



Sermons on the Gospel of Luke (V)

WE ARE THE SERVANTS WHO BELIEVE IN THE GOSPEL OF THE WATER AND THE SPIRIT



PAUL C. JONG

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WE ARE THE SERVANTS WHO BELIEVE IN THE
GOSPEL OF THE WATER AND THE SPIRIT



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Our Lord Actually Came Into Human History

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

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

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



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PAUL C. JONG

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Sermons on the Gospel of Luke (V)
*We Are the Servants Who Believe in the Gospel
of the Water and the Spirit*

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Preface

Think of the Consequences of Your Beliefs before Deciding What to Believe

If we were to build a house, just how many factors would we take into consideration? We'd ask, "What size a lot should I purchase? How large should the house be? How many rooms should I put in, and how big should the living room be? What construction material should I use, and what's the required budget including labor cost? Can I afford all these costs? If I were to get a mortgage, do I have the means to pay it back?" We'd begin building the house only after all these issues are taken into consideration and we are assured of its feasibility.

Like this, it's taken for granted that we should carefully consider various factors when it comes to building a house on this earth, where we will live only for a short while. Yet too many people are



careless when it comes to entering Heaven, their everlasting home. Even most Christians believe in God arbitrarily without caring what the result of their blind faith will be. Therefore, before deciding what to believe, everyone must first ask the following questions and consider them very carefully: “Although I believe in Jesus, there is sin in my heart. Will I really enter Heaven by believing as I do? I’m told that my daily sins can be washed away through prayers of repentance, but can I really reach salvation by offering prayers of repentance diligently and doing many good deeds? I’ve been taught that my original sin was remitted away when I first believed in Jesus, and that if I try my best not to commit sin from then on and devote myself to sanctification, I will be completely sanctified at my last breath to enter Heaven. But is this really the case? Can I really avoid committing sin just because I try?” Only when one has clear answers to these questions should he decide what kind of faith he should have.

Once you consider these questions honestly

before God, you will reach the conclusion that you can never blot out your heart’s sins on your own. The conclusion is clear: If you have believed only in the blood of the Cross all this time without knowing the gospel of the water and the Spirit, then you will not be able to enter Heaven through such a doctrinal faith. The Bible declares, “*The wages of sin is death*” (*Romans 6:23*). Therefore, anyone who has even the slightest trace of sin in his heart can never enter the Heaven of everlasting life. If this is true for you, then you must cast aside the line of faith that you had chosen as soon as possible. You must find the Truth that will enable you to be truly and wholly born again and enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

Do you know the gospel of the water and the Spirit? If you don’t, you will encounter this gospel through this book. If you already know the gospel of the water and the Spirit, then I ask you to consider meticulously what consequences will follow when you believe in and follow this gospel on the one hand, and, on the other hand, what will be the



consequences of refusing to believe in this gospel, rejecting it despite knowing it.

The Lord said, “*Also I say to you, whoever confesses Me before men, him the Son of Man also will confess before the angels of God. But he who denies Me before men will be denied before the angels of God*” (Luke 12:8-9). What does it mean by “confessing the Lord” here? It means confessing by faith that the Lord is the One who has come by the water, the blood, and the Spirit (1 John 5:6-10). In other words, it is a confession of faith; one that’s made when we believe that Jesus is God Incarnate, that He bore all our sins by being baptized by John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, in a form of the laying on of hands, and that He paid off all the wages of these sins by bearing the punishment of the Cross.

Does this mean that the born-again righteous who have already received the remission of sins are free to do whatever pleases them, since they no longer have any sin? No, that is not the case. Even we the

righteous, who have recognized the gospel of the water and the Spirit as the Truth and believe in it, must consider the result of our choice—that is, we must ask ourselves how we ought to live our remaining lives. All of us need to consider carefully the following questions: “How should I live my remaining life from now on? What should I do to live my life to the fullest and in the most worthwhile way? The Lord has accepted such a prodigal son like me, clothed me in the garment of righteousness, and made me His disciple. What will then happen if I just bury His gospel in my chest instead of sharing it with others? Will the Lord still welcome me to the Kingdom of Heaven?”

With His Word, the Lord has already pointed out the right path for us so that we may consider these questions, calculate the results, and reach the correct answers. The Lord says that for the righteous believers in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the wisest life is led when they set their minds on the spreading of this gospel and live as its faithful



workers. He says, “*Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you*” (Matthew 6:33).

What will then happen in contrast if the born-again live according to their fleshly desires? The Lord says that He will annul such people’s salvation and cast them into hell no matter how they may confess with their lips that they believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The Lord calls such people “evil and lazy servants,” or the “wicked.” He says that in the end times, He will sort out the wicked from the righteous and cast them out into the darkness (Matthew 13:49; 25:26). He also says that those who do not serve the gospel of righteousness even as they know it will be punished even more.

Therefore, it is imperative for all of us to do rational calculations before the gospel of the water and the Spirit and make the wisest choice. It is my earnest prayer that the Word of God would be planted in your heart and take its root, so that you would make the blessed decision to serve the gospel of

righteousness. ☒



SERMON

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Whoever Enters into The Message of the Cross Believes in the Gospel of The Water and the Spirit

< Luke 13:22-29 >

“And He went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem. Then one said to Him, ‘Lord, are there few who are saved?’ And He said to them, ‘Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able. When once the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open for us,’ and He will answer and say to you, ‘I do not know you, where you are from,’ then you will begin to say, ‘We ate and drank in Your presence, and You

taught in our streets.’ But He will say, ‘I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.’ There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out. They will come from the east and the west, from the north and the south, and sit down in the kingdom of God.”

< 1 Corinthians 1:18-25 >

“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written: ‘I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.’ Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the



message preached to save those who believe. For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.”

What Sort of People Enter into the Narrow Door?

In 1 Corinthians 1:18, Apostle Paul said to the believers in Corinth, *“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”* In other words, “the message of the Cross” is the message of destruction to those who shall be destroyed, but it is God’s wisdom to us who have received salvation.

Then, what does the message of the Cross mean here? “The message of the Cross” here means that we must absolutely pass over death once in order to go to the Kingdom of God after receiving the remission of sins by believing in God. In other words, it means that every sinner must absolutely be in the status of a sinner first to be born again by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. How can we become sinners? We can be sinners by realizing our own nature before the Word of God. The Scriptures say that we become sinners because we are beings that cannot live according to God’s Law.

Therefore, believing in the message of the Cross means believing in following three things: First, we must believe in and acknowledge God the Creator who created us. Secondly, we must believe that we are sinners who are going to die due to our sins before the presence of God. Lastly, we must believe that our Lord took all our sins upon Himself at once by being baptized by John the Baptist, died in our place on the Cross, and saved us. The message of the



Cross signifies these three things. It means that we receive salvation from all sins and attain eternal life only by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit the Lord has given to us, and dying with Jesus Christ once because we are sinners who are going to die due to our sins before the presence of God.

That is correct. Anyone in the world who believes in God must acknowledge that he is a person who is going to die once due to his sins before the presence of God. It means that a person can enter into the message of the Cross only if he acknowledges himself, "I cannot receive salvation aside from Jesus Christ and I am a person who could not but die if Jesus Christ did not save me with the baptism He received in the Jordan River and the blood of the Cross." We cannot believe in Jesus and be saved without knowing anything about the gospel of the water and the Spirit just like we cannot get into someone's home by making a hole in its wall. That actually does not even make sense.

We are people who must definitely die once

because we were born sinners from birth. We each must definitely acknowledge the fact that we are such people who cannot but die before the presence of God due to sins of each one of us. We were actually people who will die before the presence of God due to our sins. We are beings who were born with such a miserable fate. Do you acknowledge this? That is why the Apostle Paul says here, "*For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.*" Christians must first realize that they are sinners before the presence of God, and they must die once through faith by acknowledging God's Law and humbling themselves under God's just Law that says, "*The wages of sin is death.*"

A person who acknowledged God's Word and died once by faith can truly be cleansed of sins by believing in the baptism Jesus Christ received from John the Baptist. But what about a person who does not acknowledge that he is a sinner? A person who does not acknowledge that he is a person who is



going to go to hell when he reflects himself in the light of God's Word can never receive salvation from sins. If you are still a sinner, you must recognize that you must acknowledge your sins before the presence of God and die once under destruction. You can receive the true salvation only if you believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit after that. Think about it. How can a person who has not died once by faith be born again? How can a person be delivered from drowning when he is not yet drowned? How can a person go to Heaven with the same self that he was born with? Is there anything righteous or good in a human being? Is there anything that is upright in you? There is nothing.

That is why everyone must be born again if he wants to enter the Kingdom of God. We must go through the message of the Cross. We must go through the spiritual death by the message of the Cross and then receive new life.

We must first acknowledge God and acknowledge the almighty power of God in order to

receive the new life. God said, "*The wages of sin is death.*" This means "Those who have sin must face death and they will receive eternal destruction." However, we have violated God's commandments many times up to now and we will continue to violate them many times in the future as well. It means that we will die eventually. We must acknowledge such facts before God's Law. After that, we must go to our Savior and receive salvation from all sins by believing in the baptism Jesus Christ received and the blood He shed on the Cross.

The Apostle Paul said here, "*Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age?*" He spoke about God's wisdom emphatically, "For since, in the wisdom of God, the human wisdom cannot replace God's wisdom. The world cannot know God, because the foolishness of God is wiser than men and the weakness of God is stronger than men." What does this Word mean? It means that all humans can receive salvation only through God's wisdom. It means that we receive salvation only by



believing in God's wisdom. Those who are considered wise by the people in the world and people who think they themselves are wise do not know God properly. The weakness of God is really much stronger than the most powerful of humans. God's wisdom cannot be compared with human wisdom.

However, People Think They Are Something Great and Try to Achieve Something with Their Own Wisdom

Simply put, people think of salvation only legalistically. They just think in terms of the law of causality as they say, "If you live by the Law incessantly and faithfully, then you will be saved. If you violate His Law and commit sins, then offer the prayers of repentance for the sins. That's okay!"

However, God's wisdom is not like that. How is God's wisdom? God made us perfectly righteous

once and for all through His wisdom. Even though this is the Truth, people of the world pretend to be intelligent themselves bound by the law of causality. They think they should give one if they receive one and receive one if they give one, even in the matter of attaining their salvation. Look at all the people who are officially recognized as wise. Their way of thinking is all the same. They all just follow the thinking, "I earn only as much as I work." Such people think like that in regards to salvation. Even in the matter of sins being washed away, they think, "My sins will be washed away only as much as the good deeds I perform."

However, God's wisdom is not like that. God came to this world and received the baptism from John the Baptist, died on the Cross, made all the people perfect at by resurrecting from the dead, and blotted out all the sins of the world eternally at once. Such perfect wisdom is the wisdom of God. Our human thinking is truly limited. They think they reach a nice place if they do something good; that

they achieve success when they work a little harder, and reach the objective if they put much effort into it. However, that is only a very limited human thinking. Our human thinking is very limited and has many shortcomings like this. How is God's thinking? God has vast, enormous, and immense wisdom. God sent Jesus Christ to this world and made Him receive the baptism, made Him die on the Cross, resurrected Him from death, and blotted out all the eternal sins of the universe. That is the immense wisdom of omniscient God.

What is it like to compare God's wisdom and the wisdom of human beings? Human beings think working hard to put up one brick on their careers, making progress by that much and gaining something valuable in proportion to that progress is wisdom. Therefore, we must follow the vast and immense wisdom of God because wisdom of human beings is always narrow and unfair.

However, We Cannot Even Fathom God's Wisdom Because It Is So Immense

What kind of wisdom is God's wisdom? In God's wisdom, there is no limit to bestowing His love; but there is no exception in His judgment. He bestows His grace that is unfathomably immense. God the Father has saved us, He sent Jesus Christ to this world and made Him receive the baptism, die on the Cross, and thereby blotted out all our sins eternally and perfectly all at once. That is God's wisdom. This God saved with grace the people who really acknowledge God and His Word, in order to make foolish the people who go against God with the wisdom of the world.

So many people live in this world. Among those many people, there are people who do not acknowledge God's Word. They think they are smarter than God and they think their wisdom is better than God's wisdom. Many people think, "I can live well if I do this and such consequence will result



from it.” There are many people who think they are great. These people do not believe in God’s Word. They cannot essentially believe in God. Because they do not believe in God’s Word, they try to resolve with their own wisdom matters of removing sins, going to Heaven, and receiving salvation from sins. That is why they follow a religious life so diligently. They follow a religious life so diligently and do good in the world. They believe that sins are blotted out if they live with the wisdom that their sins are forgiven only as much as the good they perform.

Although it is rare, there are some people who think, “I believe in God’s Word. I cannot live like this, but I acknowledge this Word is the Truth and this Word is God’s wisdom.” They know their own shortcomings and that their thinking is unrighteous and there is nothing wise that could come out from them. They believe in the Word of God who is wiser than they are because they know themselves.

However, there are more people in this world who are not like this. There are more people in the

world who boast of their own wisdom and follow the religious life with their own wisdom rather than living the spiritual life with God’s Word. There are few people in the world who acknowledge before the presence of God that they are people with shortcomings who have not had much learning, and believe in God’s Word as they lead their spiritual life.

Who between these two kinds of people would receive salvation? People who acknowledge that they have not had much learning and that they do not know much and lower themselves before the presence of God; people who acknowledge the Word of the Scriptures is the Truth and hold onto God’s wisdom rather than the knowledge they have acquired in the world even though they have much learning in the world; people who consider God’s Word as the only Truth and acknowledge the Word in their heart and acknowledge God—such people believe in the Word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit and receive the true salvation. God gives salvation to such people and bestows grace upon

them. The Lord came to this world, received the baptism, carried the sins of the world and died on the Cross, and was resurrected from death for such people. Therefore, He became the Savior for only these people.

However, there are people in the world who do not acknowledge God's Word even though they do not have anything, who do not have anything to boast of, who do not have anything intelligent to themselves. People who do not acknowledge God and His Word; people who try to live by their power and wisdom; people who try earn salvation from sins with their own endeavor and good deeds; people who want to receive blessings from God even though they try to live well with their own will and fortitude—these people never acknowledge God's Word, but God never approves them as well.

It says in today's Scripture passage, "*For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.*" This Word of the Bible is God's

wisdom and power. Actually, so many people live in America, Africa, Asia, Europe, Oceania, and many places around the world, and many people including you and your family live in Korea as well now. However, there are not many people who acknowledge God's Word and God who manifested in the Scriptures. Many people think to themselves with their own wisdom that they are smart, but no one in the world could be more foolish than they are.

Then, who are the truly wise people? People who acknowledge God and His Word; those who know in the Word of God that they are the creatures of God and that they are sinners; those who know that they cannot but go to hell in that Word and therefore believe in Jesus Christ within the Word and receive the remission of sins—such people are truly wise ones. People who have the faith of believing in God and His Word are the truly spiritual people.



