will save all believers and make every believer equal; but He will punish unbelievers with fire. Therefore, believing in Jesus Christ is not a matter of choice. Everybody must believe in Jesus Christ.

Who Is Jesus Christ?

Jesus Christ is the Creator, who made the whole universe. Creation is to make something out of nothing. Jesus Christ is the Creator of the universe. He is the Creator of man. When people left God because of their sins and weaknesses, Jesus the Creator came down with human flesh through the gospel of the water and the Spirit.



God clothed Himself with a human body and came down to earth to save us. He has saved us by taking away all our sins at once through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, dying on the Cross, and being resurrected from death. The Lord saved us in such a complete and well-thought-out way, and He commanded us to preach the gospel.

That is why John the Baptist cried out to people, “Brood of vipers, repent! Repent and turn to God. Stop the evil practices and come back to God.” Receiving the remission of sins is impossible for those who pretend to believe the righteousness of Jesus and take advantage of others with lies. They cannot receive the washing of their sins because they do not admit their wickedness. Those who do not acknowledge their sinfulness and imminent judgment of God for their sins cannot receive the remission of sins because they are not even aware of their sins.

Even though the Lord cleansed all our sins with the gospel of the water and the Spirit, they still go to hell because they don’t admit their sins. They are going to hell because of their arrogance not to admit their sins and God’s Law. There are some people who obstinately do not accept Jesus Christ as their Savior even though they know Jesus Christ, who came by the water and the Spirit. They believe in Jesus, but the salvation doesn’t take root in their hearts. Why is that? It is because they are not ready yet. They are supposed to admit that they are going to hell because they do not acknowledge their sins or believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, but they don’t.

God gave everyone a conscience and the conscience convicts each and every one before God. It is like saying, “You are damned to hell.” Even if we are not fully aware of God’s Law or the Word of Truth, our conscience knows that we



are destined to go to hell. But there are people who do not have an ounce of conscience. How could they receive the remission of sins if they don't admit their sins while they are claiming they believe in the righteousness of God? They don't think they are sinners. That is why so many people believe in Jesus as their Savior and hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit, but cannot receive the remission of sins because they think they are not sinners.

Brothers and sisters, here is the difference between those who have received the remission of sins and those who haven't. Hearing the same gospel message of the water and the Spirit at the same time, some people believe in the gospel and receive the remission of sins. Others are not ready in their hearts and cannot receive the remission of sins. John the Baptist said, "Brood of vipers, repent!" but some of us do not know if they are brood of vipers, for they do not believe

God's Word. But they should know that they are the very brood of vipers John the Baptist talked about.

The descendents of Adam and Eve are born sinners because their common ancestors Adam and Eve had committed sin against God. The Bible says that all men became sinners through one man's sin (Romans 5:18). Everybody is born with twelve different sins and keeps committing hideous sins for the rest of their lives. We should admit this. We are the beings who cannot but commit so many sins. We commit sins throughout our lives.

Therefore we should know that we go to hell because of the sins of our ancestors as well as because of our own sins. We should acknowledge this fact. We should admit that we as well as our ancestors would go to hell. Is it right or not? That's absolutely correct. Those who have an upright heart before God admit that



they are sinners and try hard to meet with the Lord. They get to receive the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Brothers and sisters, I want you to believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. But there still are so many people who say, “I am not going to hell. What sins do I have that deserve that? I am not the kind of person who goes to hell.” Those who say such things would still go to hell even if they met Jesus, or someone could bring Jesus right in front of them. Why would that be? It is because they do not admit their sins and they think they are sinless even though they have sins intact in their hearts. Because of this they cannot receive the remission of sins even when they believe in Jesus as their Savior and the gospel of the water and the Spirit. How can they be saved if they claim that they do not have sins before the Lord and that they would not go to hell? Do you

agree with me? How can we save someone from drowning if he is not even in the water yet? How can anybody drag him out of the water? Do you think he needs a savior? No, he doesn't.

That is why we need to know our sins before God and admit first that we are going to hell because of our sins. Evangelist Byungki Ahn once told me that before he was born again, he used to pray in the taxi not to die from a car accident since he would go to hell because of his sins if he died then. That is the right attitude of heart to have.

Before I received the remission of sins, I also used to think that I would go to hell when I die. I wasn't too bad compared with other people who were in a similar situation. But I knew that I would go to hell because of my sins then. I admitted it before God. I went to church for the first time to ask God to forgive my sins because I knew I would go to hell. I was dying of



tuberculosis, so I had to solve my problem of sin before God since I might die anytime soon. At that time I didn't know much about Jesus. I only knew that He died on the Cross on behalf of sinners. Even though I didn't know how to pray, I said this prayer in the church sanctuary: "Jesus, I heard that You will remove sins if I believe in You. I believe in You now. I am bound to die and I believe in You before my death. Please remove all the sins in my heart. I am not asking for a glorious life in Heaven after my death, but just remove my sins, please."

That is how I put my first foot in the church building. Since then I gradually learned more about God's Word and His Law, and became a real sinner. Ten years later, I came to understand the gospel Truth of the water and the Spirit and received the remission of sins by believing in the genuine gospel.

The Lord is God who gives the Holy Spirit to

those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. But at the same time, He is God who punishes those who do not believe in Him. Because of this reason, in Luke 3:1-17, Luke is writing about who the Lord is, who the John the Baptist is, and how we should believe in the Lord.

Brothers and sisters, we should abandon evils, but it's not easy. Even so, we should have at least the repentant heart that understands and admits what is wrong. We have to have the heart that knows that we are doing something wrong and the heart that is willing to come back to God. If we have any abusive minds towards anybody, we should repent of that. Do you follow me? We should believe in Jesus Christ as our Savior, for He took away all our sins through His baptism and His death on the Cross. That is the only way we can receive the Holy Spirit. That is the way to become God's children. We will receive everlasting life. We will gain eternal life and



enjoy everlasting blessings.

That Is Why We Need to Teach People about Their Sins Before We Preach the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

We also need to teach people that the wages of sin is death. The ‘wage’ here is something you get for what you did. If you worked as a hired hand for a day, you will receive the amount of money that is worth your work. ‘The wages of sin is death’ means, therefore, people with sins face spiritual death and judgment of fire. We should know this and we should acknowledge it. God said so. God said that the wages of sin is death and the law brings wrath (Romans 4:15, 6:23).

However, He also said, “*The free gift of God is the eternal life.*” You may know the passage from John 3:16 that goes, “*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.*” Brothers and sisters, we should trust God’s love and know it. We had no way to go but to hell, but the Lord had compassion on us and loved us. Because we were about to suffer the eternal curse, God took pity on us, loved us and saved us from the condemnation and sins.

The Lord Himself came down to this earth for those who were damned to live under the eternal curse: He was baptized to take over our sins; He was punished and crucified for us; and He rose again from the dead. He took all the pain we were supposed to get and paid the price in our stead to save us. The Lord is telling us this. You and I should believe in this. The coming of the



Lord to this earth, the baptism of repentance by John the Baptist, and the Lord's salvation through the gospel of the water and the Spirit are all for you and me. Those are for all men and for every single one of us.

Brothers and sisters, please repeat after me. "The Lord has come for me. He came down to this earth to save us, from sins and punishment. I was bound to go to hell. But the Lord has saved me."

"I was about to go to hell but the Lord has saved me with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. I believe. I do believe that the Lord loves me. Thank You, Lord." Why are we doing this as if we were in an elementary school? The reason we are doing this is because we need to remind ourselves of this in our hearts by faith. From a spiritual aspect, we might be as little as first graders. Or we may be kindergarteners or even toddlers in the spiritual world.

The Lord has saved us with the water and the blood, and He is the one who baptizes all human races with the Holy Spirit and fire. He is God who baptizes believers with the Holy Spirit and non-believers with fire. I thank God for doing so.



SERMON

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CONTENTS



Do You Know and Believe Jesus Is God?