Who Are the Spiritual People?

We can be spiritual people by acknowledging God's Word. We become God's people when we acknowledge God's Word with our hearts. Put differently, we become people who have received the remission of sins, people of faith, and people who have received the blessing just by believing in God's Word. That is God's wisdom. This is why the Scriptures say that the foolishness of God is wiser than wisdom of men. The Apostle Paul expressed this so honestly in this manner that we are sometimes ashamed by it.

The Word from First Book of Corinthians chapter 1 verses 26-30 says, *“For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the*

things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence. But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.”

What does this Word mean? According to fleshly notion, there are not many people with wisdom, and there are not many people who have much ability, much power, and much money and have noble background. Even so, people compare themselves and consider a certain person as having much education, a certain person as having great power, and a certain other person as an ignorant, lacking, and lowly individual. We must know well that such categorization of human beings is a foolish thing in the eyes of truly almighty God. The Apostle Paul listed three kinds of people who were regarded as the wise of that time by saying, *“Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this*



world?” (1 Corinthians 1:20) As such, the scholars, lawyers, and government officials of this world actually do not know much. To be more frank, many doctors do not even know much about their own discipline of study. They may have much knowledge about how they can follow the doctorate program well and be qualified, but there are so many doctors who do not even know much about their own major field and therefore just spit out difficult vocabulary and say it is under study when they are asked a certain question.

Do you think theologians of the world know much about theology, God, or the Scriptures? No, they do not. They do not know anything. Do not think that such people who are in well-regarded positions such as lawyers, accountants, government officials, and scholars know much. They just happen to be in those positions, but they actually do not know anything. They do not know that they are actually ignorant and they think they are of such prestigious status because people call them by doctor

so and so with ‘sir.’ They look down on others if they think those other people are of somewhat lower social status. They are boastful, prideful, and arrogant. However, they actually are very foolish and ignorant people.

Most people who evaluate people based on material things, outward appearance, and social status of the world also do not believe in God. They just think they are the best and refuse to come down from the arrogant position and stay far away from God’s Word. Of course, there are people who believe in Jesus among them. But, even though they believe in Jesus, they are just full of their own stubbornness and egocentricity. Therefore, they reject the gospel of the Truth that enables them to be born again by the water and the Spirit, and they just insist that they can receive salvation even if they just believe in the Cross. They do not hear or believe the Truth no matter how much we tell them that believing in the baptism and the blood of the Cross with same regard is truly “the message of the Cross” and the Word of

the Truth that gives salvation to every human being.

That is right. They go to church only because they hope it may help them as they live in this world; to comfort their conscience and live in this world with a little more confidence. Each of them does not have any desire to be born again, become a child of God, and become one of the righteous. Even though we witness the Word of the Truth, they just shake their head and say in repudiation, “Why do you go to church with such a daunting goal? Just go to church to share fellowship with others, and to do something to soothe their boredom. Why should you believe like that?” They just boast of their own greatness, but never believe in God’s Word.

On the other hand, there are people who are very knowledgeable and well educated in the world, but give much thought in matter of life and try to find true meaning of life. There are people who think deeply about their own soul, think about the future, reconsider his life, and seek to find the Truth even though they have education, money, and enough

distinction in this world. What happens when we witness the gospel of the water and the Spirit to them and tell them of the Truth? They believe in the fact that Jesus Christ is the Truth and that God’s Word is the Truth and kneel before the presence of the Word of the Truth because they do not have their own righteousness to boast of. They receive the Word of the Truth in their hearts and believe it by confessing, “The Lord is the Christ, the Son of the living God who became my Savior by being born to this world, receiving the baptism, dying on the Cross, and being resurrected from death to save me from sins. I believe in this Truth.”

There are people in this world who believe and accept the Word of the Truth like this. These people are spiritual people of God regardless of their social status in the world or their wealth and reputation. Whether they are indigent or doctorate recipients, construction workers or men of wealth, such people are all children of God in Jesus Christ regardless of their social position. They are people who have



broken free from the foolish things of the flesh. It means they are people who attain the precious wisdom of God by being released from the foolish wisdom of human beings and revering God, believing in Him, and accepting God's Word of Truth.

The Apostle Paul said in the Early Church era, *"For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called"* (1 Corinthians 1:26). It was like that in the Corinthian Church at the time and it is the same in our country now. Even in our country, our ancestors just lowered themselves before any country that had power and strength because of the Confucianism and toadyism that was prevalent when Christianity was first introduced. They made distinction between the upper class and the lower class and between scholar and servants based on social criteria of that time. Because the toadyism was prevalent throughout the whole country, they bowed down to the strong nations and treated

contemptuously the weaker nations. This trait was also applied to human relationships so that they bowed down to the people of higher status and treated people of lower status contemptuously; worse than an animal. Christianity came into our country at the time when this wrong notion was deeply rooted in people's thinking and way of life. Even though people in high government positions accepted Christianity at times, lower class people accepted Christianity more readily most of the time. What is the reason the lower class people received Christianity more readily? Lower class people had the ideology of equality from an indigenous religion called Tong-hak that taught, "All humans are gods. Everyone is god." Therefore, when Christianity came into Korea, they thought, "That's right. All humans are equal. Man and woman are equal and no one is higher or lower than another. All humans are precious. They are all equal," and accepted Christianity naturally. People who claimed the "man-is-god" ideology of Tong-hak came to know the



absolute being called God and accepted Christianity in their hearts.

However, even then many people looked down on Christians and called them Jesus' freaks, and disrespected Jesus Christ and the Word of God in the Bible. People who disrespected Jesus like that did not accept Christianity. Of course, the people who accepted Christianity did not know the Truth of God properly. Although they could not accept the real Truth because even the preachers did not know the perfect Truth, they accepted the fact that God is the only divine Being and that they become sinners according to the commandments of God, and that they could not help but die because of their sins.

This was the same phenomenon that manifested itself in the Church of Corinth. It was the same when Christianity was first preached in our country. Moreover, it is also the same phenomenon to you and I who live in this era. All the people are the same before the presence of God whether they are of the past or the present. People try to make distinction

among themselves and say, "I am better, I am higher, and you are lower," but all humans are same. Human beings do not have much to distinguish between one another and there is no difference between people.

I wonder if maybe there are people who still think the well-respected people in the world are great individuals. However, these days, it seems there is no such thing like admiring someone, and most people seem to chase after pleasure before their eyes and live a life of quick fix. Everyone is the same. This person eats three meals a day and that person eats three meals a day; this person has his own righteousness while the other person has his own righteousness. They are all same. The only difference is that their prestige goes up or down depending on whether they have money, power, and fame or not. However, even that is a meaningless distinction before the presence of God. Wealth may make a distinction between people in the world, but everyone is the same in God's world. The only thing that makes a difference between people is whether a

person believes God's Word or not. People who do not believe and accept God's Word are all foolish no matter how well educated they are. People who accept God's Word are spiritual no matter who they are. It is like that for everyone all through human history.

Remember this. A person who believes in God's Word is the wise and spiritual person, and a person who does not accept God's Word is the foolish person and doomed to be destroyed. This is also applied to the born-again. As we preach the gospel to the people who have not been born again, some of them accept the gospel but the others do not. When we gather about ten people and witness the gospel to them, a few accept the gospel and the rest do not. Anyway, a person who does not accept the gospel is truly foolish person.

How Can One Blot Out All His Sins by Oneself?

How would we have become people without sins if not for the salvation of Jesus Christ that was completed by His baptism and death on the Cross? Could you receive salvation through good works? Could you become without sin just because you tried hard to live righteously? Could you become without sin by cleansing your sins every day? Could you wash away all your sins by offering the prayer of repentance every day, by doing good every day and living righteously, and by doing forty days prayer and fasting ten or twenty times in their lifetime? That is correct. People who try to know that they are sinners with their own strength and people who try to receive the remission of sins through their own strength are really foolish people. They are definitely not spiritual people. Such people consequently cannot achieve anything with their own strength.

Think about it. Can you and I become the



righteous by ourselves? No, we cannot. Therefore, we need to understand our insufficiencies and just believe God's Word exactly as it is. If God's Word says, "*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,*" then we just need to believe, "Ah, God created everything. God created me, too." If God said, "*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,*" then God actually did create the heavens and the earth whether you believe it or not. That is the truth.

Do you have doubt about this Word saying in your mind, "Have you seen that?" Scientists say that we should believe something only when we experience it. Must we Christians definitely see it to believe it? Were you there when God created the universe? Who could have been there? A person could argue whether one has seen it or not if he was there and existed from the beginning of the universe. However, it does not make sense for a person who has only lived for some decades after being born from his mother's womb to argue against what God

has done when He has created the universe billions of years ago, and created human beings long ago.

One who has been created must believe the Word of the Creator. If God says that He has created us, then we have no choice but to say, "Yes, I believe it." How can a creature that has only been living for a few decades say to God the Creator, "I can't believe it. Show it to me." That is such a foolish request. If God says this is the way it is, then, that is how it is. We just need to believe His Word as it is.

God's Word says, "*For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God*" (1 Corinthians 1:18). And it also says, "*As it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment*" (Hebrews 9:27). That is right. A person cannot help but die once after being born to this world. Once he receives judgment, he must go to hell because of his sins. We were all born with this fate from birth. You were born with this fate and I was born with this fate. Then, what is the way to be saved



from this hopeless situation for us who were born with this pathetic fate of having no choice but to go to hell? Who is the One that could save us? Who is our Savior? He is none other than Jesus Christ. There is only He, Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ saved us. He came to this world and took all the sins of us who could not help but go to hell by receiving baptism. Jesus received the judgment and died on the Cross in the place of us who should have died according to God's Word that says the wages of sin is death. Because Jesus is not the Lord whose power ends with death, He is the Lord resurrected from death and became our eternal Savior.

The Scriptures say,

*"But He was wounded for our transgressions,
He was bruised for our iniquities;
The chastisement for our peace was upon Him,
And by His stripes we are healed"* (Isaiah 53:5).

What does this Word mean? It means that Jesus came to this world to save you and me; that Jesus

Christ received the baptism to take all our sins upon Himself and to carry all the sins of the world to the Cross; that He was crucified on the Cross to die in place of you, and that He was resurrected from death to give new life to you and me.

If God's Word says this is the way it is, then we need to say, "That is true" and acknowledge it with our hearts. People who accept this are the spiritual people, and such people can become God's children and His people. However, people who do not accept this are truly foolish people, cursed people, and people who will go to hell and receive destruction eternally.

To people who will be destroyed, 'the message of the Cross' seems foolish. How could we not believe this when the Lord has clearly done all this? How could we dare disobey the Word of the Almighty God who has much more power? Think about it. You can make an imitation flower. But could you make a real flower if I asked you to create one? Could you create this universe and human beings? We do not



have any such ability. However, how is God? God created the whole universe, the heavens and the earth, only with the Word “Let there be such and such.” This God still lives and moves all the stars and things of the universe. There was light when the Lord said, “*Let there be light,*” and that light is still here in the universe. There was night and day when the Lord said, “*Let there be light,*” and it is still there because that Word still lives even now. What does it mean to disregard God’s work that was done by such an omnipotent God who has such immense power? That is foolish. It is truly foolish not to accept God’s Word.

Therefore, such foolish people cannot but be destroyed. What has God prepared for such foolish people? God has prepared a garbage dump for them and it is none other than hell. Hell is the place that burns eternally like the garbage disposal site that burns garbage. Hell that burns fervently is for such foolish people who hold onto their own wisdom instead of believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. There is eternal life for the people who believe

in Jesus Christ and an eternal punishment for those who do not believe in Him. Eternal punishment means that they will be punished eternally in hell.

The Apostle Paul said that we have received salvation through God’s wisdom. God sent His Son Jesus Christ to this world and made Him receive the baptism in order to save us with His wisdom. Furthermore, He saved us perfectly by making Jesus carry all the sins of the world after bearing them through baptism and having Him die on the Cross. God resurrected the Lord from death, sat Him on the right hand of God the Father’s throne now, and gives blessings to us through Him. The wisdom of God Almighty is immense and infinite like this.

Do you believe in the Truth of being born again, that is, the gospel of the water and the Spirit? In place of our death that we had to suffer once, Jesus Christ received the baptism, took all the sins of you and me upon Himself, and died on the Cross. Do you believe the fact that the Lord has saved you and me with His baptism and blood like this? I believe in the



Truth of being born again of water and the Spirit. I lift up God's wisdom high. Actually, evaluating God's wisdom itself is nonsense. Anyway, I uplift God's wisdom with the greatest prestige and admire it.

God really has amazing wisdom because He blotted out all the sins of humankind once and for all through His Son. He transferred over all the sins of the world to His Son once and for all through the baptism, made Him die on the Cross once and for all, and made us be born again as His sinless people once and for all. He saved us eternally. Accepting God's Word is the greatest wisdom, and not accepting God's Word is the most foolish of all. Therefore, we must receive the wisdom of God from Him within His Word, and become spiritual people and discern spiritual things. Let us give glory to the Lord and live like that forever, meet the Lord, enter the eternal Kingdom with Him, and live happily eternally.

I do not want any of you to live a foolish life. Is there anyone who has not received God's Word even

though he or she is in this Church? It is truly a huge problem for a person who has not accepted the Word of the remission of sins God has given. However, we believe the fact that God has saved you and me with God's wisdom. I give sincere thanks to God for saving us. I give thanks to God from the depths of my heart for giving you and me God's wisdom that is never lacking eternally. ☒



SERMON

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CONTENTS



Preach the Gospel of The Water and the Spirit To Those Who Cannot Repay You

< Luke 14:12-24 >

“Then He also said to him who invited Him, ‘When you give a dinner or a supper, do not ask your friends, your brothers, your relatives, nor rich neighbors, lest they also invite you back, and you be repaid. But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just.’ Now when one of those who sat at the table with Him heard these things, he said to Him, ‘Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God!’ Then He said to him, ‘A certain man

gave a great supper and invited many, and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, ‘Come, for all things are now ready.’ But they all with one accord began to make excuses. The first said to him, ‘I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.’ And another said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused.’ Still another said, ‘I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.’ So that servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, ‘Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind.’ And the servant said, ‘Master, it is done as you commanded, and still there is room.’ Then the master said to the servant, ‘Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say to you that



none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper.’”

Jesus Told Us to Invite and Feed Those Who Can’t Repay Us

“But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just” (Luke 14:12-14). “But they all with one accord began to make excuses. The first said to him, ‘I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.’ And another said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused.’ Still another said, ‘I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.’ So that servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, ‘Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of

the city, and bring in here the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind” (Luke 14:16-21).

We can apply this passage to both the physical and spiritual aspects of our lives. While we are living on this earth, we should refrain from inviting the rich and treating them to a dinner. That’s because the rich can repay us, and once they repay us, our hospitality is all rendered in vain. So whenever we spend money or treat someone to a dinner, we should do so for those who cannot repay us. How can we spend our money on those who cannot repay us? We can do this when we spend our money for the gospel. For instance, we’ve spent a lot of financial resources to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit, but has anyone repaid us to thank us? No, that hasn’t happened.

In contrast, if we were to invite the rich and just give them some material hospitality, they would feel burdened by this and think about ways to repay us somehow. But when it comes to serving the gospel and preaching it to the souls, people do not intend to



repay us even though we have spent a lot of money for this mission. That's why we visit places like seniors' residences and hold a feast for the elderly. It's better for us to go to such places as these seniors' residences, or where the hungry are gathered, and show them our hospitality and preach the gospel to them without expecting anything in return. It's not worthwhile for us to go and preach the gospel in a time or a place that we are likely to get repaid. When we do good things, we should not expect to be paid for our good deed. The Lord said, "*Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward*" (Matthew 6:2). On the last day, when we the righteous are resurrected, the Lord Himself will reward us. In the future, at our resurrection and the arrival of the Millennial Kingdom, the Lord will give us many rewards to repay us. Therefore, it is right for us not to do good expecting rewards on this earth.

That is what the Lord says in today's Scripture passage.

Today, through this parable of the feast, the Lord is speaking of the feast of Heaven. Verses 16 and 17 say, "*A certain man gave a great supper and invited many, and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, 'Come, for all things are now ready.'*" The certain man here refers to the Lord, and the great supper refers the feast of Heaven that is prepared with spiritual food, the gospel. That "all things are now ready" means that our Lord has blotted out all our sins. In other words, this passage means that the Lord has blotted out all our sins with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Indeed, our Lord has eradicated all our sins once and for all with this perfect gospel.

Some people in this world describe themselves as saved sinners, however, there are no such people as saved sinners. In the Kingdom of God, there are only the righteous that have been saved, not any saved sinner. Is there any sin in this world, my fellow



believers? No, there is no sin in this world; whoever believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is sinless. This means the blessing of the remission of all sins is ready now. Through His servants, God is inviting everyone to a great feast, and this feast is the heavenly feast of the Church, the feast of the genuine gospel. All that one has to do is just participate in the feast and eat this bread of life, the blessed bread of salvation and grace, by believing that the Lord has remitted away everyone's sins. For us to receive the remission of sins, absolutely no human effort is necessary. What is necessary is just faith in the Lord, for the remission of sins is not received by one's own effort but by his faith. That's why God sent out His servants to invite people, saying that everything was now ready.

I went to a Christian bookstore today to buy a Bible, and while there I saw someone preaching the gospel to the owner of the bookstore rather loudly. So I listened to him for a while, and the gist of his point was that since God has already saved us even

before the foundation of the world, there is no need for any righteous works of our own. So far so good, right? This man was quite an impressive man. Since I wholeheartedly agreed with what he was saying, and I hadn't heard anyone saying something so right and worthwhile in a long time, I continued to listen to him silently at his side.

So, after listening to him for a while at his side, I said to him, "Yes, you are quite right. Then you must have no sin at all, right?" To this he said, "How can there be anyone without sin?" So I asked him, "But you just said that salvation is not received by one's own righteous acts but by faith. And you said that God has saved everyone before the foundation of the world." He then said to me, "But still, how can there be anyone in this world who has no sin?" I asked him in return, "Do you then have any sin in your heart?" "Of course I do," he said.

So I told him, "You, too, are mistaken." I told him he hasn't received the remission of sins either. This man then got angry with me and refused to talk



to me anymore. So I asked him what he was doing here shouting out so boldly, preaching to the bookstore owner, and claiming that salvation is received by grace. But it was useless to talk to him. This man had a lot of useless knowledge to pay back. He also had much to say, talking about Calvinism and Methodism. Then I asked him, “So what’s your conclusion? That you have sin?” He said, “Why do you ask whether I have sin or not?” So I asked him again, “Are you a righteous man or a sinner?” Quoting Romans 3:10, he then said to me, “How can there be anyone righteous, when the Bible says, ‘There is none righteous, no, not one’?” “You are so wrong,” I said to him. I would have continued with the conversation had there been any prospect of winning his soul, but there was no such prospect. He was just talking about some worthless things that he had heard here and there.

Returning to the Word of God, today’s Scripture passage means that God sent out many invitations through His servants. Having come to this earth and

blotted out all the sins of the world with His baptism and blood, our Lord has opened the gospel feast of Heaven and invited people to it. It’s written, “‘*Come, for all things are now ready.*’ *But they all with one accord began to make excuses. The first said to him, ‘I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.’ And another said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused.’ Still another said, ‘I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.’ So that servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, ‘Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind’*” (Luke 14:17-21). As our Lord said here, we shouldn’t invite to the gospel feast of Heaven anyone who is too busy with his own affairs, makes too many excuses, or has too much to repay.

Everyone falls into one of the three types of people identified here. What was the first man’s



excuse? His excuse was that he had just “bought a piece of ground,” which means that he was too busy with his business. He then brazenly asked to be excused, but this makes no difference as anyone who declines the Master’s invitation will be cast out to hell.

In the Book of Esther, King Ahasuerus held a great feast for his subjects, and in the midst of the merriment, he wanted to show off his wife and brag about her beauty and refinement to his subjects. So he sent out his servants to bring Queen Vashti. He must have been quite drunk, as people tend to brag about themselves when they get drunk. Ahasuerus held great riches to boast of as well, but since everyone already knew about it, he wanted to show off his wife instead.

Coincidentally, however, Queen Vashti was also holding a separate feast for the wives of the officers. So when she heard from the king’s servants that he was summoning her, she refused to go. She probably thought to herself, “The king is not alone in holding a

feast. I am also in the middle of my own feast. If his feast is important, then mine is also important.” However, the Bible says that Queen Vashti was deposed for this one offence. She was completely ruined. Because of this, a maiden named Esther was chosen to be the next queen. The Feast of Purim (one of the feasts of Israel) originated from this as well. When the people of Israel were at the brink of destruction, Esther went to the king by faith, saying to herself, “If I perish, I perish.” Then she beseeched the king on behalf of her people, and because of her faith and the faith of Mordecai, the Israelites were delivered from their destruction. The people of Israel were delivered from the Gentiles through King Ahasuerus because of this faith of Esther and her prayers to God. Esther could have such faith because she obeyed Mordecai, her spiritual leader. This is Esther’s faithfulness to God and her people.

In contrast, Queen Vashti was deposed for refusing King Ahasuerus’ summons. Like Queen Vashti, there are many people facing destruction for



declining our Lord's invitation to His heavenly feast. The Lord is inviting everyone to this feast so that they would receive the remission of sins and accept the salvation that He has prepared for them, but many people are declining.

There are three types of people shown in today's Scripture passage. The first type is the one who couldn't come because he had just bought a piece of land and had to go see it now. This refers to business. What was the second man's excuse? His excuse was that he had just bought some oxen, and so he had to test them to see if they were good and healthy. This also refers to business. What was the third man's excuse then? The third man's excuse was that he just got married.

All these three men couldn't come to the feast because of they were too busy with their own carnal affairs. This means that even though God has opened a feast of Heaven and wants to give the remission of sins and eternal life, many people are saying that they can't come. Why can't they come? It's because they

are too busy with the affairs of the world. But does it make any sense for them to decline this invitation over just some riches of the world, when they can be saved, receive everlasting life, and get their future guaranteed if they just come and attend the feast? No, it makes no sense. How can such a thing happen? Yet these people didn't come. So what did our Lord say to His servants?

“Go out Quickly into the Streets and Lanes of the City, and Bring in Here the Poor and the Maimed and the Lamé and the Blind”

What does this passage mean? Do such people as the maimed, the blind, and the lame have anything to pay back their debt? Do they have their own righteousness? Just a while ago the Lord told us not to invite the rich to a dinner, for they will just say, “Thanks for the dinner. I will reciprocate and make sure to invite you to a dinner as well.” The rich, in

other words, have the means to pay us back, in which case our hospitality toward them would be nullified. The poor, in the other hand, cannot pay us back. Therefore, the gospel is actually needed by the spiritually poor, the spiritually maimed, the spiritually blind, and the spiritually lame who lack their own righteousness—that is, those who have committed many sins, those who consider themselves sinners, and those who think they are bound to hell. It's people such as these who know their true selves as sinners that need the gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven. In fact, the gospel is not needed by the pious. Instead, God has invited and saved those who admit that even though they may not have done anything particularly perfidious in their lives, they still have many shortcomings and flaws when reflected on the Word of God and His Law, that they have committed many wrongdoings before man as well, and that they are destined to go to hell. It's these people whom God has saved.

There are many people in this world who think

they have many means to pay back their debts: Those who think they can somehow repay God and serve Him well with their own merits, their own intelligence, or their own good deeds; those who think they can be pretentious before God; and those who think they have much to brag about before Him. Everyone has shortcomings, and yet many people think that they lack nothing and they are just perfect. Some of them think that they know everything about every religion, from Buddhism to Christianity and what their teachings are. They are well versed in arguing for peaceful coexistence with other religions. Our Lord is not inviting such people who are so smooth and so full of themselves that they think they are virtuous and good. In reality, God has called the maimed, those whose entire lives are marked by blemishes, those who are flawed despite trying to live a spotless and blameless life before God, and those who, like the lame and the blind, could not find the Truth by themselves no matter how hard they tried to find God. So God is looking for people who can't

afford not to come to Jesus' feast of Heaven, and who have no recourse to be saved but by believing that the Lord has blotted out all their sins once and for all. It's the maimed that God has called. The word maimed is the opposite of healthy.

Many people consider themselves quite decent and good. But such people have not been invited by the Lord, nor do they come even if they are invited. It was the maimed whom the Lord invited here. He invited only the maimed, and it's these people who accepted this invitation and were saved.

In fact, all of us sitting here, beginning with me, were invariably maimed, blind, and lame. Do you think that you are somehow meritorious? Do you think that you are a decent person? Are you unsure what to say, thinking that you'll be criticized if you say yes but your pride will be undermined if you say no? But still, you have to say either yes or no. As brothers and sisters, we have to give a clear answer. Do you still think you are decent? In reality, we are all lame. We are all imperfect. Just a moment ago I

said that the word 'maimed' is opposite to someone who is perfect. Are you and I then perfect? No. If we were perfect, God would not have invited us. No one on this planet is perfect.

However, there are many people who think that they are perfect. Do you know what percentage of people think so? Probably, ninety-five percent of people in this world think they are perfect. Even the maimed think that they are all okay. When Jesus went to the pool of Bethesda, there were all kinds of disabled people gathered there, from the lame to the blind and the paralyzed. Yet these people were all full of themselves in one way or another. The blind bragged about their keen sense of hearing, the lame bragged about their quick sight, and the paralyzed perhaps bragged about their past career. Everyone has an excuse and something to brag about.

Do you know just how smart everyone thinks he is? Starting from me and including you, everyone living on this planet thinks they are smart. This is the same when it comes to nations. Everyone is proud of



his nationality. For example, the Chinese think they are so smart. They look down on us Koreans as though we were dimwitted. They are very proud of their long history and splendid culture. The Chinese think that they are superior to the other races, arguing that they have longest history, that they invented gunpowder first, and that they were the first to come up with a written language. The Chinese seem to be one of the most self-conceited nations. You might know how racism has brought about conflicts between nations in human history. Racism also stems from such a notion of ethnic superiority.

My fellow believers, how self-conceited are we also? How pretentious do we get if there is even the slightest thing to brag about? It's all ridiculous, like midgets arguing over who is taller. How tall can a midget be even if he is tall? To us, they all are short. Yet amongst themselves they still compare each other and argue over who is taller than whom. So do we also argue over who is better than whom, bragging how big our houses are and how much

money we make. Even animals brag about themselves. You probably have seen a peacock showing off its brilliant plume. Similarly, some kinds of fish open up their fins to try to make themselves look bigger, as most fish don't attack any fish that's bigger than them. But in reality it makes no difference whether they are big or small. Human beings are no different from these animals. That's how every human being really is.

Everyone is disabled. Our Lord told us to bring the maimed, the lame, and the blind. It's so frustrating to see so many people declining this invitation thinking that they are really smart, when in fact they are all maimed. However, those who think that they are disabled do come. Those who have committed great sins and whose lives are marked by blemishes are lame. The blind are those who admit that they are completely ignorant. God told us to bring them all—those who are pretentious and self-conceited. He told us to compel them to come.

Anyway, we the redeemed were all disabled. It's



because we were maimed that we were invited by our Lord and saved. Instead of pretending to be smart and being self-conceited, believe in the Lord. Your faith is better than your intelligence. Measuring and calculating every angle is something that only fools do. Is anyone justified to do this before God? Only fools do this. Some people investigate this gospel to stand against it, but it's laughable. However, those who are truly wise surrender to God at the earliest chance they get. They ask for mercy to God who can show infinite mercy on them. Only fools would go to the king and demand to know if he is really king or not and how good of a king he is.

We were saved because all of us were insufficient. If we had been full of our own merits, we would not have been saved. Such grace is not bestowed on those who are full of their own righteousness. They cannot partake in the feast of Heaven. God does not allow it for them. If we were self-conceited, God would not have invited us. Now that we have been saved at this heavenly feast, we

have realized that we were indeed lame. This is why God had compelled us to come and preached the gospel to us, and we were saved as a result. You must grasp this. Now that you have received the remission of sins, do not be self-conceited. If you are too self-conceited, God will break your righteousness.

In particular, those who have had some theological training are prone to mistakenly think that even though they have been saved by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, they somehow have more knowledge than the rest and are quite different from everyone else, despite the fact that they have received the same salvation. Those who think they are well educated need to be ejected of their prior learning and should be injected with new and spiritually correct learning. Those who are highly educated are prone to cause more trouble in God's Church. I'm not saying that you should neglect your education, but that there is nothing spiritually correct that you can learn from the world. Even if someone has gone through graduate training, he doesn't really

have much knowledge to show. In fact, he has no real knowledge at all. Between a high school graduate and a college graduate, who has more knowledge? Of course, the college graduate would be more knowledgeable as far as secular knowledge is concerned. But when it comes to the question of who is wiser before God and whose faith is better, he is actually at a disadvantage in God's sight. That's because someone who only finished high school knows his shortcomings and realizes that there are far many people better than him in this world.

Those who are insufficient are receptive. In contrast, those who are highly educated are judgmental rather than receptive. Now that you have received the remission of sins, do not be so self-conceited. Do not be so arrogant just because you are educated. It's been my observation that the highly educated have more difficulty leading their lives of faith. I've seen their faith struggle to grow. Although those who are insufficient grow their faith step by step, those who are highly educated have a great deal

of difficulty growing their faith. It's because they approach everything as an intellectual exercise. Because such people try to understand everything with their own head first before believing, they cannot build their house of faith from the beginning, even though the Lord has already laid the basic cornerstone of salvation. If all our intellectual curiosities are met in our heads, there won't be any need for us to believe with our hearts. So among the redeemed, those who are highly educated are disadvantaged when it comes to the growth of faith.