< Luke 4:16-30 >

“So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written: ‘The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.’ Then He closed the book, and gave it back to

the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them, ‘Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.’ So all bore witness to Him, and marveled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. And they said, ‘Is this not Joseph’s son?’ He said to them, ‘You will surely say this proverb to Me, ‘Physician, heal yourself! Whatever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in Your country.’” Then He said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own country. But I tell you truly, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a great famine throughout all the land; but to none of them was Elijah sent except to Zarephath, in the region of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the



time of Elisha the prophet, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian.’ So all those in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, and rose up and thrust Him out of the city; and they led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw Him down over the cliff. Then passing through the midst of them, He went His way.”

Are You Saying Jesus Is God?

When our Lord was tempted by Satan the Devil after he had fasted for 40 days, our Lord defeated the temptation with the faith of believing in the recorded Word. In the Scripture passage we have read today, the Lord went to the place called Nazareth, where He was born and raised. He went into the synagogue on the

Sabbath day and as He stood up to read the Scriptures according to the practice, He was handed the Book of the prophet Isaiah. He opened the book and found the place where it was written from verse 18: *“The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.”*

The Scripture Word Jesus read here was the Word from the Book of Isaiah, and as He read the Word, He said, *“Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”* He was saying this Word of prophecy spoken in the Old Testament was about Jesus Himself and that the Word was fulfilled for the people of the world because He came to the world.



Let's Look at the Content of the Word the Lord Read

Let's look at the Word from the Gospel of Luke chapter 4 verse 18.

*“The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me,
Because He has anointed Me
To preach the gospel to the poor;
He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,
To proclaim liberty to the captives
And recovery of sight to the blind,
To set at liberty those who are oppressed;
To proclaim the acceptable year of the
LORD.”*

This Word spoken by the Lord here is the Word about Jesus Himself. He was saying that Jesus Himself came to the world to do this work—to save the blind who had been oppressed by sin and by His power, opened their eyes, and freed them. The Word spoken by the Lord here is

about spiritual things.

The Lord said He would proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind first. This means that the Lord gave us the true freedom through the gospel of the water and the Spirit when we were prisoners of Satan the Devil due to our sins. Then, He would proclaim recovery of sight to the blind. This means that He would make us see God perfectly by opening our spiritual eyes through the cleansing of sins in our hearts. What was the Word that the Lord truly wanted to say to you and me through this passage? It was that the Lord is the Son of God who came to this world to give the light of salvation to us.

The Lord illuminated the light of the salvation to all humankind as He said. However, what do many people think about this Word? Many people in the camps of liberal theology in Christianity, especially liberation theologians,



misunderstand the Word from today's Scripture passage and claim, "Christianity must first do the work of liberating the oppressed people if they want to really do upright ministry and thereby fulfill the will of Jesus. Therefore, we must liberate so many workers who are oppressed with an overload of work for low wages." Therefore, because of such misunderstanding of the Scripture Word, many Christians actually do vain work of liberating people by making labor unions in companies.

However, the Lord wants us to do the work of liberating people from sin. The Lord said there would always be poor people in the world (Mark 14:7). This implies that there will always be oppressive people and people who are being oppressed. Of course, it would be better if such things did not happen, but such things will happen because this world is not a perfect world. Actually, it is a good thing to lift out the people

who have been socially oppressed and deprived.

However, the ministry our Lord did when He came to this world was the work of delivering our hearts and souls from the authority of Satan the Devil, and from all the sins of the world. The Lord came to this world to do the work of liberating people from the oppression of the Devil and to give spiritual salvation and freedom to us. He came to spread the gospel of the water and the Holy Spirit in this world. The Lord Himself did these works and allowed us to preach this gospel of Truth.

People who claim to work for the employees by forming a labor union in companies are not the people who really work for the righteousness of the Lord. Of course, the freedom from all kinds of oppression and the equality of human rights are universal values to everyone of the world. However, the thing people really need is being freed from the status as prisoners of sin.



Only then they can meet the Lord and enter the gate of salvation by receiving the cleansing of sins. That is the salvation and the possession of the genuine Truth. The only way for sinners to receive salvation is to believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It is the true will of the Lord for all the people who are oppressed by sins, people who suffer as slaves of Satan, to receive salvation from sin by believing in the righteousness of the Lord. The Lord spoke of this through today's Scripture passage and that is what it means when He said, *"Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."*

People in the synagogue listened to the Word of Jesus Christ and thought it was good as God's grace poured upon them, but there was one problem for them. In their eyes, Jesus Christ only appeared to be the son of Joseph. As you know all too well, Jesus was born in Bethlehem and grew up in the village of Nazareth. Therefore,

people in the village of Nazareth who knew the background of Jesus well thought, "Anyhow, is this not Joseph's son?"

Then the Lord said to them, *"You will surely say this proverb to Me, 'Physician, heal yourself! Whatever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in Your country.'"* What does this mean? People wanted to say to Jesus, "Isn't Joseph your fleshly father? I even know your brothers, and you are not such a great person, right?" People at the time did not believe that Jesus was the Son of God the Father and that He was the Savior of humankind. The Lord knew their hearts. They were thinking, "They say you healed the sick in Capernaum. Well, go ahead and do the same here in this place. Try to do it in Nazareth where you had grown up. Then we will believe in You." The Lord knew their hearts already when He spoke these Words here.

Many people in that era still did not believe in



Jesus as their Savior even though the Lord came to the world to save all the people who have been held down and oppressed by sin and become prisoners of sin, and He actually saved all the people from all sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Even though some people claimed to believe in Jesus, they didn't believe in Him as the Perfect Savior. People in the village of Nazareth where Jesus was brought up did not believe in Jesus even more so. People at the time never believed in Jesus no matter how many wondrous works and miracles He performed in that village, and no matter what correct Word He spoke.

Therefore, the Lord spoke to such people: *“But I tell you truly, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a great famine throughout all the land; but to none of them was Elijah sent except to Zarephath, in*

the region of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian” (Luke 4:25-27).

Do you know what this passage means? It means many people in this New Testament era do not believe in the righteousness of the Lord just like many people in the Old Testament era did not believe in the righteousness of the Lord. Even though Jesus came by the gospel of the water and the Spirit before them, even though Jesus was really the Son of God the Father, the Creator who created the universe, and the Savior, and even though this Jesus saved the people who were oppressed by the sins of the world and had been the prisoners of sins, they did not believe that Jesus was their own Savior. It means that they do not believe Jesus is the Savior. Jesus Himself spoke of this very fact here in this



passage. The Lord came to this world and saved the people who had become the prisoner of sins and opened the eyes of people who were spiritually blind. But there were only small numbers of people who actually believed that the Lord Himself came to this world to do the work of salvation, and actually did that work and fulfilled it all.

Even during the Old Testament era, only General Naaman among many lepers living in Aram and Israel at that time received salvation. Only the widow of Zarephath in the land of Sidon and her family received salvation when there was famine in Israel. Not only in Israel, but also in Arab, there were many lepers and only General Naaman actually received grace of God. Many people died of hunger when there was famine in Israel at that time. However, no one but the widow of Zarephath received the grace of God. What this Word means is that only these

two people were able to receive the grace of God by faith even though so many people lived during the Old Testament Era.

Our Lord gave true freedom and true salvation from sin to you and me in this era. However, the number of people who believe in the righteousness of the Lord is really small, and the number of people who are prepared to receive this gospel of the water and the Spirit in their hearts is also really small. There were many lepers in the Old Testament, but General Naaman was the only person who was healed by faith of obedience when the Lord God spoke to him through His servant Elisha to go and wash seven times in the Jordan River.

In addition, what happened when everyone was about to die because of devastating famine in Israel? The Lord told Elijah to go to a widow in Zarephath. At the time, the widow of Zarephath only had very little flour from wheat



as a last source of food, enough to make a loaf of bread or soup of dough flakes once. Therefore, she was going to eat it together with her son for the last time and die together (1 Kings 17:12). They were in a situation of just waiting to die of hunger when God sent Elijah to her. When he came to the town gate, she was there gathering sticks. Elijah the servant of God said to the widow, *“Please bring me a little water in a cup, that I may drink”* (1 Kings 17:10). Then, the widow of Zarephath followed the Word agreeably. The widow of Zarephath who followed God’s Word properly and her son therefore received salvation appropriately.