Of course, this doesn't mean that you shouldn't get an education. But the reality of education in Korea is that even when one graduates from college, once he gets a job at a company, he has to be trained all over again as though he were no better than a kindergarten student. This is because the educational system in Korea is rather impractical and apt to indulge in academic discussions. So, one must learn again what actually matters apart from what he learned in college.

Likewise, once we actually come into this life of faith, we must learn everything all over again. We have to learn what faith is all about and how to lead a spiritual life from the beginning. It's because we are all insufficient that God has saved us perfectly. Everyone is the first when he is alone, but the last when there are several people. Do you grasp this? Don't you agree with this? It's because we are insufficient that God has saved us; if we were meritorious, would God have saved us?

My Point Is That When It Comes to Our Salvation, It Is Absolutely Not Because of Our Own Merits That We Have Been Saved

My fellow believers, if I were meritorious, I would never have stood here and preached like this. I would not have been able to do so. It's precisely because I have no merit that among so many

countless people in this world, I have received the remission of sins and am now carrying out this work. I know many people in Korean Christian communities. From the gifted to the ordinary, I have countless acquaintances. Among all those people, I have no merit. I have no merit to have received the remission of sins. I am no good to be God's servant. Otherwise, if I were meritorious, I would not be sitting here like this. If I had many merits, I would probably have gone abroad to Europe or the US for graduate studies and taken a doctorate in theology, and I would be pretending to be virtuous and upright. I'd be committing a fraud.

But I am here because I am insufficient. It's also because you are insufficient that you are sitting here at this place, taking part in this feast of Heaven and eating manna from Heaven. If we were self-conceited, we wouldn't be sitting here but somewhere else. We would all be sitting in a big church and a big denomination boasting about ourselves. A self-conceited congregation would be sitting under a self-

conceited pastor, bragging about each other's non-existing accomplishments until they come before the judgment seat of the Lord.

Our Lord is saying to us to go out into the highways and hedges, and compel the maimed to come into His Church, that it may be filled. Your evangelizing effort should be compelling. This means that instead of saying just a few words and then giving up, you have to be persistent. You have to keep asking people to come to the Church. That's what evangelizing is all about. The elementary foundation of evangelization is compelling people to listen to the Word of God. To be persistent is to evangelize. You have to insist on people to come to the Church, make them listen to the Word, and thus make them receive the remission of sins. That is what is meant by evangelization.

Our Church is holding a revival meeting in two years. But what use is it unless you come with some souls to the meeting? They will follow you only if you are persistent. They won't come if you talk to

them just once or twice. In particular, Korean culture requires persistence. For example, let's say someone happens to drop by your house when you are having lunch. The socially acceptable custom is for you to invite him to your lunch table at least seven, eight, or even ten times. Just inviting him two or three times will not be enough, since in Korean culture, it's not unusual for people to decline an invitation repeatedly out of politeness. If you otherwise withdraw your invitation the first time it's declined, you will be considered a bad host.

Likewise, when it comes to inviting sinners, you have to invite them at least ten times. That's how you should evangelize. You have to keep asking them to come to the Church. You have to do so diligently. You should also tell them how wonderful the atmosphere and pastors are in the Church. That is the right thing to do before God.

However, when you praise the pastors, you shouldn't brag about their fleshly accomplishments. Instead, you should tell them honestly what you



actually like about our Church—the wonderful worship services we have, the sermons that are based on the Word of God, the salvation that you’ve received here, and the life of faith that you are leading. Tell them you like our Church because it believes in the Word of the Scriptures and it is a biblically sound Church. If you were to boast of such things, then you are more than welcome to do so. However, if you brag about your pastors in fleshly terms, people will be disappointed once they see them and never come again.

Anyway, your effort at evangelization must be compelling. This means you should admonish people forcefully when you try to evangelize them. Rather than inviting them just once or twice, invite them again and again if they refuse. Keep asking them to come to the Church. You should also be persistent like this when it comes to your own family. What will happen to the people who have refused your invitation? They all will go to hell.

Let’s say that when you preached the gospel to

people, one of them said that he had bought some oxen and had to train them. So you gave up on him and turned to someone else, but this person said that he had to go on a business trip. You then gave up on him also and turned to still another person, who then said that he couldn’t come as he just bought a piece of land. Our Lord told us that rather than inviting people just once like this, we should invite them continuously. In other words, we must ask them persistently.

If some people come without being invited, you need to teach them that they themselves are maimed. You have to let them know that they are spiritually lame, maimed, and blind. You should say to them, “You’ve been a Christian all this time, but aren’t you still completely ignorant? Aren’t you still unable to understand the Bible even as you read it? It’s only fitting that you should be ignorant, for everyone is like you. But if you read the Bible after you are born again, you can understand everything.” When you read the Bible, you don’t need to struggle with



ignorance. Once you are born again, you come to know it all clearly. You have to teach people that they are spiritually blind and lame, that they themselves are maimed. You have to teach them what a grave sinner they are before God. You should then invite them to come to God's Church, listen to the gospel, and receive the remission of sins. Do you understand what I'm saying here?

Evangelizing is all about persistence. It's about admonishing repeatedly. That's what evangelizing is all about. For those who are self-conceited, if your repeated and persistent admonishments fall on deaf ears, then you can give up on them. They will then be cast into hell. You should also talk to your family, but not just once or twice. You have to invite them repeatedly. If you insist long enough, they will come to the Church at least once or twice even if it's just to do you a favor. There are many such people who came to the Church, heard the gospel, and received the remission of sins in this way. These people heard the gospel and received the remission of sins because

the ones trying to evangelize them compelled them to come to the Church. If the evangelizers had given up after just trying once or twice, then all these people would have faced a tragic consequence unable to partake in our Lord's feast. To avoid such a consequence, we must be persistent with people, bring souls to God's Church, and preach the gospel to them. Keep on admonishing your family. I've been admonishing my foster mother for over ten years, even though so far my effort has not been successful.

Will you give up on your own family members after just inviting them to God's Church once or twice? Do you think this is acceptable? What does the Word of God say? Didn't God say that we should compel them to come to His house even if they refuse? He told us to go out to the streets and compel the people there to come and fill His house. Did He say that we can just talk to them once and give it up if they don't listen to us, since it hurts our pride? No, He told us to compel them and fill His house. No matter what, you must try indefatigably to bring your



family members to the Church, even if they just listen to the sermon and leave. You must keep on preaching the gospel to them. Only then can your family avoid hell. Only then can the families of the righteous avoid hell. Unless we compel them, they will all go to hell.

What a terrible tragedy this would be. The feast of Heaven refers to the everlasting life of the Kingdom of Heaven, and those who don't attend this feast will be cast into hell. They will burn in fire forever. If there are any souls in your family that still have not received the remission of sins, you must preach the gospel to them and make them receive the remission of sins no matter what. You must also realize that we were all maimed, and that our God has saved us.

There are several elderly people here with us, and if their children had not compelled them to come to the Church, they would be heading straight to hell. It's because their children cared deeply about their parents' destiny that they spoke to those elderly

people. That is how our elderly brothers and sisters heard the gospel and received the remission of sins. Don't you then have the same desire for your children who are still with sin? Do you not care even if your children are cast into hell? If you believe in this Word, you will be able to compel your children and fill the Church with their souls. But if you don't believe in it and just take it as a mere hypothesis, then you won't need to compel them. Nor will you do this. Rather than just understanding today's Scripture passage merely as an intellectual instruction, we must believe in it with our hearts, listen to it carefully, preach the gospel to the souls around us, and compel them to come to the Church.

Let us all act upon this realization. ☒



SERMON

3



CONTENTS



Can We Become The Lord's Disciples Only By Denying Ourselves?

< Luke 14:25-33 >

“Now great multitudes went with Him. And He turned and said to them, “If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it—lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish’? Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down

first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace. So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.”

Who Becomes a Disciple of the Lord?

My fellow believers, if we are to become the disciples of the Lord, we must first know three things. Our Lord said, “*If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple*” (Luke 14:26). To become a disciple of the Lord, we have to do likewise. Our Lord tells us directly what we should do, if we are to follow Him.

My fellow believers, do you want to become



disciples of the Lord? It is easy for you to be saved from all your sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, but it is not easy to become the disciples of the Lord. But in here, the Lord speaks of three things that are necessary for us to become His disciples.

First, to become the Lord's disciples, we have to hate our fathers and mothers, wives and children, brothers and sisters, and even our own lives. What does this Word mean? When He says that we should hate our parents, wives and children, and even our lives, this does not mean to fall into the trap of nihilism, detest the society and the mankind and hate them and kill them. This means that if our own lives or relationships with our family members such as our parents, our wives and children, our brothers, and sisters hinder us from following our Lord, He tells us to hate these relationships and worldly things. This is the first thing that is necessary for us to become the Lord's disciples.

When we are willing to follow the Lord after

being born again by receiving the remission of sins through the Word of God, the first stumbling stone would be our own family, especially our own parents. For example, if we were willing to obey the will of God, we would feel like we are undutiful to our parents; if we were willing to obey the will of our parents, this would make us feel that we are impious to our God. This is the first problem you encounter. In other words, this is the first problem you run into when you truly want to follow the Lord and become His disciple.

But this does not mean to hate all worldly relations unconditionally. Only when something hinders us from following the Lord, we must hate it. Only then can we follow the will of our Lord. Do remember that sometimes we can follow our Lord only when we hate even our own lives.

If It Is So, It Is Not Easy to Become the Disciples of the Lord, Is It?

These are the first troubles we face when we try to follow the Lord after meeting Him. I spent 10 years as a Christian enthusiast before meeting the Lord. But the first problem that I encountered after meeting the Lord was that my parents, my fleshly brothers, and sisters had become the stumbling stone. My adoptive mother ran a huge prayer house at that time and was going to hand it over to me. She told me, “You, my son! You have studied so much, but why are you acting like this now? You have to listen to and obey me. Minister with me in this prayer house as we did before. Why do you have to go out and pioneer a new denomination just because God told you to do so? Does it have to be you who has to go out and proclaim the gospel and act like you are something? If you act like that it may please God but it does not please me. People in our denomination will surely mistake you for something else.” But I

forsook her and followed the will of the Lord. When we are trying to follow the Lord as He had told us, only those who can hate every thing that is against His will can become His disciples.

Secondly, to become His disciples, as the Lord told us, “*Whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple*” (Luke 14:27), we have to bear our cross and follow Him. Only then can we become the disciples of the Lord. Of course, it is better to follow the Lord comfortably rather than in difficulty. But all of us have our own cross when following the Lord. We all have difficulties. We can become His disciples when each of us bears such a cross and follows Him. Thus, becoming followers of the Lord may be easy and difficult at the same time. In conclusion, only those who can follow the Lord in difficulties can become His disciples.



What Do We Need to Become the Disciples of the Lord?

“So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple” (Luke 14:33). There is an expression that goes, “Out of the frying pan into the fire.” Don’t you feel the same when the Lord said, “If you do not forsake all that you have, you can not become My disciple.” What does it mean to “forsake all that you have?” Just prior to this phrase, the Lord addresses the parable of the tower builder to explain this. What He tells us through this parable is that if we are to build a tower, we have to “sit down first and count the cost,” before laying the foundation and starting to build it. If we do not calculate the cost beforehand, start to build the tower and unable to finish it because we ran out of money, wouldn’t everyone mock us? They will mock us saying, “Those guys began to build a tower without realizing their limit, and were not able to finish it.”

The Lord also explained this by another parable,

the parable of a king preparing for war: A king is going to make war against another king. Before starting the war, the king sits down first and counts how many soldiers another king has and how many soldiers he has, and if there is no chance his army will win, he should send a delegation and ask conditions of peace, while the other is still a great way off. Then He said, *“Whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple” (Luke 14:33).*

Then what does He mean by “all that we have”? The Lord is not referring to material things when He speaks of this. Indeed, the Lord provides us with materials. But the Lord said that, as a third condition to become His disciple, no one could follow Him if he or she does not forsake all one’s possessions; that is, one’s pride and righteousness. My fellow believers, all people have their own self-respect even though they are born again, and they have many things to boast about themselves. They do not like to give up their respect for themselves and to forsake



their own righteousness. They want to keep these things. But no one can follow the Lord if they do not throw away these things. They cannot become His disciples. My fellow believers, I say it again; if we cannot stop having respect for ourselves and do not throw away our pride for our Lord, we cannot become disciples of the Lord. An arrogant servant, a disciple that follows the Lord but who has his own strong opinion, and a person who cannot give up his assertions, even if threatened with a sword by the throat, such a person can never become a disciple of the Lord. Even though our personalities are like that, the Lord tells us to give these all up as the third command. To become a disciple of the Lord after we are saved, this third battle is the fiercest battle. Should we insist on our own righteousness, our faithfulness, and our pride even after receiving the remission of sins? Or should we surrender before Him as it is written, *“Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet*

him who comes against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace. So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple” (Luke 14:31-33). “Our Lord, I don’t have my own righteousness. Nor am I somebody. Even though I claim that I am great, I am nothing but an old, weary rag before You. I have nothing to boast. What is great in me is nothing compared to You, my Lord. You alone are majestic and only Your Word of Truth, salvation, and Your righteousness are upright.” Just like this, only those who have given up respect for themselves and given up all their own righteousness can become disciples of the Lord.

My fellow believers, what do you feel when you see brothers and sisters who are being trained as servants of God after receiving the remission of sins? It is hard for us to become the disciples of the Lord when we have too much righteousness of our own. Do you understand what I am saying? Instead, it is



easier for a person with nothing to boast to become a disciple. Why? Because these people have nothing to boast, nothing to be proud of, when the Lord tells them to do one thing, they will follow Him, saying "Yes, Lord." When our Lord tells them to do another, again, they will follow with "Yes, Lord." Just like this, they can only answer "Yes, Lord." to Him.

But a servant who has much righteousness of his own will act in a different way. If the Lord tells him to do one thing, he will ask Him, "Why, Lord?" If the Lord tells him to do another, he will again ask Him, "Why, Lord?" "Why? What? What for? How?" He will stand against the Lord and provoke a quarrel with Him at everything. If the Word of the Lord is true, and He tells us do something, we should be obedient as a good servant saying, "Even though I have another idea, Your Word is always true. Yes, Lord. Your Word is right. Yes. I will follow You." But a servant of Lord who has many things to boast will insist on his ideas and will stand against the Lord at everything saying, "Why did our Lord give this

Word? If I were Him, I would not have said like that. I would have said otherwise."