This Word means that there actually were not many people who believed and obeyed God’s Word even in the Old Testament times; and like those times, when the Lord came to this world in the New Testament era, there were only a few people who truly believed in such a ministry of

salvation of the Lord even though the Lord had saved all mankind through the gospel of the water and the Spirit and given them freedom by liberating them from oppression.

What is the reason for this? That is because people of the world knew Jesus just in a human perspective and only thought of Him as a human. They really downgraded the status of Jesus. However, Jesus is definitely the Son of God the Father. More precisely, Jesus, who is the Son of God the Father is our God, and He created all things of the universe. Therefore, although I just refer to Him as “Jesus Christ the Son of God” when I preach to make it easier to understand, I use the expression precisely as “Jesus Christ the Son of God the Father” when I describe Him in a document. Jesus Christ is the Creator. He is God. You can never receive the precious grace of the Lord when you think of Jesus only as a human and judge Him from a humanistic perspective



only.

People of This Era Are Like That

Our Lord God came to the world in the New Testament era, but the people from the village of Nazareth, His hometown, did not believe in the Lord as God. Rather, they looked at Jesus and rejected Him, saying, “Is this not Joseph’s son?” People in other villages believed the wondrous works and miracles that manifested through Jesus because they did not know Jesus well, even from fleshly perspective. However, people from the village of Nazareth were not like this at all. They consequently failed to believe in Him because they could not believe in the divinity of Jesus because they just looked and tried to perceive Him from human perspective. Therefore, you and I must look at Jesus and the Scripture

Word that Jesus has spoken from spiritual perspective.

People who cannot look at the Lord or the Word of the Lord spiritually really think and do things imprudently. There are many times when I get frustrated when I ask such people to do something. Sometimes I get so frustrated watching them work that my stomach seems to growl. I calculate the work and set up an efficient system for them to work in, but there would be no way for them to finish the work even if I told them tens and hundreds of times about the work. Therefore, I just find comfort with the wishful thinking, “He would come around if I waited patiently for a long time.”

We must look at God’s work spiritually no matter what the work or the situation is. What did the people who did not look at Jesus spiritually do when Jesus spoke such a Word to them? The angry people took Jesus to the top of



the hill where they had amassed earth to build a village to push him off the cliff. It says, *“So all those in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, and rose up and thrust Him out of the city; and they led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw Him down over the cliff. Then passing through the midst of them, He went His way.”*

Think about this situation for once. Do not only think of this Word literally, but actually think of the Word in relation to yourself also. Do you think this was not a significant situation? Our Lord went into the synagogue, opened the Book of Isaiah, and read from it.

*“The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me,
Because He has anointed Me
To preach the gospel to the poor;
He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,
To proclaim liberty to the captives*

*And recovery of sight to the blind,
To set at liberty those who are oppressed;
To proclaim the acceptable year of the
LORD.”*

The Lord read this Word and then He closed the Book and said, *“Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing,”* and He explained this Word from the Old Testament to the people. But what was the response of the people in the synagogue? At first, they liked it very much, but eventually they said, *“You are Joseph’s son. What have you got that makes you so great?”* and did not believe in God’s Word, and instead tried to kill Jesus. They were angry because they just looked at Jesus fleshly. However, Jesus went on and talked about General Naaman and the widow of Zarephath and pointed out directly, *“There were many lepers or the starved in the days of Elijah, but only these two people received salvation. All the others did not receive God’s*



grace.”

Then the people understood, thinking, “He is talking about me,” and took Jesus by the collar and dragged Him to a cliff at the top of a hill. However, Jesus resisted them and walked away from them because He had supernatural authority as God. In the Scripture Word here, it is written, *“They led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw Him down over the cliff.”* It means some people took hold of Jesus violently and tried to throw Him over the cliff. However, what did Jesus do? As today’s Scripture passage says, *“Then passing through the midst of them, He went His way,”* Jesus walked down leisurely without being hurt. As we believe in Jesus as our Savior, we must have correct understanding of Jesus.

“Is Jesus just a human? Or, is He God?” We must know well in our hearts and theoretically that Jesus is God. The Gospel of John chapter 1

verse 10 says, *“He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him,”* and verse 3 says, *“All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.”* This Word means that the world was created by Him. It means that He created all things of the world. If we did not know clearly that He is God, Our faith would eventually become nothing even though we believed in Jesus as our Savior and also believed in Him as the Shepherd. If you do not believe that Jesus is God, then you might as well say that your life is over.

Let’s say, for example, that Buddha was our savior. Our salvation and faith is decided based on whether Buddha is God or a human. If Buddha was a human, then we could not believe him because he would be an imperfect being, and no matter how Buddha saved us, that would not be a true salvation because it was a work of a



human being. However, what would happen if he really were God? That salvation would be a perfect salvation: If he created the universe, came to the world clothed in human flesh and took all the sins of humankind upon him by receiving baptism upon his body, and offered his body before the presence of God the Father as the sacrificial offering and received the judgment and resurrected from death, his work of salvation is proper and lawful. The work he had done could save people from sin since he would have the qualification because he is God and, therefore, because he has such power.

We can believe in Jesus and receive salvation from Him because Jesus is God the Creator and the Savior who has saved us. When we read the Word of the New Testament, we can see Jesus and Jews arguing often, and the reason is that people knew Jesus only from a human perspective. They knew Jesus only as Joseph's

son. "Jesus was brought up in Nazareth. What would a country fool from Nazareth know?" They could never acknowledge Jesus who is God because they just looked at Jesus fleshly.

When we Koreans want to look down upon a person, we say, "You, country fool." It is to disrespect a person's background. But, actually, we cannot ignore a person's background of birth. Generally, metropolitans are cunning. However, people from countryside are mostly tactless. They may do things that would get them beaten to death, but they would not know why he is being beaten up. As such, people's character may differ among people depending on where his or her origin is. But for a person born again, it does not matter where the person was born. That is because the born again have all been freed from the conditions of flesh thanks to the Lord.

However, the problem is that even though Jesus who is God came to this world as the



Savior clothed in human flesh, people look at Jesus from a human perspective only and consider Him as a human, not God. People in the synagogue were the same. They looked at Jesus and disrespected Him saying, “Jesus was born in Bethlehem and brought up in a village called Nazareth. In addition, Nazareth is a one of the most backward countryside villages in Israel. Furthermore, Jesus is a son of Joseph from that backward village.”

There is a small town called Jinbu in Kangwon Province in Korea, and I went to that place a while ago. I stopped there because someone told me that a certain brother lived there when I passed by the town to attend Minister Jaemoon Ha’s wedding. We have some ministers from Kangwon Province, the most mountainous district in Korea, and they sometimes argue, “I used to live in a bigger city than you” even though they all came from a

small town. But then one person from Jinbu among them said, “I am from Jinbu,” and they all disrespected his origin and responded, “That backward place?”

Jews were the same. They all disrespected Jesus because they knew Jesus was from Nazareth. At the time, it was over when a person said he was from Nazareth. They thought there was nothing that was worthy to gain from him. When we look at the Word here, we can see that people were angry after hearing Jesus speaking this way, and took Jesus and tried to push him off the cliff. But Jesus passed through the midst of them and went His way resolutely. This speaks about the divine nature of Jesus.

Jesus also spoke when He met the people who were demon possessed. He said, “Demon, be gone,” and the demons begged, “*What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?*”



(*Matthew 8:29*) Demons were saying, “You are the Son of God and the Creator. Therefore, please let me stay here.” What is the meaning of this Word? It means that even demons know about Jesus well. That is the reason the demons tremble in fear when we command the demons to leave in the name of Jesus Christ. Demons fear because they know the authority in the name of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is our Savior, but He is also God the Creator at the same time. That is why even demons tremble in fear before His name. We must understand this very clearly. People at that time tried to push Jesus down the cliff and kill Him, but Jesus passed through the midst of them leisurely. They could not do what they wanted to, being overwhelmed by His divine authority. That is the part that shows the divine nature of Jesus.

Jesus is God, not human. Therefore, Jesus had two characteristics of God and human. Jesus is

God while He is a human. He is also a human while He is God, and He is also our Savior. As the Word from the Scriptures say, “*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son,*” God Almighty came to this world to save us from sin.

We must believe the Word spoken in the Scripture exactly as it is because we do not know much about Jesus. All those people tried to kill Jesus, but Jesus passed through the midst of them and went His way solemnly. The Scriptures say, “*Then passing through the midst of them, He went His way.*” Jesus did not flee quickly from them at all. Jesus did not beg them not to kill Him or sneak away from them. Jesus was not a person who would suffer such death from humans because Jesus is God, because He is God Almighty.

Here, we can ask, “Then, why did Jesus die on the Cross?” That was the will of Jesus and God



the Father. The Lord had to die on the Cross in our place because He took all our sins upon Him. We must have clear knowledge and faith about that.

At today's morning service, I delivered a sermon about Jesus' fasting for 40 days and being tempted by Satan. At the time, Satan told Jesus who fasted for 40 days to turn the stone into bread and eat it. Jesus actually could do this because He had the power of God. God could do this because He is God who can bring a dead person back to life and create something from nothing. However, Jesus did not do this and only took God's Word and defeated Satan's temptation.

You and I must believe with the clear understanding that Jesus is God. Jesus is God who created the universe, the Creator who created all things of the universe including the forsythia over there and the spider that is

crawling down through the spider web from the ceiling. He is God and He is our Savior. If we believe firmly that Jesus, our God, saved you and me, then that faith dwells in us firmly.

However, what would happen if we understood Jesus only as human? It would be nothing at all no matter how much we believed. That is right. We humans must know clearly the Divinity of Jesus in order to have faith in our hearts. We must not just know Jesus as the mere Savior. We must not understand Jesus only as the Savior because there are so many people in the world who claim to be saviors. There is one God who could save humanity, you and me, from the sins of the world and from the judgment. We deserve to go to hell because we have committed sin before the presence of God, and we could receive salvation from those sins only if God Himself came as our Savior and saved us.



We Must Learn about the Righteousness of Jesus Correctly

“And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). This is the basics of faith and the backbone of faith. This is the backbone of Christian faith. Our spiritual life of faith is over if we do not know this clearly. We cannot know and believe in Jesus just by professing, “I believe in Jesus the Son of God the Father.” We must believe with clear understanding that Jesus is God. The Scriptures says, *“He was in the world, and the world was made through Him.”* As this Word tells us, the entire universe was created by Jesus. You and I were also created by Jesus.

Jesus who created us came to this world for a short while in human flesh to save us when we fell into sin, and actually saved us from sins. Then He ascended to Heaven again after saving

us through the gospel of the water and the Spirit perfectly. We must believe with clear understanding of the ministry of salvation Jesus, God the Creator, had done.

Do you know the reason why so many theologians throughout the entire world and so many Christian pastors and believers do not bear the fruit of faith and come under the curse of sin? It is because they do not know and believe clearly that Jesus is God. They try so hard from their standpoint because they do not have such faith; but all their efforts are done in vain. Therefore, you and I must believe with clear understanding through today’s Scripture passage that Jesus is God the Creator and also our Savior. The Lord revealed some of His Deity through today’s Scripture passage.

Humans can never be God. A human can never be God no matter how he pretends to be holy and spiritual. All those people who purport



to believe in Jesus but do not smell like a human, people who deify himself or herself, are all of cults. Even among the pastors and ministers, if anyone does not smell like a human, then he is demon-possessed or clearly of a cultic sect. They are 100% hypocritical people. However, many people in this era are deceived by such people, saying, “He is so holy.” Would it be good if a pastor became a god of mountains? A pastor who is like a god of mountains is not a pastor. He is just a swindler, not a servant of God.

Jesus is God. Jesus is God who created the universe. Do you believe Jesus is God? Do you believe Jesus is God who created this universe? Jesus is God who created the universe and created each one of us. He is God Almighty who saved us perfectly from sins. Furthermore, this Jesus has become our God, our Savior, our Shepherd, our Friend, and our Groom. Jesus is our groom spiritually and He is our all because

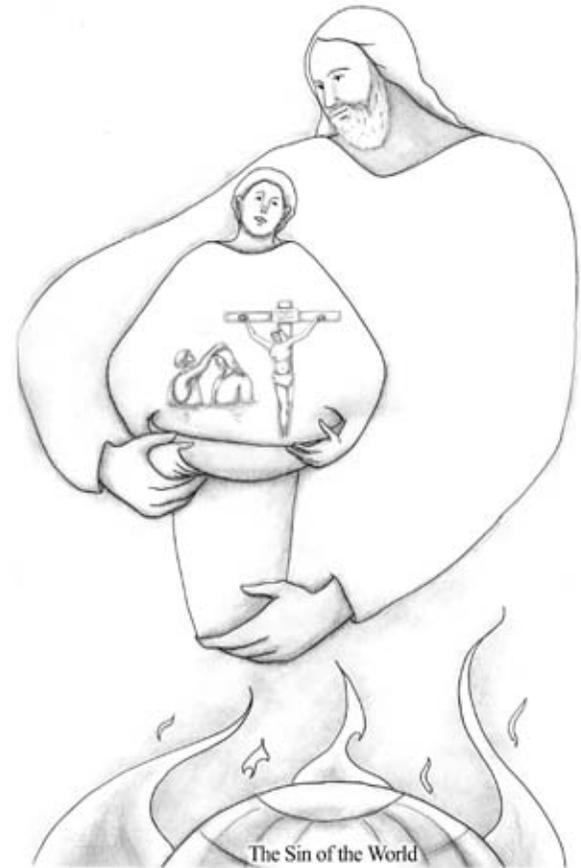
He will take us to the Lord’s Kingdom and live with us eternally.

Jesus is perfect because He is God. He is absolutely perfect. We must know this aspect clearly and also believe it. All of us must become true Christians who believe in God with our hearts, and not just with our head. ☒



SERMON

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CONTENTS



The Salvation The Lord Has Given Is Unfathomable

< Luke 5:1-11 >

“So it was, as the multitude pressed about Him to hear the word of God, that He stood by the Lake of Gennesaret, and saw two boats standing by the lake; but the fishermen had gone from them and were washing their nets. Then He got into one of the boats, which was Simon’s, and asked him to put out a little from the land. And He sat down and taught the multitudes from the boat. When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, ‘Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.’ But Simon answered and said to Him, ‘Master, we have toiled all night and caught

nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net.’ And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking. So they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, ‘Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!’ For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish which they had taken; and so also were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, ‘Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men.’ So when they had brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed Him.”



The Lord Knew Everything about His Disciples

When we look at the Word from the Gospel of Luke chapter 5 here, we can see Jesus stood by the Lake of Gennesaret and saw that a few men, who became His disciples later, came out from a boat and were washing their net. Jesus got on the boat and Peter, who met the Lord here, became a disciple of the Lord. Simply put, the point of today's Word is that the Lord works in times when we humans feel very distressed and powerless. We can see that the Lord comes to our lives and meets us with His precious Word when we are facing difficulties in our lives, and we have exhausted all our strength and we just cannot go on living with our own strength anymore, rather than when we are doing well. The Lord actually knew everything about His disciples. He knows our heritage and He knows

what kind of person we are. Jesus knows everything about us humans because He is the very God who created us. Jesus Christ is God who knows the deepest things that even we do not know.

The field of genetic engineering has developed so much now that they analyze the DNA when a new child is born. Then, they claim to know what sickness that child will be stricken with, when he will die, and whether this child will be healthy or not and so on. They claim to know almost everything about a person's physical life through the study of the person's genetic map. But common people like us cannot interpret even a tiny portion of such a genetic map.

However, Our Lord knows everything about us, including our genetic maps. He really knows everything about us. First, the Lord knows all about our weaknesses. He also knows that we were born with sin from birth and that we



commit sin throughout our life because of this. Our Lord knows everything about us because He is God who created us.

In addition, the Lord who knows everything about us comes to us personally when we are facing a difficult situation. God comes to us, the wretched people, personally and works in us with His Word. Then what do we do when the Lord comes to us like that? As the Apostle Peter said, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!” In the presence of the Lord after meeting the Lord, we acknowledge that we cannot stay close to the Lord because of our shortcomings when we stand before Him. One really can see very clearly his weak self that is totally exposed because every hidden sin is revealed and there is nothing that can be hidden when one stands before the presence of the Lord.