This third test is much more difficult and harder than the first and the second tests. A person who is well prepared with the first, can still follow the Lord, even though he may face some difficulties bearing their own cross as the second test. But a person who is full of his own righteousness is prone to give up following the Lord during the third test.

My fellow believers, if you are to become servants of the Lord, His disciples, you must pass all the three tests. The first thing is, when our family is becoming a stumbling block in following the will of the Lord, we need to be able to hate them, even though they may be our fleshly parents, wives, children, and brothers and sisters. We need to be like those who can hate all things that hinder us from following the Lord. Secondly, even though we may face many difficulties while following the Lord, we need to be able to bear them all. Thirdly, we need to be able to give up all our own righteousness.



In this whole earth, there wouldn't be a single person who has nothing to boast about themselves. We all have many things that we are proud of ourselves, not just a couple things. In our own thoughts, we would probably have at least a dozen things that we are proud of. "I am good at this field. I am honest. I am diligent. I am polite. I never lie. I rarely commit sins. I am so bold no matter what happens to me. Even if someone threatens me with a sword by the throat, I will never sin before the Lord." My fellow believers, would our Lord be pleased with such a person? In fact, the Lord does not like that kind of person. He would probably say, "Yes, you are great. You can become a teacher yourself. So you do not need to be my disciple. Get away from me. I cannot be with you."

When Two People Meet, One Must Be a Teacher

When two people meet, one must be a teacher while the other becomes a student. We must be students ourselves. But if we are trying to become disciples of the Lord, trying to follow Him, and trying to accompany Him with many things to boast, we would cause too much trouble for the Lord. Also, it will be too hard for Him to use us as the servants for His work. The Lord would say to us, "You are so proud! I cannot be your teacher. I have no qualification for being your teacher. I would rather be your follower. How can you be my disciple? Graduate! Graduate from me. Then I will be your student and you can teach me. I will follow you. If your word is the truth, I will follow you." But He cannot become our student, because our words cannot be the truth. Thus, He will say, "Stop following Me. You go your way, and I will go my way." Among the born again, there are many people



who think they are smart and who have many things to boast. But these people cannot serve the Lord. They cannot become His disciples.

My fellow believers, I also have something I am proud of. In my own opinion, I have things that I am good at. I believe you have these things, too. In our own opinions, we all are great. If we think about it, we are always at the top of other people, not below or behind them. People are all great in their own thoughts, but the Lord tells us otherwise: "Do you want to become my disciples after giving up all that you are proud of? Or do you want to become a teacher yourself, since you are so great? Should we go the other way? Choose between these two." This is what the Lord is telling us; "You can keep being proud of yourself, and I know I am great. So both of us are teachers. We cannot sustain this kind of relationship anymore. Let's go the other way."

The Lord is tired of such people. So I think of this: "Should I insist on my own righteousness, or give it up." Of course, it is not easy to give up our

own righteousness. But what the Lord wants from us who want to live the lives of disciples is this: "Give up your own righteousness. Let go of all your pride. Get rid of your own righteousness and bear My Righteousness, and be obedient to My Word, and follow Me only." My fellow believers, do you understand the will of the Lord? This is what pleases Him.

Women and men alike, all people have respect for themselves. Humans boast about themselves, whatever little things that they are proud of. But the Lord wants us to forsake this. The Lord does not want us to brag about ourselves and our own righteousness in front of Him. Instead, the Lord truly wants us to reveal our shortcomings in front of Him and our brothers and sisters. He wants us to proclaim, "I lack so much. I need more and more of You, my God. But I want to be a disciple of Jesus Christ and follow God throughout my whole life."

But if God tells me that He cannot use me because I am too proud of myself, this is not good.



Not only myself, but all of you need to give up your own righteousness. I believe that if we have too many things to boast, if we are full of our own righteousness, and therefore, if the Lord tells us that He cannot use us, we need to give up everything that hinders us from becoming His disciples. What our Lord wants from us is for us to give up our own righteousness, things that we are proud of, things that we think that are right, good, and true on our own.

It Is Not True That We Cannot Become the Disciples of the Lord Because We Lack Much

Rather, we cannot become the disciples of the Lord because we are too proud. We cannot become His followers because we think we are so great, so smart, know everything, so stubborn, and so kind. Instead, if we were not that bright and slow in learning, it would have been better for Him to use us

and make us His disciples. But He feels uncomfortable because we think we are so great. We must say to God, "My God! I have nothing to boast!" He tells us to consider whether we are able with ten thousand to meet an opponent who comes against us with twenty thousand. If we think that we cannot win, we should send a delegation and ask conditions of peace quickly.

We need to think before the Lord. We need to consider how righteous we are in front of Him. We must carefully observe how righteous we are, how great we are and how kind we are. My fellow believers, are you absolutely sure that you can be perfect throughout your whole life? Can you keep things that are good inside you until the end? If you cannot do this, you should surrender before God ahead of time and confess to Him, "Oh Lord! I am not righteous. I am not perfect. My Lord, I lack so much. You alone are true and Your Word is the only truth. You are right, Lord. I believe in You." You have to surrender before Him and follow Him only.



After a quick calculation, we need to surrender before God saying, “Even though I have lived by Your Word so far, oh God, I have nothing that is great in me, I have no righteousness and I have nothing proud in me.” If you are to become the disciples of the Lord, you need to surrender before Him quickly. Do you understand this?

My fellow believers, I have something that I want to share with you about me. In fact, I have nothing to be proud of. Only when the Lord came into me, I have something that I can be proud of; only when He gave me His righteousness, I became righteous; only when He gave me His salvation, I was saved, and only when He made me His servant, I became God's servant. I can assure to all of you and in front of God that I am not God's servant because I am great, that I am not doing this ministry because I am righteous and have many talents in every field.

My fellow believers, I am not righteous, indeed. I am not righteous by myself. I am not telling you this theoretically. I really don't have anything great in me.

But sometimes I feel comfortable because I have nothing great in me. I am sharing with brothers and sisters about my shortcomings honestly, and I am living comfortably, revealing myself wholly, without deceiving people hypocritically. I am so comfortable in Lord.

Now, I am living like this, but I used to have so much righteousness of my own. Even if someone threatened me with a sword by the throat, I did not yield myself up to something that I didn't agree with. If I thought something was right, I obstinately argued that it was right. I was also really stubborn. In Korean saying, “Chois are so stubborn that grass does not grow on the places they once sat.” So I thought Chois were the only ones that are stubborn. But someone told me that Kangs are also stubborn. But Jongs, which are my family, are really stubborn, too. I have never found anyone who is more stubborn than a Jong. These stubborn people are the ones that lead the demonstrations. They are hot-tempered people who stand in the front at demonstrations or



sacrifice their lives for their own righteousness. Now to think of it, Ahns are also stubborn. Brother Hong Gyu Ahn told me once that Ahns are really stubborn. I did not know that they were that stubborn. I only thought Chois, Kangs, and Changs are the only stubborn clans, but I found out that Ahns were also very stubborn. Are Kims stubborn or not? They are very stubborn. Are Lees stubborn or not? Are Parks stubborn or not? All these people are stubborn, indeed. I thought Chois were the only clan that is stubborn but people are all stubborn equally.

My fellow believers, we have to give up our own stubbornness before God. We have to throw away all the things that make us think we are great. We have to get rid of our own righteousness, our honesty, our good deeds, and so on. Only then, can we hold fast to the Lord's will and become His servants. Before the Lord, we have to give up all things that we are proud of that seem to be right in our sight. Some people never give up their own virtue. My fellow believers, if our virtue is in the way of God's virtue and is

against His, we are becoming enemies of God. It is a great vice and a grave sin. Our virtue is prone to commit a high treason against God.

I have told you that we need to think about three things if we are to become the disciples of the Lord. Whether the people of the world bother us, or our family stops us, if they don't agree with the will of God, we need to be able to hate them boldly. This is why the Lord said, *"Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My sake and the gospel's, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time—houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions—and in the age to come, eternal life"* (Mark 10:29-30).

Secondly, whatever difficulties we may face, we need to follow the Lord consistently bearing them as our crosses. Thirdly, we need to give up our own righteousness. We need to throw away our own righteousness in Jesus Christ. This does not mean to



ruin our life. We only give up things that we are proud of. You have many things that you are proud of, don't you? Do you have these or not? I know you have many of these. I just can't figure out how many. But you did not know that your pride and your own righteousness are the things that are standing against the Lord, right? Pride and our own righteousness are the things that are standing against Him.

That is why Pharisees did not believe in Jesus. Pharisees are the ones that followed the Law fervently. Whatever Word God may say, they tried to follow God's Word. Why then did Jesus hate these people the most? Why did Jesus call the scribes and Pharisees as "the brood of vipers." They could not accept Jesus' salvation because they were full of their own righteousness and self-conceit saying, "I am righteous, and I live only by God's Word. Other people may not do so, but I live according to God's Word even if someone threatens me with a sword by the throat."

Only when we give up our own righteousness can

we be saved from all our sins. When we are saved from our sins, we need to give up our own righteousness. Even after we are saved, we need to give up our own righteousness. This is the most difficult part. Satan the Devil provokes us to maintain our own righteousness saying, "You are really righteous." But the Lord says, "*Whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple*" (Luke 14:27). My fellow believers, only those who can forsake all that they have are worthy of becoming the disciples of the Lord. Do you believe this?

Until now, we have lived by the grace of the Lord. My fellow believers, do we have our own righteousness? Try a little calculation. Do you think you can keep your righteousness, which is so small like a pea, throughout your whole life? You cannot. If you think you can keep it, brag about your own righteousness to the end. But if you know you cannot keep it, surrender to the Lord saying, "Oh Lord, I lack much. I have nothing to boast."

Give up your own merits. Admit in front of God



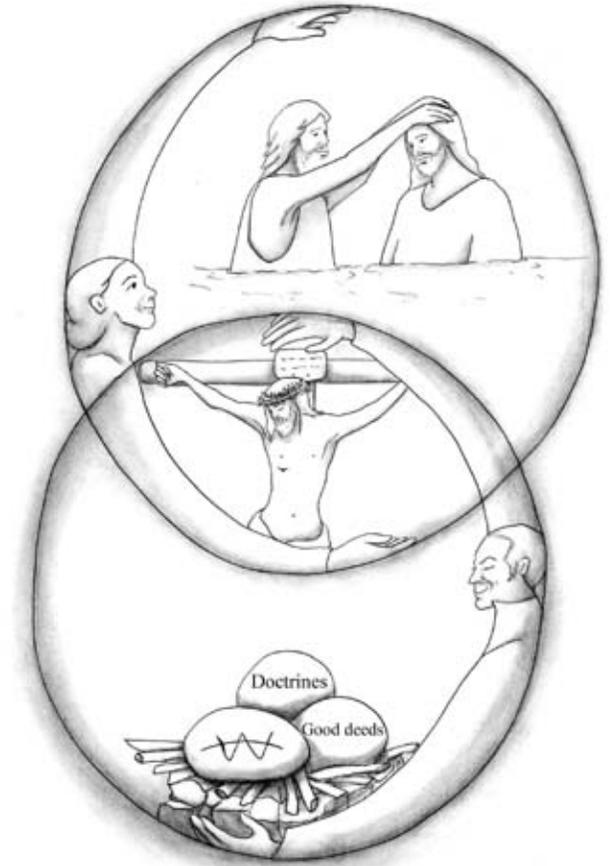
that you are only a human being who lacks so much. You have to confess, "My Lord, even though I lack much, I will believe in your Word and follow You. I may not be able to follow you 100% but I believe following You is right. I will follow You. Even though I have no righteousness of my own, I will follow You to the end. Even though I lack so much, I have nothing to boast, and I am insufficient in front of God's Word, I will follow You amongst these shortcomings." Only those people can become the disciples of the Lord and God will use these people essentially. Through them He will receive all the glory.

Do believe this. You must remember these three things if you are willing to become the disciples of the Lord. ☒



SERMON

4



CONTENTS



If You Want to Follow The Lord, Calculate First And Then Follow

< Luke 14:25-35 >

“Now great multitudes went with Him. And He turned and said to them, ‘If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it—lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish’? Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down

first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace. So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple. Salt is good; but if the salt has lost its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land nor for the dunghill, but men throw it out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”

Follow the Lord after Having Examined Your Faith

Have you had a good meal? I don’t know why it’s raining so much in this heat. I am very glad that you are all living out your faith so well. I am glad to see you like this without having faced death. As we lead our life of faith, we really don’t know when we will die, but there are many people who aren’t



thankful for their lives. Is today better than yesterday? Is your heart feeling happy and thankful today, too?

Yesterday, we were a little tired and fatigued for it was our first day of arrival here. Anyway, I am glad and happy to be seeing you all at this summer discipleship training camp. I hope and pray that we will be having a wonderful time all through this meeting by sharing God's grace that is revealed in His Word.

When we look at the Scripture passage we have read today, the Lord tells us that if anyone follows the Lord and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be one of the Lord's disciples. Also, He tells us that whoever does not bear his cross and go after the Lord cannot be the Lord's disciple. In a metaphor, the Lord tells us that a certain person, trying to build a tall tower, will fail in that endeavor if that person does not count the cost that will go into it first. He also tells us that

certain people, making war against others, will suffer a great failure if they wage war without having considered in advance the results, the gains and losses, or the outcome, victory or defeat, of that war. Then the Lord says in conclusion, "*Whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple. Salt is good; but if the salt has lost its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land nor for the dunghill, but men throw it out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!*" (Luke 14:33-35) Such are the contents of the Scripture passage we have read today.

All the Words spoken by the Lord are the truth, and they are something very precious to us. They continue to be something very precious to you and me who are living in this day and age. If we cannot understand these Words and if we cannot believe in and follow these Words well, I believe we will suffer a great failure exactly as it is written in today's Scripture passage. Therefore, we must think about how we can continue our lives of faith until



the coming of the Lord incessantly and unwaveringly, and we must count and calculate it well. We will gain much help and strength if we were to live out our lives by thinking and calculating in advance about the following: “Can we lead our life of faith to the end? Can the faith be maintained? Can we become true disciples of the Lord? Why must we follow and serve the Lord? What differences would there be between the result of having followed the Lord and that of not having followed Him? Hence, with what kind of attitude must we lead our life of faith?” We can live out our faith by knowing its results beforehand.

We must lead our life of faith until the end of this world, until the day when the Lord will return, and until we go before the Lord. But in order to do so, as we are right now following the Lord by having received the remission of sins, we must consider whether or not it will go well very meticulously. We should lead our life of faith by reflecting on our mindset seriously and thinking about the following

things: “As we are leading a life of faith like so right now, can we endure until the coming of the Lord with such faith, when the tribulation comes and when hardships fall upon us? Will we be able to do the entrusted work well then? Might not we be leaving the Church before the coming of the tribulation? Can we be abandoned by God owing to my unfaithfulness?”