Our Lord knows everything about us; He knows what sinners we really are and what kind

of people we are; and He is the Lord who resolves all our problems as well. Because the Lord knows everything about us, He makes us know about all our sins. By resolving all those sins through the baptism and the Cross, He blesses us to be His workers who do the righteous work before the presence of the God. I am so thankful for the fact that the Lord knows everything about us. I am also thankful because the Lord met us and saved us by resolving all our problems of sins through the baptism He received and the blood He shed on the Cross. The Lord made us God’s precious workers. We can only testify that the Lord’s grace is so great and so amazing, and give thanks to the Lord. I cannot but give sincere thanks to the Lord.

Here in today’s Scripture passage, the Apostle Peter said, “*Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!*” Before meeting Jesus, the future disciples of Jesus actually let the net down all



night long since early evening in order to catch fish. They let the net down all night long and then pulled up the net at early dawn. However, they did not catch any fish. They worked all night long, but the net was empty. As they sat there discouraged and dejected, Jesus got on the boat and said, *“Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.”* Then, Simon the Peter said, *“Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net,”* and they let down the net and they caught so many fish. Peter, who saw God’s work like this said to Jesus, *“Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!”*

Two Great Changes Occur When We Meet the Righteousness of the Lord

What happen if we meet with the righteousness of the Lord? First, we come to understand that we are sinners who commit terrible sins before the presence of God. What is the second change, then? We come to understand and believe that the Lord came to this world and received the baptism and died on the Cross to save us who are really wretched and terrible sinners who cannot possibly stand before the presence of God. Such great changes happen when we meet the Lord.

Peter said, *“Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!”* when he stood before the presence of the Lord. However, the Lord said to Peter, *“From now on you will catch men.”* Actually, when Peter came before the Lord’s presence, the Lord also knew what kind of sinner



Peter was. Therefore, the Lord resolved all the problems of Peter's sins, because Peter could not do any righteous work because of that sin. Peter could not stand before the presence of God due to his sins. The Lord, who is Peter's God, became Peter's Savior and approved Peter as the worker of His righteousness who could do the righteous work.

As such, the grace God has bestowed upon us is so great, and we are so grateful for it. We really were the offspring of sin who could not be close to the Lord like Peter who could only say before the presence of God, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" However, our Lord did not reject us who were like this, and came to us and clothed us with the precious grace of His salvation. The Lord took all our sins upon Him, washed them clean by personally receiving the baptism, and saved us perfectly by receiving the judgment for the sins on the Cross.

I give sincere thanks to the Lord. The Lord met us through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, solved all our problem of sins, and made us righteous people to do the work of God's righteousness. We really come to know how great and how deep God's love is in all these things. Peter said here, "*Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!*" and that was before Peter genuinely met the Lord. That was before Peter knew that the Lord washed all our sins clean by coming to this world and taking all our sins upon Him by receiving the baptism and dying on the Cross. Even though Peter said this, what did the Lord say? He said, "*From now on you will catch men.*" The Lord knows everything about our human life because the Lord created us. That is why the Lord is able to resolve all our problems related to life, and He really resolved all the problems of our life.

Without depending on the Lord, without the



Lord blotting out his sins, without the Lord approving him as God's people, Peter was a person who could not stand before the presence of our Lord. Peter was a person who could never stand before the presence of God without the grace of salvation the Lord gives. However, the Lord bestowed such amazing grace upon Peter and later made Him a precious servant of God.

Here, Peter said, "*I am a sinful man,*" and actually, how can a sinful human being stand unashamedly before Jesus Christ who is God? There is no one who could stand before the presence of God if he does not believe in the Word of salvation of the water and the blood with which Jesus Christ blotted out all our sins. Although we may be able to look at ourselves and say, "I am honest and upright in this world," no one can stand boldly before the presence of the Lord. The only thing we can say standing before the presence of the Lord is, "I really have

many shortcomings and I am weak. I am nothing. I am a person that deserves to go to hell. However, the Lord came to this world and saved me because He so loved me. I have received salvation by holding onto the grace of salvation the Lord has given with faith in my heart. That is the only reason I am able to stand before God and follow You, my Lord, and do the precious work You have entrusted to me. I am really thankful to You, Lord!"

We Were Such People

The grace God has bestowed upon us is this kind of love. We were really wretched sinners before we met the Lord and we were people who could not help but go to hell; we were people who could not receive cleansing of filthy sins. However, you and I have received salvation like



this because the Lord met us and blotted out all our sins cleanly. The Lord washed our sins cleanly and made us the instruments of God's righteousness. God has approved us as saints and workers who do not have sin; people who do the righteous work of spreading the love and salvation of the Lord to other people.

In today's Scripture passage here, the future disciples of Jesus came out of the boats and washed the net. We must also wash the net spiritually whenever we do something. We must wash the net cleanly and also mend the torn parts. The farmers plant seeds and sprinkle fertilizers and insecticide to harvest fruits of their labor like that. It is the same with fishing. You cannot catch fish just by dropping the net down at anytime and then pulling it up. Catching fish in the sea is the same as farming. They must wash the net every day and they must wash it even more if fish were not caught. Because they cannot catch fish if the

net has a lot of filthy things on it. They must clean it even more and also mend the torn parts of the net.

I know such things well because I used to live near the sea. There used to be sea mammals called "water pigs" in the sea of Gadeok Island, and I think they are probably some kind of dolphins. The sea mammal was really as big as a pig and fishermen disliked it the most because it was just a mass of fat. In addition, when they were caught in the net they twisted and turned wildly and ripped up the net everywhere. That was another reason why fishermen disliked that mammal the most. Anyway, fishermen should be prepared to throw the net. Therefore, they have to wash the net and also mend the net each time they finish fishing.

I am publishing many books with my coworkers these days and this is really difficult and tiring. I just handed over the manuscripts that



I have revised, and I think I may have overdone it. I feel really exhausted physically. Maybe I went beyond my physical capability, and I feel sick to my bones. We humans become sick when we do more than our capability. Though we may be fine spiritually, flesh becomes sick when we use up too much strength and have too much stress. Every other part of my body now seems to have broken down, and during these times, I think “It would be nice to be an idiot and do not think about anything.”

As I have been going through this physical hardship, I thought the other ministers working with me must be so tired and exhausted with so much work and I am thinking that we must share the work with more workers. We become exhausted when we do too much work. Therefore, I am thinking that we need to divide up the work and do the entrusted work only within our capability. Actually, I have been so deeply

engaged in my work these days that it has been very difficult even to share fellowship with the saints. Therefore, I intend to divide up the work of publication to lighten my burden, and go and do some work overseas, meet fellow saints, and spend some time thinking about the grace the Lord has given to me also.

Anyway, we can do God’s work well when we always wash the net and mend it. Here, the Lord said to Peter, “*Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.*” Then, Peter said, “*Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net,*” and threw down the net. Generally, there aren’t many fish in deep waters and there usually are more fish near the shore. Of course, there are fish in deep waters too, but they are harder to catch because they drift along with currents.

Though it did not make sense to Peter who



was an experienced fisherman, he said he would do this because the Lord told him to do so, and he ended up catching so many fish when he did according to the Lord's Word. He had to ask all his friends help him pull up the net because there were too many fish and it was too difficult to pull up the net by himself. He caught so many fish that the net was about to tear. Peter thought at that time, "This person is not an ordinary person. He knows things beyond common sense. He came to realize that He is the Son of God. That's why the first thing Peter said when he met the Lord was, *"Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!"* Peter came to know the Deity of Jesus. He came to know that Jesus is the Son of God and the Savior. Realizing who Jesus was, Peter knelt before His presence and said, *"Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!"*

We must fully know who the person that

saved us from the sins of the world is; who the person that we believe in is; and what grace of salvation the Lord has bestowed upon us. However, you may think, "So, we have been saved from the sin. But, why do you talk about that every day? Don't you know anything else besides that?" Do you really think the grace of salvation is so minute? It is not like that. It's just that the grace, love, and salvation of the Lord that met us, blotted out our sins, and made us the instruments of His righteousness are so profound and so great. Therefore, we, the born-again Christians, cannot help but talk about this whenever we open our mouth. We cannot live any other way than to talk about the salvation God has given to us, praise God, give glory to God, be thankful to God, and give our hands, feet, mouth, and all our bodies to the Lord as God's servants until we take our last dying breath. What is the reason? It's because you and I have



received such great grace from the Lord. We have actually received such amazing grace.

Let's say a person has died for us. Just thinking of that brings tears and makes us become so thankful. Just the same, today's Christians shed tears with gratitude when they think, "Jesus died in our place." However, we must confirm something in our hearts here. Such degree of faith, thinking, and thanksgiving can be found in any human society. For example, let's say someone went into a fortress of an enemy and he was at the brink of death with no way out, but a certain person saved him and he was able to live and the person who saved him died in the process. How grateful would he really be? He would not be able to forget the person who saved him all his life, and live with thankfulness throughout the rest of his life.

But, the gratefulness to the Lord for the salvation He has given to us cannot be compared

to this. The Lord really has bestowed to you and me the unfathomable love and salvation that cannot be compared with anything found in human society.

Think about this: The Lord has made you and me sinless, made us God's people, and made us the righteous. Then, how can that compare with the love of someone dying for another person to rescue him? Is God's love the kind of love that can be found in human society, too? No, it is not like that. The love of the Lord is not the kind of love that people of this world can give. It is not a love that can be found in this world.

Even people in this world perform ceremonies and make statues to commemorate a person who died for another person. If that is the case, how can you and I, who have received salvation, forget the love of salvation that the Lord has given? We can never forget this. You and I can never forget the grace of the Lord and we cannot



help but be thankful for that eternally. We cannot help but give thanks to the Lord because we know how deep and great this salvation, and the grace that the Lord has given to us is. I am really grateful that the Lord made such a person like me God's precious servant.

Our body is so weak that we become exhausted even when we do just a little amount of work, or when we are stressed even a little bit. Before, I was confident about deliberating over certain things and I could stay up all night for a few days and have no problem. But now, I become totally worn out when I just overwork one night. Anyway, I am thankful the Lord made me His servant even though I am lacking, and bestowed such great salvation upon me. I want you to remember this. We must not forget how God has saved you and me and what great grace God has given to you and me. The grace the Lord has bestowed upon us is so great and so precious.

How could we become a person without sin with our own strength? No one can become a person without sin through human means and strength. However, the Lord said, "*With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible*" (Matthew 19:26). God Almighty gave us eternal and sinless life by coming to this world in human flesh, receiving the baptism, and dying on the Cross to blot out all our sins and being resurrected from death. We have become righteous through God saving us like that and through our faith of believing in that salvation.

That is right. We have now become a person without sin. It is natural for us to be without sin after being born again, but it is absolutely impossible without God's special love and salvation. We have become righteous people without sin because the Lord has bestowed us with great and amazing salvation. We cannot help but be thankful for this. It is because the



Lord Almighty has fulfilled the work that we could not even hope for.

Let's always believe and follow the Lord with grateful hearts for making such inadequate people like us sinless and making us the righteous. As we look at ourselves, we must have the grateful mindset before the presence of God who saved us. That is really true. Are you also like that? We were really nothing, but we have been catching many fish since we started to believe in and follow the Lord according to His Word. We really were people who always disappointed; but what happened after meeting and believing in the Lord. Haven't we received precious blessings before the presence of God? Our spiritual net is filled with fish. What great blessings we have actually received? You and I are people who have received many blessings. Do you also believe this?

Do you think, "What did He give us after we

have received salvation? What blessings?" Such a person has not even become a young child yet spiritually. How does a child react when he meets his parents? He smiles and moves about playfully to show his gratefulness, right? Even a little child knows that parents are precious. Even a child cries and weeps when his parents are gone. If you do not have gratefulness in your heart even after you have received salvation, then it is proof that you have not even become a little child yet.

You must be mature in your faith and faith must grow. In addition, you must attend the meeting diligently and listen to God's Word often if you want your faith to grow. God did not give us a blessing that does not mean much. He gave us an amazing grace. He gave us a great blessing. Do you believe this? There is no blessing greater than this in the world. No blessing can be compared to the blessing of



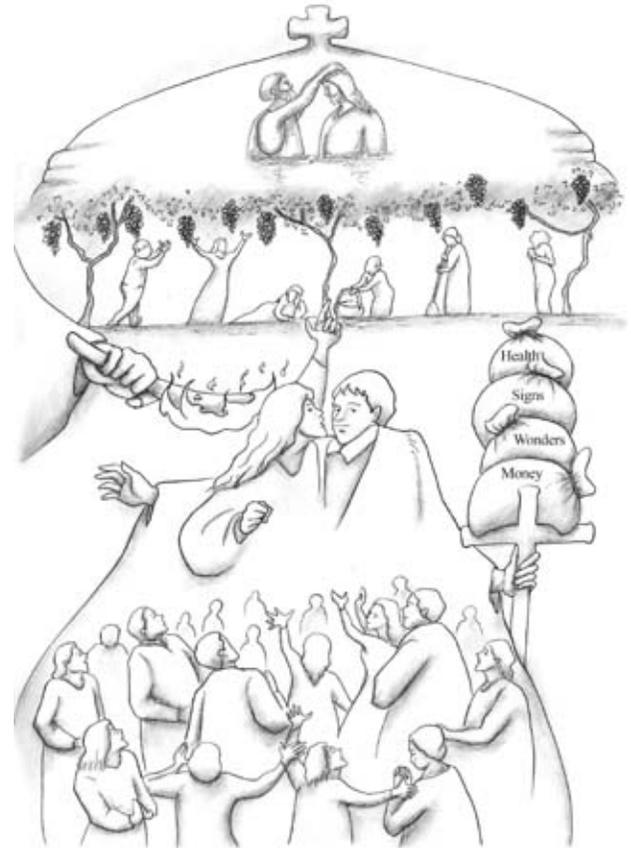
salvation the Lord has given to us. The Lord bestowed such a great blessing to all mankind.

I will end this sermon with thanksgiving before the presence of our Lord who has given this blessing to us. Halleluiah! ☒



SERMON

14



Jesus Who Saved Sinners from Sin

< **Luke 5:27-32** >

“After these things He went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, ‘Follow Me.’ So he left all, rose up, and followed Him. Then Levi gave Him a great feast in his own house. And there were a great number of tax collectors and others who sat down with them. And their scribes and the Pharisees complained against His disciples, saying, ‘Why do You eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?’ Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.’”

Who Did God Save from Their Sins?

I am truly thankful that God has allowed us to have this prayer meeting and also allow us to sing praises and preach God’s Word vocally through the microphone like this. I am thankful we have this freedom in our country. I have been to China safely thanks to the grace of God and your prayers. In China, we would be imprisoned if we preached God’s Word publicly like this because they do not have religious freedom like we do in Korea. There are a few of our bothers and sisters in China and my heart is always with them. I believe God will raise them as God’s servants and make them stand upright and have the gospel of the water and the Spirit evangelized throughout all of China through them and have many souls receive salvation from sins. Not only Chinese, but also that all people throughout the entire world would receive salvation from sin



and manifest God's glory if you and I prayed to God, believed in Him, and tried to achieve this task.

I want you to know that it is by God's precious grace that we can praise and pray to our hearts' content like this. Foreigners can't even evangelize freely in communist countries. A foreigner doing such work would be taken to jail by government authorities. Therefore, they must work secretly and they cannot even go around freely in full dress because the security officers chase the foreigners by their appearance. They cannot even put on a tie freely and they always have to be careful in rural areas whenever they go outside. I give thanks before the presence of the Lord who gives us such freedom. I earnestly want God to protect and bless our coworkers in China, our brothers and sisters, and ministers throughout the entire world. I want the Lord to

give them the proper faith and bestow precious blessing upon all things they are engaged in.

Jesus Came to This World to Save All Sinners

Both in the old times and in this era, people slander and stay away from people who commit sin, or people whose sin has been revealed. However, Jesus said, "*I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.*" The Lord came to this world to call the sinners to repentance and make them believe in the righteousness of God. Actually, all humans are beings that commit sin. Humans can surely steal things without learning because there is a heart of thievery in the essence of the human mind. You cannot guarantee that you wouldn't do this either. Rather, you could possibly sin even more. If someone was made a



president of the country, he might deposit the whole country in his account. Anyone can do such a thing. However, God Almighty knew already that you and I would do such things and He made us repent before we actually do that.