Let Each of Us Take a Look at Our Faith

We must examine ourselves as to whether or not we can follow the Lord no matter what happens. I am asking you to calculate if you can follow the Lord all the while you do everything that fits you to be a good social being. We must see if we can live as the Lord wishes by doing all the things that we want to do from a fleshly perspective, such as, what our parents of the flesh want, what our spouses want, what our children want, what our brothers and sisters



want, and also what our own selves want. If we do such things first, we can never follow the Lord wholly. The Lord says to us that we cannot become His disciples as we do things that we and our brothers, sisters, and parents of the flesh want us to do.

They are something the Lord has also calculated. He says to us that, as we follow Him, if we do things this way and that according to the flesh, that is, if we do things according to the desires of the flesh, then that will make us lose our faith. In other words, He says to us that we cannot follow Him while taking caring of all the people and things that concern us due to our social and blood ties which bind us to the flesh. He is saying to us that we cannot follow Him by doing well what a human being must do, responding to every single thing, getting accepted, and receiving applause from our parents, brothers, or relatives. It means that if there is such a person, someone who tries to follow the Lord as he receives applause from all those who are related to him by

flesh and does all the worldly things, then that person will never be able to follow the Lord perfectly. Such a person can never become a disciple of the Lord.

Furthermore, the Lord says to us that people who try to follow the Lord after having taken care of their own difficulties first cannot serve the Lord properly. The Lord is telling us how to follow Him after having considered it meticulously, as if He were solving a math problem. He is telling us that such a person also cannot become His disciple and cannot follow Him. Like so, the Lord concludes. The Lord says to us that if we truly do not throw away all that we possess, we can neither follow Him nor become His disciples.

Then, like so, if people cannot follow the Lord, then what will be the end for those who don't follow the Lord? In the end, those people will be abandoned by the Lord. He said, *“Salt is good; but if the salt has lost its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land nor for the dunghill, but men*



throw it out” (Luke 14:34-35). Dear fellow believers, if you do not follow the Lord, your life will become like that of the salt that has lost its flavor. In other words, the Lord will throw you out. Your role will be over. The result of not having followed the Lord is getting abandoned by God.

What the Lord requires is a little higher in dimension. It is neither a fleshly requirement nor some religious requirement. Rather, He is requiring us to follow Him unconditionally. Strictly speaking, His requirement seems exorbitant. But, what will happen when you neglect this Word of the Lord? As I have said, you will be abandoned by the Lord. You will break away and disappear from the ranks of the life of faith in which people believe in the Lord and follow Him.

One might say, hearing this Word, “Well, it is fine so long as I get to go to Heaven. So what if I deviate a little. No matter if this happens, and no matter if that happens. It’s fine so long as I get to go to Heaven.” But what I am saying is that is not the

case. What the Lord has concluded is that just as He has said that although salt is something good, it will be thrown out if it loses its flavor, one will suffer complete abandonment from the Lord because of their deviation from a life of faith. Think about mixing in salt into fertilizers used for farming. You must have seen sawdust and fallen leaves heaped up and getting decomposed, right? As one decomposes them, let us assume that the person adds tons of salt to them thinking it will make them better fertilizers and mixes them together. Using this, if the person fertilizes some crop, such as wheat, what will happen to the wheat? It may cry out, “How salty, too salty. I am getting thirsty. I need rain; I need water, not some fertilizer. I am dying! Don’t regret after I die, but rather, remove this fertilizer from me. I don’t like this kind of fertilizer. I like water, not salt.” If that wheat had lips, this is what it would have said.

Getting thrown out into the streets is the same. Do you think it would be good to have salt spread



out in the streets? There has to be dirt on the streets, but if the streets were covered with salt, plants would not be able to grow. Dear fellow believers, imagine salt lying around on the streets in filth. The streets would only be dirty and filthy. Salt is something that has to go into food. If it were thrown on the streets, it would be unsightly. In Korea, salt is usually thrown to someone who seems to bring bad luck. To sum it up, I say to you that the result of not willing to follow the Lord and not being able to follow the Lord will be getting abandoned from the Lord like so.

It won't be so serious if anyone can go to Heaven just by living out one's faith half-heartedly, isn't it? Wouldn't it be great if you can arrive at Heaven regardless of whichever way you go? There is a Korean saying that goes, "It doesn't matter so long as you can go to Seoul." This means that the result is important while the means to achieve it are secondary." But when it comes to the way to Heaven, the process and the result are both important. They

coincide with each other. If we live out our faith well everyday, we will surely reach Heaven and vice versa. Therefore, we have to set our mindset upright before the Lord and follow Him to the end. We already have faith in Jesus. So, how great would it be if our hearts do not change despite something happening to us? What worry would there be if we could be like that?

You might think, "It will not matter whether or not I stay inside the Church. But you say I should stay in the Church. Would that be so important?" However, the Lord asks us to do so. Therefore, we need to calculate this beforehand.

What is the difference between those who lead a life of faith and those who do not? There's a clear difference. The difference between the two is much greater than you might think because the Lord is the just God and because He is the omniscient God. For people who do not follow His Word despite having known it, what punishment is prepared for them? What happened to that person who had received a



talent and hid it underground? Despite having known that the Lord sees through everything, he hid the single talent he had received, and when the Master came back, he gave it back, saying, “Here it is.” The Lord rebukes such a person saying, “*You wicked and lazy servant,*” and He casts that unprofitable servant into the outer darkness, that is, hell. Dear fellow believers, although it may seem as though I am speaking in a strict black-and-white logic, these Words aren’t something I have made up. Rather, they are the Words of the Lord. Therefore, these Words apply to you and me as well. The Lord says to us that if we want to become the Lord’s disciples and to follow the Lord, we won’t be able to do so unless we throw away all our possessions. Throwing away possessions is not about throwing away your properties. He is telling us that it is right to follow only what the Lord requires and not follow the requests of all your acquaintances with whom you are bound by fleshly ties.

What will happen to us if we follow all the

requests from the world? There a thing I have learned from the world. What I have realized is that if you were to try to meet the request of the world properly, even if you have twelve bodies, you will still be in want. I had learned that fact when I was young. When I was a little boy, I participated in the memorial services of my ancestors, tried to be pious to my parents, tried to get along well with my friends, showed my utmost respect to the elders, and so on. While I was growing up, I was educated like that.

For example, trying to show my worldly propriety, I always turned my back so as to hide my wine glass when I was drinking wine in front of the adults, and as for smoking, I couldn’t even dream about smoking in front of them. Even though I was young, I took care of all the memorial services of my ancestors in our household. When there was a memorial service being held at my relative’s house, I went there even after midnight, bowed together on my knees and ran errands for them. Moreover, if



there was an occasion for celebration or sorrow, such as weddings, funerals, and such, I went there. I gave my congratulations or condolences with words and money. I did all of that.

However, as I got older, I realized, “Alas, there is just no end to all these kinds of services.” I also came to realize that things like these, even if you continue to do them, had no end and that there has to be a limit to taking care of worldly things. Furthermore, I came to realize that one cannot take care of them without money, and that one has to have money to carry out such things—occasions for celebration or condolence, visiting the sick, holding memorial services for my ancestors, and so on. So, I came to think, “Alas, I have to have a lot of money and need about 12 bodies to act like a human being properly.”

After having become the born-again, I came to think even more so. Therefore, I had concluded, “At any rate, I am not very good at acting like a proper human being in front of the worldly people. If I do

all those things—attending my nephews’ and nieces’ weddings, attending memorial services of my ancestors somehow (even if I do attend without bowing on my knees), and so on—when will I follow the Lord, when will I preach the gospel, when will I rest at home, when will I hold prayer meetings, when will I give sermons, and when will I share fellowship with the saints? All right, this is ridiculous. Such works are over; all of them!”

I graduated from doing worldly works as such. I graduated from the world with a shining diploma in my heart. Whatever the case, all I have is a single body, so I decided to be faithful in at least one thing, the Kingdom of God. I came to think that I should at least do this one thing—serving, believing in, and following the Lord well, for I cannot do everything. I simply gave up on the worldly works, thinking, “How can I possibly receive recognition from worldly people, receive praise from them, and do my duties toward them?” The Lord said, “*Whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My*



disciple” (Luke 14:33).

As our saints and the servants of God endeavor to follow the Lord, they are faced with difficult circumstances and other problems. There truly are many difficulties. Once you start making excuses, there can be many excuses that will prevent you from following the Lord closely. You might think, “My current situation is like this, so I cannot do that. Because of my current circumstances, it is difficult for me to go out and engage in the ministry of preaching the gospel. Because my living is difficult, I am unable to carry out the work of serving the Lord with materials things, with my heart, or with prayers. Under my current circumstances, it is too difficult for me to follow the Lord wholly.” But dear fellow believers, if you truly want to become a disciple of the Lord who follows Him wholly, you must throw away worldly things. As I have mentioned above, it is truly difficult to do. However, when will you have time to follow the Lord when you are chasing after the things of this world and

doing all the humanly duties for the people of the world? I am telling you to try to calculate what you should throw away and what you should attain if you want to become a disciple of the Lord and to follow Him. You must carefully reckon such things as what is most important and whether or not it is possible. Dear fellow believers, what I am saying to you is this: What strength will you have left to follow the Lord if you are going about meeting worldly friends, pleasing all of them, visiting neighbors, becoming a town’s headperson, and attending all sorts of friendly gatherings and neighborhood clubs? I am asking you to calculate to see if you will have any strength remaining after all that.

Therefore, the Lord speaks to us that people like that are just like the salt which has lost its flavor. In other words, people who live out their lives without having set their heart in the Lord and those who claim to follow the Lord without even throwing away their own carnal desires and lusts are just like the salt that has lost its flavor. It means that they are



useless to the Lord as well as to the world in the end because they are the salt that has lost its flavor. Such people are also useless for the spreading of the gospel.

I Am Not Saying This without Having Considered Your Lacking

I know my lacking, and I also know that you are lacking as well. I am not saying that our lacking causes trouble in our life of faith, but rather, I am speaking about our mind-set, that is, we must not have our hearts set on the world. Our hearts must not lean toward worldly things. If not, we will neither be fit for the Lord nor the Kingdom of the Lord. When that happens, we will become a person unfit for the world as well in the end. A person who does not throw away all that he or she has cannot follow the Lord properly. If the ministry workers or the saints who follow the Lord were to come and go to Church

only with their bodies but without that kind of an attitude, what will happen? There aren't that many born-again Christians who have already set their mind on the Lord, and they lead a life of faith half-heartedly. At any rate, they don't calculate the consequence of their faith saying, "Que Sera, Sera." Do you know the famous popular song that goes, "Que Sera, Sera"? These Spanish words mean, "Whatever will be, will be." Anyhow, what I am saying is that we need this kind of attitude if we want to follow the Lord. We must confess like this: "I will follow the Lord without fail by truly throwing away all that I have and my greed. Even though I am not perfect in this world and here in God's Church, and I lack so much like this, I will follow the Lord despite my lacking for I am still someone who has received the remission of sins before the Lord. I will become a disciple of the Lord." Then, we must choose a side and give up the other. We must choose between becoming a disciple of the Lord and becoming a servant of the world.



People Who Have Become Disciples of the Lord Follow His Righteousness

The Lord's disciples are those who follow the righteousness of the Lord to the end. People who throw away worldly values and follow the righteousness of the Lord can follow the Lord to the end despite their lacking. They will become like that. They will be following the Lord with the Lord-given strength, power, and blessings. However, it is true that people who aren't like that can neither follow the Lord nor become a person useful to the world. For example, when playing and having relationships with the worldly people out there in the world, the born-again people can play and develop relationships better than those who aren't. When playing, they play ardently, and they can also lead well, saying, "No, this is dull! Let us try this for fun." But we cannot find anything useful from such people; they are useless inside God's Church without a doubt, and they are useless in the world as

well. They are also of no use when it comes to the spreading of the gospel. Dear fellow believers, compared to salt, a useless thing is like some plastic salt, only white in color but insoluble in water. It is like that fake salt. What use would that kind of salt have? Although we have to become like salt, giving things salty taste, we won't be able to become like that. We will become of no use for anything.

Not just anyone is useful to the gospel, and not just anyone can serve the gospel and follow the Lord. Someone who is of great use to the gospel is a person who leads a life of perseverance to become a disciple of the Lord. Anyone who tries to become a servant of the world, unable to throw away all his or her possessions, worldly things, worldly desires, and avarice, rather than to brace oneself to follow the Lord is useless. They are useless in the Church as well. In other words, anyone who just comes and goes to a church, offers worship, does things loosely, and wastes time like that is of no use. People like that are troublemakers in the Church. They raise dust



for no apparent reason. They criticize by saying something's wrong with this, something's wrong with that. When they aren't starting up arguments, they stay silent over the issue of the preaching of the gospel just for a while until they go on cursing ministry workers and God's servants. They say, "Our Church is as small as a pea, so why do you work so hard? Let's just order something delicious and eat. Let's work loosely. Let's share some Chinese noodles. It should be all right so long as we have a good time like this." When the servants of God preach to them that we must spread the gospel throughout the world so that people can receive the remission of sins, they say, "What? Are you crazy? I don't even have any money for food. Yet, you want to spend money for the gospel?" People like that are of no use anywhere.

Of course, there are people who are like that because they don't have any spiritual discretion. Essentially, for one year after having received salvation, the young believers are considered to be

without discretion. During that period, we can try to understand their preposterous actions, thinking that they are without discretion and are just child-like. But, if they were to continue to act like that and speak like that even after three years, then, we can say that they do so because they are hopeless. For they know only themselves, they have to be insulted much more. Then, what about those who do such things after two years? People like that are neutral, that is, neutral in gender. Doesn't neutral describe something that is neither this nor that? Although I am embarrassed to say this, people like that have to receive a sex change operation. They are creepy when they take fancy in men and the same thing even when they take fancy in women; we feel awkward being near them, and when we see them in the distance, we get confused.

Dear fellow believers, is it okay for you and I to become useless people inside the Church and among the people of God? Is it okay for us to be abandoned by the Lord? Never. Is it not a problem for us to be



excluded from the precious work of God? No, absolutely not! Must we become people eliminated from the task of saving souls?

Now, let us think for a while about why we have to calculate our life of faith on the basis of what Jesus has said. He said, *“Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand?”* Let’s say that as we engage in a war, we find ourselves having ten thousand soldiers, while the enemy has twenty thousand. Yet, we have to fight the war. So, we must think about what we must do. If two countries should make war against each other, they have to fight to win the war somehow. Both sides will have to calculate carefully beforehand to see whether or not they can win and then decide on whether or not to start the war. In cases like this, one would have to make a choice, right? It would be between making war and making peace.

But, if one of them were to engage in war without even having done the calculations, then they will lose the war, 100%. They will all die. And so, after having done the calculations, if it doesn’t seem viable, they would have to send a delegation and ask conditions of peace while the other is still a great way off. This is it. “Do we need to fight? Let’s not fight with each other. What are your requests? We want such and such things. Let us negotiate.” Like so, both sides must compromise and let things be mutually beneficial. That is what negotiation is.

The Lord tells us to negotiate with Him. “If you want to follow Me, now that you have been born again, calculate the result in advance. Throw away worldly things that aren’t important.” “If you want to follow Me, try to calculate to see if you can follow the world at the same time. Calculate whether you can follow both of them or not. If you find that you will not be able to follow them both, you must give up everything that is related to you, that is, worldly things.” You must do so. I am saying to you



that you must return to the Lord who gives us everything and serve Him by giving up everything that doesn't give you any true benefit, happiness, and blessing. I am saying that you must become the disciples of the Lord. If you don't, you will be abandoned by the Lord because you are useless in His eyes.

You must have a clear understanding of these Words spoken by the Lord. There probably are those who say, "Well, whether useful or not, I have received the remission of sins, and I am sure that all I have to do is to come to Church. Yet, why do you go on mentioning such a burdensome admonition? Even without it, my head is complicated, so all I have to do is to go on doing what I have been doing. Doing my own duties in the world now is also difficult. You go your way, and I go my own way. That is it." Still, I want to make a proposition to you, for you as well as for myself. Precisely, I want to tell you to follow the Lord by having done the calculations. I propose that you calculate and then

choose one of the ways between following the Lord and chasing after the world that is beneficial for you. I say this for your benefit and mine.

Some people may say, "I want to follow the Lord, but I am too weak to serve Him." It is all right to be faltering right now. Let us put off for a minute that flesh does falter like that. What is important is that the mind and heart mustn't be faltering. If you falter at heart, you will be abandoned. If your mind falters and is weak, sooner or later, you will be missed from the Church without even a trace. Also, you will become someone who is absolutely useless even in the Kingdom of God. What the Lord says to that person is this: "You are a useless human being." He will be branded like this. Not even knowing that, we are prone to think from a fleshly and human perspective, "We are all the saints. So, please, tolerate my weakness, go on and on saying yes, yes to me, and try to just mingle and get by in any way possible until the Lord comes." However, the Lord will sort out people like that saying, "You are a



useless person. Even though I came to this earth for you, throwing away the glory up in Heaven, received the baptism, took on all your sins, died, and was resurrected from that death to save you, but you are of no use anywhere. It is true that I am your Savior. Nevertheless, I will vomit you out of My mouth because you are a useless person.”

The Lord doesn't expect anything from people who are useless like that; obstinate people who just go to church without even once trying to do the calculations. Understanding this Word of the Lord, we must try doing the calculations at least once. After being born again, we must calculate, at least once, which way is the right one to follow. As I have mentioned, the Lord told us to decide on whether to fight or to make peace by doing detailed calculations, even in making war against twenty thousand soldiers with just ten thousand soldiers. Likewise, when following the Lord, we must carry out all acts by having done the calculations and following the exact answer derived from them. I am telling you that we

must calculate accurately and then follow the Lord. People who follow the Lord without having done any calculations may appear to be optimistic, but the Lord will say to them, “You are nothing. You are none other than the enemy. You may have come in here, but you are the enemy, the foe.” This is how He will treat them.

Neither on this side nor the other; simply put, they are double agents. Double agents are treated as despicable criminals. Even now, when we look at recently unified Germany or other nations, double agents are still getting captured and tried. Why? It is because in those countries, even prior to the unification, there were so many people who had been engaging in secret activities. They are clearly citizens of the unified Germany, but even though the spies who had worked for either one of the sides, East or West Germany, aren't being accused of crime, those who had acted as double agents are clearly getting accused of crime even now. Spies who had been on either of the sides are not being



questioned, rather. It would be somewhat odd to be accusing them of crimes after the unification when political offenders are even being released. However, people who had been double agents are being accused of crimes, nevertheless. People who are neither this nor that are the most dangerous.

Dear fellow believers, I am telling you to stop flustering and pursue either one of the two sides by having done the calculations meticulously. Whatever it may be, pursue it after having done the calculations. One's body cannot be separated into two parts, but the heart can think of all sorts of things. I am telling you to pursue what seems to be beneficial after having calculated the result. Do you understand this?

Calculate the result of your way of faith. If you neglect it, you will become upset when the Lord comes, saying, "Alas, I have lived wrongfully." When you do so, what the Lord will say is, in vulgar terms, this: "You are shitting Me. Pour a bowl full of shit in your mouth and shit like crazy. You still

haven't shit everything. You are still not ready." Also, do you think that is all that He will do? He will separate you from His people. The Lord hates touching sinners who are like filthy dung, and thus, He will say, "Hey, you! Don't say shitty things anymore, and come over here. Go into the fire that never quenches. You said you do not know Me. So, I don't know you either." Although having been born again, if the Lord says He doesn't know you, then this is what will happen. Dear fellow believers, if you do not do any calculations and chase after worldly things, this is what will happen.

Do you know why people cannot come back after having left the Church? Did they not receive the remission of sins? Why are they like that? They are unable to return because they are weak, first of all. They tend to question how they could possibly return now and have doubts about whether or not they will be accepted. They are unable to return because their faith is so weak like that. However, there are those who return by faith, thinking that



although they are truly lacking, the Lord is their Savior and this Church is clearly their Church. The second reason that prevents them from returning to God's Church is that they have been living among the enemies for too long. This makes them have the same mindset as that of the enemies. As they live in enemy neighborhoods, they tend to think that the enemy neighborhood is their people and that that country is their country. Hence, when they see us, they view us as bad people. Toward us, they think, "Those utterly robbing dogs. Wicked jerks." With their eyes rolled back, they view us as the enemy. They start to view brothers, sisters, and the servants of God not as friendly forces, but as people who are trying to injure and kill them. People like that are described as those who have been blinded by evil spirits and possessed by demons. When possessed by demons, one will see the people of God and the Church of God as enemies, just as when one puts on red-colored lenses, everything looks red, and blue when one puts on blue-colored lenses. That's why

they are unable to return. If so, what is the result like? Literally, they get abandoned.

What was the man who had received one talent like? What did he do after digging up the ground with a hack and saying, "Oh Lord, You have saved me. Thank You." He buried the gospel of salvation. The person might say, "If I spread this gospel, I will be disgraced; if I spread this, my ties to my brothers and sisters will be severed; all the relationships will be severed, those with my brothers, sisters, parents, children, and spouse of the flesh." Like so, as soon as he receives the remission of sins, he will keep it safe by digging up the ground with a hack, placing the gospel in it, covering it up with dirt, and pressing it down well. When the Lord comes, he will be giving it back to Him. He will dig it out and say, "Here it is." When the Lord says to him, "What did you do all this time? Why did you let it rot like this?" he will answer, "You are shameless. Well, You are asking too much from me just for having given me a single thing, salvation. Well, You did



save me saying that it is free, that it is grace, and that it is a gift. But now, You are asking too much. You seem like a dictator, and You are too strict. Still, I am all so thankful for You having saved me, and that is why I am laying it in front of you like this after having kept only just that safe.”

How do you think the Lord felt then? A plant has to sprout to bear flowers, and it has to bear flowers to bear fruit. So, the Lord will whip out the plant with its sprout, and as He gives it to another person, He will say, “I want you to gain even more over your everlasting life, and I want you to do this work of the gospel and hence receive more rewards.” He will say, “Send away this no good imbecile to a dark place.” This is what will happen.

An abandoned person will not be able to come back to the Church. How many people yearn to see their hometown again but cannot go back? You probably know the popular song that goes, “Green Green Grass of Home,” don’t you?

“The old home town looks the same

As I step down from the train
And there to meet me is my Mama and Papa
Down the road I look and there runs Mary
Hair of gold and lips like cherries

It’s good to touch the green, green grass of home.”

Lyrics like these are truly sentimental. The understanding is that the protagonist of the lyrics had been imprisoned. The middle of the lyrics goes like this: “Then I awake and look around me, at four gray walls that surround me and I realize that yes, I was only dreaming.” It is enough to drive a person crazy. Everyone has his or her own hometown. It is a place where you were born, where you used to live, and where those close to you live. When you are in a situation preventing you from going there, you start longing for your hometown a lot. When you are unable to visit your country or your homeland, don’t you start yearning it? Like this, if you cannot return to the Church, you will wind up being the same spiritually.



When one tries to preach this gospel to the world by himself after leaving the Church, he will be treated as their enemy. The world will look at that person as if he were an enemy. “This person is a jerk. We are the only ones who can preach the Word, but he is doing it all by himself. This person is ludicrous.” The words I say may sound harsh, but my expression is not too harsh. They continue to sharpen swords to kill such a person. Dear fellow believers, you know those swords used to strike people’s necks, don’t you? Those kinds are what I’m talking about, like half-moon shaped swords. They are relentlessly sharpening swords like the Green Dragon Crescent-Moon Sword used by Guan Yu, a character appearing in the Romance of Three Kingdoms. Swords like that are so thick that they cannot be sharpened in just one day. They have to be sharpened for a long time. Why do they do so? They do so in order to obliterate the enemy army. They are always sharpening the sword tip. Even those who have the gospel will become useless people and be

abandoned if they were to try to follow the Lord without having done the calculations.

We have no other choice but to follow the Lord by faith. People have to realize this through faith. If not, they will suffer death. They’ll live out their lives watching themselves die. We see their future clearly: “You are dying and are like that right now, but you will carry out this kind of act soon.” Despite knowing it all, we will leave them be. Dear fellow believers, faith is something personal. Receiving salvation before God is also something personal. Why should we become useless people? Why should we not calculate? We can become the good disciples of the Lord and lead a worthy life receiving blessings only by fully following the Lord after having calculated well and having chosen a side that is good.

Well, if you were to go on living without even trying to do calculations, then you will be living intoxicated by the world drinking all day and night. Although living together with the world, you will



become of no use to the world, ruin the world, and become a person who is useless to the Kingdom of God. You will become a person of no use at all before the Lord. Therefore, what I want to say to you is that you and I must never become a person like that. Follow the Lord only after you have done the calculations. You must follow Him by faith. You don't know what will happen to you tomorrow. At times, I get to thinking that when the day of the tribulation comes, even some of the ministry workers will leave the Church. There might remain only a few of the saints and the ministry workers in the Church. When that happens, it's really serious. There are serious instances when I see our ministry working serving the gospel right now. Whenever I think about such things, my heart becomes ill at ease and leaves no room for tolerating your half-hearted faith. Truly, I can go crazy in an instant.

I don't even have the time to look back because I lack strength and don't have the sufficient abilities as I deal with the whole world; not just individuals

but the entire population of the world. Then, I get to thinking that the result will not be good, as I've told you before, if I leave the half-hearted believers alone like this. As I continue to see with the eyes of faith and calculate by faith, I am able to see things that will occur in actuality. They are obvious. I am saying such results will come about not because of the problems of your lacking, but because of your following the Lord without having done the calculations, that is, without having set your heart in either one of the two sides. I predict that the results will be bad, rather than good if I let you do what you want. You will only be very busy, unable to become a disciple of the Lord. You will not become someone whom the Lord can use to His heart's content. Don't you think this should not happen?

Dear fellow believers, if you want to serve the Lord, you will be following the Lord steadily. You have chosen this whether you like it or not, after having calculated the result on your own. Although you may lack a bit, if you follow the Lord to the end,



you will then receive help before the Lord. You will receive His love and blessings. You will live out your lives amid the Lord-given strength. However, if you were to follow Him without even having done the calculations, not even once, you would become such that you will stop in your tracks when things do not workout. People like that cannot do calculations well. The scariest person is someone who cannot do the calculations. Ignorant people are the scariest. You don't know how dangerous they are.

Calculations of faith must also be carried out well. Of course, you should also be good at calculating fleshly things. Doing some work without having done the calculations is tremendously dangerous. It is very dangerous. It is more dangerous than communism. Are you following the Lord after having done the calculations thoroughly? Are you following Him after having done the calculations accurately at least once? “Alas, I used to do calculations well in the past, but why should I have to calculate like that these days? As the saying goes,

what is good is good. I think ‘compatibility’ is the best.” Did you choose like that? As you may know, Cheonan is a historical city in central Korea. All the broad roads from the southern regions of Korea were converged as one leading into this city. So the city was famous since the ancient times, described by the words, “Cheonan Fork Way.” There were lots of choices as to where to go. So, in the past, travelers used to stay there for days and the city became prosperous. But one had to eventually choose one of the roads after having calculated everything. Even something like that has to be calculated well before one's outset. Yet, regarding calculations of faith, is it all right not to calculate beforehand if we are to follow the Lord?

One Becomes the Lord's Disciple If He Calculates Well

Also, if you calculate wrong, you will without



fail become a person absolutely of no use. You will become an abandoned person. Thus, we have to make the right choice by having calculated well if we want to follow the Lord. We must become proper followers of the Lord. It is already noon, and if I continue, I think you will be displeased. Anyway, you can understand what I mean, right? I have calculated time already, haven't I? You all know how to calculate, don't you? I hope there isn't anyone among you, like a fool, who will wage war against an army of twenty thousand with only ten thousand, right? I hope there isn't anyone among you, like a fool, who will give up following the Lord for having felt that what you have is too precious, right?

When you add up all that you have, how much is it worth? When you follow the Lord, how much do you gain? You must do calculations like that well. You must be taught how to calculate things like that. There are just too many people who do not know how to do these calculations. But then again, you

wouldn't believe how good they are at doing fleshly calculations. Such people are really bad at doing spiritual calculations. What do you call that kind of people? We call them imbeciles, blockheads. Especially among those who are young, I think there are many who are really poor at doing calculations. I think the youth these days aren't very good at math. With such incompetence, I don't know how they get to enter colleges. But then, many colleges have sprung up these days, and inversely, there really are many schools, the level of which has fallen drastically. Actually, people don't learn much at a college. As long as one learns properly at a high school, that person will not have much trouble in society. There are many people who had gone to universities under vainglory and just used up money. They came out with a diploma, but then, they found it completely useless.