The reason people do not commit terrible sins is because the circumstance has not yet been fostered to do so. Anyone would commit sin right away if a proper circumstance for committing sin were fostered. A person that does not sin even in a proper circumstance for committing sin is the truly righteous person. But a person that does not sin because a suitable environment for committing sin has not been fostered is a person who commits sin, not a person who does not commit sin. Do you understand what I am saying? That's why the Lord said, "*I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.*" Actually, when we see people that Jesus called, we can see that He

called the people who are poor in their own righteousness rather than people who are rich in their own righteousness.

We can confirm through today's Scripture passage that Jesus called sinners from all sorts of people. Even in today's Word, it says that Jesus called the tax collector who was called Levi. As other disciples did, this person left everything and followed Jesus when Jesus called him. After being called by Jesus, he invited Jesus and his disciples and held a big feast with a heart of thanksgiving to God.

But, what happened at that feast. Pharisees who came to the feast together were whispering about Jesus and Levi, saying, "Jesus would have known what a thief that person Levi was if Jesus was a real prophet." Actually, the tax collector named Levi here was not just an ordinary thief. He was a really big thief. Maybe he took in more than Taewoo Roh, the former president of Korea.



Anyway, one definite thing is that that the person named Levi was a very big sinner in the eyes of the other people and also in the eyes of Jesus.

However, there is one thing we must understand clearly. Who in this world can receive the remission of sins through the righteousness of the Lord? A person who acknowledges that he is a complete sinner can receive the remission of sins through faith thanks to the righteousness of God. Only a complete sinner is able to become a perfectly righteous person by receiving the remission of sins.

On the other hand, what happens to a person who thinks that he is not a sinner? It is difficult for him to receive the remission of sins. Therefore, a person who does not think he is a sinner must first become a sinner before the presence of God in order to receive the remission of sins. That's the reason God lets the evil people exist in this world. God allows such scoundrels

to remain in this world in order to make those who do not think they are sinners become sinners. God lets those people who are like a thorn in the eyes of the people who pretend to be holy and righteous spill all out all their filth.

That's right. God did not sweep away the people who were so prickly that we would become crazy if we did not insult them and fight against them. God let such people coexist with us in order to make us understand through them what terrible sinners we are.

What did our God do when He cast out Adam and Eve, who had sinned against God, from the Garden of Eden? It would have been painful to God just to cast them out, but He actually cursed the land they had to dwell in. He cursed, "*Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you*" (*Genesis 3:18*). They could have had resentment toward God because the thorns and thistles were so painful for them. But they also could have



also realized how wonderful was the Garden of Eden they used to live in.

We are also like that. We would never seek God and His righteousness if we did not face difficulties. Therefore, our Lord gave us difficulties to make us seek the righteousness of God. God allowed a really terrible and evil environment for us in order to teach us what great sinners we are before the presence of God. Hence, God made us realize we are complete sinners. That's right. You and I who have received the remission of sins were complete sinners and we were able to become perfectly righteous people by knowing and believing the righteousness of our Lord. We must understand this fact clearly. Isn't that right? Therefore, whoever has not become a sinner yet must understand what a sinner he is. Then, they can receive the blessing of the remission of sins and also receive all the blessings of Heaven.

The Pharisees there made sarcastic remarks toward Jesus and His disciples, "*Why do You eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?*" As you can see in this remark by the Pharisees, the tax collectors, tax officials, were terribly wretched sinners. The power of money was as great back then as it is now. That's because money refers to the power and ability in this world. Tax collectors at the time were horrible thieves. They were absolutely despicable traitors. They were terrible traitors who sold out their country and sucked in the blood of the people in their country. Israel at that time was a colonial country to the Roman Empire. As our country was under the Japanese rule for 35 years until the end of the Second World War, Israel was ruled by the Roman Empire.

Tax collectors did the work of collecting taxes from the people for the Roman Empire. However, there was much corruption in that work. They



collected as much as they could from the people and turned over only a little to the Roman government and took the rest for themselves. They were not just ordinary thieves. The Roman government actually did not collect much tax in Israel. They did not assess a huge tax because it could cause violent uprising. However, tax collectors lied, “Rome told us to collect much tax,” in order to fill up their own pockets. They used the name of the Roman Emperor to exploit Israeli people for their own profit. Most Israeli people knew this situation well. Therefore, they considered the tax collectors as terrible and wretched persons.

However, Jesus called this person named Levi who was the most terrible tax collector of them all. Jesus told him, “*Follow Me.*” Then, that person left everything and followed Jesus. What does this Word mean? It means this person knew that he was a sinner even though he was a tax

collector, and he understood Jesus accepted him even though the Lord knew about him. We can understand that he knew this from the fact that he held a big feast for Jesus and His disciples.

Actually, what was the reason Jesus came to this world? Jesus came to this world to save truly complete sinners like this tax collector; people that ordinary people would never associate with because they have so much sin. A sinner with a little sin cannot receive the remission of sins. Think about our selves. We were all complete sinners, but we have now become perfectly righteous through the salvation of Jesus. Therefore, in the Kingdom of God, there are only people who were complete sinners before but are perfectly righteous now. There is no such person who is partially sinful or a little righteous. Then, where is the destination of such a person who has received the remission of half of sin and did not receive the remission of the other half of sin?



Such partial sinners will go to hell. I want you to make sure of this. Only sinners who have all their sins revealed like this tax collector can belong to God's Kingdom, in God's Garden of Eden, and among the people who have received the blessing of salvation from God.

Even though we do not commit certain sin through our actions, we still have such sources of sins in our hearts. Our inadequate flesh has all such sources of sins plenteously. Let's take a look at our physical body for once. Our flesh can commit so many sins that the Gospel of Mark says that the things that come out of people's heart are evil thoughts, murder, covetousness, evil, lewdness, envy, anger, theft, slandering, evil eyes, and foolishness (Mark 7:20-23). Our flesh has all these vicious sources and also actually does such things. We think evil thoughts with fleshly thinking. We commit murder with fleshly thinking. Though we might not kill a person by

actually stabbing him, we sometimes have the heart of wanting to kill a person with our fleshly thinking and vigor. We also commit adultery. With what do we also commit sins of lewdness, envy, theft, pride and all 12 kinds of sins? Do we sin with our spirit? No, we don't. We sin with our human physical body, with our flesh. Of course we sin with our hearts, but we forget the sins of our hearts easily.

What about This Physical Body?

Our physical body can commit these 12 kinds of sin at any time. It is the same with the physical body of us who have received the remission of sins. We can confess before God that we are complete sinners because our physical body always commits sin. We are weak and evil people who just don't sin because the



circumstance is not suitable to sin; we would otherwise sin with no hesitation if the circumstances allowed. We can say that the physical body of a person always wants to sin regardless of whether the circumstance is suitable or not.

Therefore, we can never say that we are righteous physically before the presence of God. However, we can only say that we have become righteous spiritually by believing the salvation of the Lord and the remission of sins. Actually, who is a perfect person? Who can be a perfect gentleman? They may look dignified, but they are not really dignified. Take a look at the history of Catholic Church. During the Reformation, Catholics stabbed and killed people with such things like bamboo spears in places like France and Switzerland. Catholics took the protestant believers and ripped their bodies apart.

Then, how are the religious people of this era? The religious people in the world always wear holy looking clothes, do benevolent work of deliverance, share love, and really pretend to be as compassionate as they could be. However, the reason they are pretending to be righteous is because they are evil. People always show their true self when they become powerful. Humans are essentially evil like this.

Humans are essentially evil. I don't mean to say that you should live an evil life, but I am telling you that you must know that you are essentially evil before the presence of God. You must acknowledge before the presence of God that you are evil and therefore receive the perfect salvation God gives. When people recognize their evilness and receive God's salvation, all such people become God's children and become the righteous, their physical bodies become stronger, and their souls receive blessings of God.



Therefore, we must know whom Jesus, our God, came to call in this world, and why He also called Levi who worked in the revenue department.

At the time when Jesus was in Israel, Pharisees must have tried to live righteously before the presence of God and they tried to live according to God's will. But, then, why didn't Jesus call the Pharisees? God called such an ignorant person like Peter and John who had furious tempers instead of Pharisees. Then, why did Jesus call such people with bad temperament? Why did Jesus call such a tax collector who was a thief among thieves and bestow the grace of the remission of sins on him? There were many upright people at that time and Pharisees lived faithful spiritual lives and did not even lie. But, why didn't Jesus call them?

As I have said earlier, humans pretend to be righteous because they are evil. A truly righteous

person shows mercy on others naturally without pretending to be righteous. Jesus did not call the Pharisees who looked righteous here because they were partial sinners and somewhat righteous people who pretended to be righteous. Jesus called the people who were wretched at the time.

Didn't Jesus say, "*I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance*"? That's correct. Jesus did not come to call people who live an upright life in this world like the Pharisees. Jesus knows the hearts of all the people because He is the Creator who created the human being. It means that Jesus knows that human beings are a complete mass of sin and how inadequate we are. That's why Jesus said, "I have not come to call the righteous, not sinners." Jesus came to call sinners. He came to this world to call the complete sinners and make them repent.



The Lord said, “You are a sinner. You are a sinner who commits sin until you die because you have original sin. Do not pretend that you do not sin and that you are righteous. You will go to hell. Therefore, understand that you are a sinner destined to hell and turn back and believe in Me and receive the remission of all sins. I have come to save you from all your sins.” Jesus came to call sinners and make them repent. He came to turn them back and receive the remission of sins by believing in Jesus. Jesus came to save sinners and make them righteous. But, the Lord called such complete sinners and saved us and made you and me perfectly righteous people.

A short while ago, I went to Yenji City in northeast China and met the brother Youngsik Shin. He was a very mild-mannered person. He was well educated and he used to work for the forestry department of the communist government of China before he retired at the age

of 50. In China, they automatically retire when they become 50 years old. Anyway, that brother is really a well-meaning person. However, although this brother believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, he constantly says nonsensical things out of his pride whenever I ask him to give his testimony of salvation.

Therefore, I told him God’s Word that said, “Only a complete sinner becomes completely righteous.” Then I opened up the Gospel of Mark chapter 7 and asked him, “Brother Shin, are you or are you not a person who commits theft and adultery?” His face burned red when I asked him that? Therefore, I asked him “Aren’t you a crazy bum and a thief?” Then, he admitted with his mouth that he was a complete sinner. Then his face became bright and his heart transformed and made a confession of faith that he believed that the Lord turned a complete sinner into a perfectly righteous person.



Jesus has blotted out all our sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. He has blotted out all the sins of people. Then, why can't people receive the remission of sins yet? It's because they do not acknowledge they are complete sinners before the presence of God, because they do not confess their sins as they are. They do not know the grace if they do not know their fundamental nature.

We who have received the remission of sins are the same. It always becomes an obstacle in our hearts and we are less thankful if we do not acknowledge that we are complete sinners in physical terms and that we have become perfectly righteous people through faith. You might look at other saints and think, "Why is that person like that? Why is he so evil? Why does he live like that when he has received the remission of sins first?" A saint who does not admit he is a complete sinner in physical terms is a person

who does not acknowledge that he has become a perfectly righteous person through faith thinks like that. They look at other saints like that because they still have their own righteousness in them and because they do not admit they are complete sinners in their hearts even though they say they are complete sinners, and they have clearly received the remission of sins. However, what would happen if they admitted they were complete sinners before the presence of God and also believed that they have become perfectly righteous people through the righteousness of the Lord? They would praise the Lord whenever they look at the other saints' shortcomings. They cannot help but do that. Do you understand this?

I do not mean that you should live like a sinner who does not believe in the perfect righteousness of God. Rather, I am saying that you must live with faith like the righteous who believes in the righteousness of God. Our Lord



had mercy on us and came to save us because we were complete sinners who could not help but go to hell. We have received the remission of sins by believing in the Lord because He did actually save us from the sin. We have not become righteous because we have something just and benevolent in us. It's not likely that someone goes to Heaven because he has done good works after believing in Jesus and another person goes to hell because he is evil. Rather, a person who has more shortcomings revealed in this world receives salvation from the Lord. Jesus came to save such people and He did actually save those people.

Jesus did not come to save such antiseptic people from sin that say, "I am a clean person. I am antiseptic." Jesus came to save a sinner like the tax collector that appears in today's Word. Jesus said clearly, "*I have not come to call the*

righteous, but sinners, to repentance." Do you believe this Word is the Truth?

I read this verse many times before. Therefore, I thought, "Jesus did not come to call the righteous and I must be a sinner until death because Jesus came to call sinners." I always thought of the Word like that and prayed, "Lord, this sinner has come to you," with pride for the fact that I was a sinner. I prayed with pride for that fact and told this to other people with pride, but the Word did not mean this as I looked at it carefully later. This Word means that God Himself did not come to call the righteous, but that He came to call sinners and make them repent to have God's righteousness. Our Lord was saying that He called sinners to make them repent and believe in Jesus in order for them to receive the perfect salvation. The Lord called those complete sinners to give them the blessing of becoming perfectly righteous people. You



must understand the meaning of this Word clearly.

Many people believe in Jesus and interpret the Word absurdly according to their own thinking, and we must not make such error. We were complete sinners. Everyone was born as a complete sinner. However, such sinners became perfectly righteous people by believing in the salvation of our Lord. There are many around us now who shall become righteous like this. Through this Word today, I am saying that the Lord saved us from all sins and made us perfectly righteous when we were complete sinners. We must always remember this Word in our hearts and be thankful for the grace of God as we live in this world.

What is the point we must absolutely remember at this time? It's that we used be complete sinners and that we became perfectly righteous because our Lord saved us. We must

remember that all these things were of God's grace and give thanks to Him. I am so thankful for this.

Many people in the world think of themselves, "Even so, I am a decent person." However, that is just our thinking and we are not actually decent. We are actually wretched human beings, but we cannot see ourselves clearly because we have been deceived by the Devil and the education of the world. We look at ourselves like that because we have been deceived by many so-called saints in the world and because we have been deceived by the cultures of the world. That is true. The world teaches people, "Live righteously. Live an upright life. Then, you will later receive blessings from God."

I also used to think like that. I thought I was a decent person. Our dream when we were young was something like, "I want to become a president when I grow up." Then when we



become a little older, we say, “I don’t want to be a president. Now, I just want to be a politician; someone like a prime minister.” Then when we grow even older, we say, “I think even that’s too much. I think it would be nice if I became an executive of a company.” When we become an adult, we say, “I just want my family to be healthy and have enough food on the table.” Our dreams become smaller and smaller like this.

What does this mean? Everything goes down and down as we come to know our selves. We become humble. Even so, we give hearty points to ourselves. We think, “I would at least make 80% grade.” Another person may think, “What is 80 points? I am at least 95.” However, what happens as we get older? We give ourselves about 98 points until we are 10 years old, but then we give 70 points when we become 20 years old. Then when we become 30 years old, the grade goes down drastically to 25, and a person

who knows himself a little better gives himself 0 points or even minus 100 points. Why is it like this? That’s because the more we come to know ourselves the more it becomes difficult to give hearty points to ourselves.

However, our God said clearly, “*I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.*” We were complete sinners from the beginning. Because we were complete sinners, because we were sinners destined to go to hell, because we were people who could not help but be cursed by God, God had mercy on us and came to this world to save us who were wretched sinners. The Lord took all our sins upon Him by receiving the baptism at the Jordan River and resolved those sins on the Cross and saved us perfectly. Therefore, we must know ourselves clearly. We must believe, “We are sinners physically, but we have become perfectly righteous by believing in



the Lord.” More than anything else, we must know ourselves clearly. Do you understand this?

Our brothers and sisters here must also acknowledge before the presence of God that we were all sinners and also be grateful that the Lord has saved us. I praise our Lord who has saved sinners completely from all sins. ☒





USER GUIDE



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PAGE BY PAGE



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