There are some college professors among my friends, but as I have said, with the falling college standards, many have quit their job. They gave up



their position early on, thinking that raising pupils isn't worth it anymore. I am saying I have friends who had thrown away chalk and old notes and picked up the Bible with their two hands. A hundred times over, what they did was great. Being professors, they had the brains to calculate they way the did. But people these days cannot do such calculations. They enter a company with a four-year college degree and receive a monthly salary of about 1,500 dollars. After that, they get to receive about 2,500 to 4,500 dollars, at most. It seems there are many people who give up their life for that kind of money. Such people are called idiots. People who can't calculate are those that if someone were to stay under their direction, that person gets to suffer much. When you sisters are looking for a groom, look to see whether or not that brother is good at doing calculations, and if you find him to be incompetent, kick him away. But, even though a certain brother may seem a bit stupid and is unattractive from a fleshly perspective, if he is very fast at calculating,

he will live up to his role well. Hold onto a man like that. Also, it's the same for brothers. When you look at a sister, if all she knows is how to tidy herself and how to calculate from a fleshly perspective, not knowing how to calculate from a spiritual perspective, spit on her face. You simply cannot make acquaintance with a person like that. However, if she can calculate well from a spiritual perspective, say to yourself, "Wow, she is great. I thought she looked good only on the outside, but she is good on the inside as well." When you see a sister like that, marry her without a second thought.

Oh my! With the lunchtime drawing near and time continuing to pass by, you must be thinking, "Why doesn't he finish?" I truly want to exchange my inner thoughts with you as I see you all. As I see you all and as I see myself, it feels truly good. But on the other hand, I am worried about some of you. I worry, thinking, "Oh my, they are all dying. What shall I do? If left alone for a little while longer, they will simply die, so why don't I teach them the ways



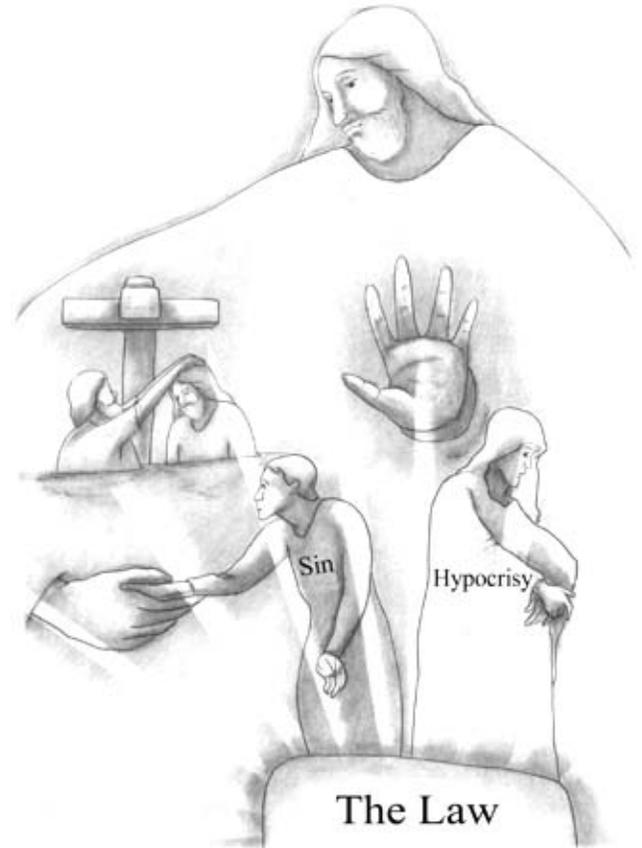
to calculate? If they can calculate well, they can stand firm on their faith in the Lord.” Though it may seem conceited, I have many thoughts like that.

Dear fellow believers, the Lord likes a person who can calculate well. A person who cannot calculate is worth nothing. No matter how strong, how beautiful, and whatever virtue one may have, if a person cannot calculate, that is, if the person has a blockhead, then the Lord will not use that person preciously. The Kingdom of God is the same. I think there will only be smart people. I don’t mean those who are smart fleshly, but spiritually. Do you understand this? I hope and pray that you all would be the saints who are good at doing calculations. ☒



SERMON

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Instead of Trusting Yourself, Believe in The Word of God

< Luke 14:31-35 >

“Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace. So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple. Salt is good; but if the salt has lost its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land nor for the dunghill, but men throw it out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”

Make Peace with the Lord First

Today’s Word of the Lord is a metaphor in which a king of a certain nation is thinking about whether or not the nation can stand against an invading army of twenty thousand with just ten thousand soldiers in a war. The Lord tells us that if the king comes to find that it is impossible to win, then he should try to make peace as quickly as possible. While the enemy is still far away, the king should be making peace with them, lest his kingdom should be ruined. By using such a metaphor, the Lord says, *“So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.”* Through the metaphor, the Lord is telling us what we must do in order to become His disciples.

At times, when a person tries to do some work, there are instances when the work does not move along smoothly and makes the person tired as if he were tied down by a snare. This happens because the person tries to take care of the work with his or her



own strength instead of asking the Lord. Therefore, it is more important for people to empty themselves completely than to have a firm conviction when doing a certain work. Rather than having the heart of “I can do anything by myself,” people must empty themselves and lead a life of faith by relying on God. When I do work, I always do the work by getting immersed in it. But, the work doesn’t always flow along smoothly. So, I become very tired. When a work does not go well, my heart gets bogged up, and until that work is resolved well, thoughts concerning that work do not leave my head.

We Shall Think about What You and I Must Do to Become His Disciple

We must quickly realize that “I cannot do anything,” and lay aside the thought that “I can do everything.” Also, rather than having the thought of “I will do this and that,” you must empty yourselves,

expect that the Lord will do it, and have the heart of believing in what the Lord will do. This is more important. We must become the saints whose hearts have been cleared. Once you plan on doing some work out of your own will, you will set your heart in doing that work and carry it out. Until that work is complete, you won’t be able to think anything else. But a true life of faith isn’t like that. Emptying our hearts and entrusting them to the Lord is more important than setting out to do something somehow on our own. There is a limit in doing work only with our own strength. Although you may aspire to diligently carry out the life of faith, it won’t go as well as you had thought. It means that there is a limit. Our thoughts, resolve, and abilities will surely reach their limits, and things will not turn out as we had expected and planned. Wouldn’t it be great if everything went as well as we had expected?

However, we are always lacking. We as individuals are not perfect. Rather, we are always lacking. Therefore, if we genuinely want to follow



the Lord, we must first empty ourselves. We must realize that only when we can wholly empty ourselves, will we be able to follow the Lord and become His disciples. When we empty ourselves, we can offer prayers that go, “Please do this and that for me, Lord.” We can set our faith to believe in the Lord truly taking care of all my works. The true faith that the Lord will do everything for us will arise in our hearts. It might seem as though we can achieve things with our own power if we were to try, but it will not go well. Dear fellow believers, a proper life of faith, and to become a disciple of the Lord are said to be precisely like that. If our abilities measure to be ten thousand, what the Lord wants is twenty thousand. Then, what we must do is to throw out our abilities and our thoughts. Can we match the power of the Lord? We can’t possibly match the power of the Lord. We cannot follow the Lord with our individual abilities.

Then, how can we follow the Lord? It is by completely emptying ourselves. “My Lord, I cannot

do anything. I believe that You have saved me and that You are the God who will lead me.” It is by believing in our Lord Jesus, who has the power of twenty thousand. Becoming a disciple of the Lord is to believe in and follow the omnipotent Lord. It is, in other words, to empty ourselves completely and to believe in the Lord with this kind of heart. We must empty ourselves, entrust all our things to the Lord, pray, and hope. When we believe in the Lord by completely emptying ourselves, we will be able to become true disciples of the Lord, do the same things that the Lord has done, and follow Him. When we empty our hearts, we become disciples of the Lord. If we do not empty ourselves, we cannot become His disciples. We must believe that the Lord will do our work for us only when we follow Him. We are able to follow the Lord because we believe that the Lord has saved us and that He will continue to protect us and help us. We are able to become disciples of the Lord.

Without the faith of believing in and following



the Lord, if we were to believe in and follow only our will, we will be faced with the limit of our powers, and hence, resolutions will become impossible. The Lord says to us through today's Scriptures, "*Whoever that does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.*" Here, "to forsake all that one has" doesn't just refer to throwing away all possessions. It is easy to throw away possessions. Compared to emptying of one's heart, throwing away the things and property that one possesses is rather easy. It is truly simple. It is rather imperative to empty one's heart, completely entrust in the Lord by saying, "Please do this and that for me Lord," and believe in Him by laying aside one's own will that says, "I will do this and that without fail." Then, we the disciples of the Lord have to believe that the Lord is working for us and follow Him by faith. We must practice according to our faith. Only when we can do that, will we be able to become true disciples of the Lord. When we empty ourselves, we can then become disciples of the Lord. We get to become

disciples of the Lord only when we follow the Lord by having accepted ourselves as being nothing and as those who are lacking.

When we look at our hymnbook, there is a song that goes, "♪This worthless body of mine making mistakes without the Lord. ♪It sails the sea like a ship without a sail, without the Lord. ♪Jesus. O, Jesus." And this phrase points out that the faith of trying to do things by oneself without believing in the Lord is not right. Before we embark on something, that is, prior to thinking that we can do that thing by ourselves, we must first acknowledge that we are beings who cannot do anything if not for the Lord. We can genuinely follow the Lord and become His disciples only when we acknowledge that we can't do anything if not for the Lord, and follow the Lord with the faith that He will help us and do for us all that we aspire.

Through today's sermon, I will only reiterate this one thing. Dear fellow believers, we are those who cannot live without the Lord. We have bodies



that are of no value, only making mistakes. I want you to think about what you can truly do, that is, what you can do on your own. I want you to think whether or not you can really follow the Lord through your volitional faith, that is, the faith of believing in yourselves instead of the faith of believing in the Lord. If we were to live by our own will, we cannot become the disciples of the Lord. We can become His disciples when we follow the Lord with the faith of obeying Him, having thrown away our possessions, our volitional faith of ‘I can do everything,’ and our own selves. This is what the Bible tells us.

Dear fellow believers, with regards to worldly things, one must live in struggles. Worldly things must be done that way. You cannot be carefree, not even stirring your finger. You must do these fleshly works with diligence and effort inspired by your strong will. But, with regard to following the Lord, that is, becoming a disciple of the Lord, our will as well as our strength are of absolutely no use. Such

things of one’s own will are most cumbersome in becoming a disciple of the Lord. In becoming a disciple of the Lord, our strength and volition will only be a hindrance.

To Become a Disciple of the Lord and to Follow the Lord to the End, We Must Genuinely Believe in the Righteousness of the Lord

Today’s Scripture passage means that you will be able to follow the Lord to the end, if you become a disciple of the Lord by having faith in Him by throwing away yourself and emptying your heart. Dear fellow believers, can we follow the Lord with just our own volition? Are you convinced that you will never deny the Lord, never be disappointed, never betray the Lord, and never leave the Church forever? Also, do you think that you will be able to go on living by never leaving the side of God, never

departing from the brothers and sisters, and never departing from the servants of God for all eternity? When the Apostle Peter was sharing fellowship with Jesus, Jesus said to the disciples, “You will all leave Me, and also, you will betray Me.” Just then, even though Peter said, “I don’t know what other disciples will do, but I will not betray You, Lord. I will not betray You until the day that I die,” he denied the Lord three times before the dawn of the next day. This is precisely what our own human volition is. Following the Lord with our own volition—this precisely is what a wrongful faith is. Trying to follow the Lord with just one’s own faith and capabilities is wrong. Our abilities have a limit. I am saying that our abilities are that of only ten thousand soldiers. That is, our will and strength and our own faith and capabilities are insufficient in following the will of the Lord. We cannot be whole with just our volition that goes, “I will follow the Lord to the end.”

Then, what can we do to become whole? The

Bible tells us, “You must surrender. When the enemy is still afar, you must make peace. You must trust in the enemy by giving up all that you have and making peace with them.” Only then can we survive without having lost that war and suffering death. As such, if you want to become a true disciple of the Lord, the faith of believing that the Lord has saved us and that He will protect us and give us blessings is more important than the faith that is constructed with just your own volition. We must realize quickly that our own abilities have no power and that they are just nothing. Human beings are nothing without the Lord. Our own will and wisdom are mere nothing. Our own volitional faith itself is worthless, too. Only the Lord is the greatest Being. We human beings are mere creations. We are nothing. As we follow the Lord, if we were to follow with our own volitional faith, we will surely fail. However, it is this faith that enables us to become disciples of the Lord and to follow the Lord—the faith of having trust in the Lord, the faith of believing in the Lord,



and the faith of one being able to say, by having emptied one's own volitional heart, "I am lacking. Even though I can't do anything, I have the faith that the Lord, who has saved me, will bless me and guide me."

Dear fellow believers, this is what He is saying through today's Scripture passage. Do you believe in this? People go on doing everything, even though they say, "I cannot do anything." Even though they often say, "I can do everything," they also say frequently, "I can do nothing at all." This shows that we ourselves are greatly lacking. It shows that in order for you and me to become perfect, we are in need of this faith, the faith of believing in the works that have been carried out by the Lord and those that He will be carrying out. If you believe in the Lord like this, you can become His disciple and follow Him to the end. You can follow the Lord to the end, and you can receive and enjoy all the care and blessings that the Lord gives you. But if you trust yourself more in comparison with your faith in the

Lord, you will fall in the end. You and I mustn't follow our own will and faith as we lead a life of faith always. Rather than having devilish thoughts and arrogance of 'I can do it,' I want you to possess this faith of believing in the Lord—the faith that the Lord has saved you, that He will protect you, that He will always guide you to the green pastures, and to the edge of the water where you can rest, and that He can do everything for you even though you cannot do it.

Believe in the Righteousness of God

If you do so, that faith will become yours. We must lead our life of faith with such faith and belief. When we possess this faith of believing in the Lord, we can lead a proper life of faith. We can also receive blessings. More than anything else, you must quickly realize the fact that you are nothing. You must realize this quickly. Although you may think



that you can do things on your own and that you are great, a human being cannot actually do anything. It has been like that, and it will continue to be like that. We cannot control the future according to our will and wishes; not tomorrow and not even each moment. You and I are such that we cannot do anything according to our will, not even for a second. All we can do is believe in and trust in the Lord. We can only confide in the Lord. There is nothing that we can do by our own volition. We must realize this quickly. Dear fellow believers, do you believe the fact that nothing is of importance except for our faith of believing in the Lord? The faith of believing in the Lord has allowed us to receive the remission of sins. The faith of believing in the Lord makes us happy and takes care of us. Furthermore, do you believe the fact that we will continue to live by the faith of believing in the Lord? Dear fellow believers, I want you to have this faith. I want you to believe this fact firmly.

At Seoksa-dong, a district in our city, there is a

church for the physically challenged. They are planning to hold a meeting there, and there is a placard that reads, “I Can Do It.” Someone had said this slogan at all the revival meetings he was preaching in. I don’t remember who he was. But, one thing clear is that our Lord can do everything. Only the Lord can do everything. Only He is omnipotent.

But a strange phrase has entered today’s Christianity. What is that phrase? It is the phrase, “I can do it.” The phrase, “I can do it,” is something really good, if interpreted in a good way, but if we interpret it spiritually, this phrase is truly the words of the devil. “People can’t, but God can.” This is the correct phrase. Yet, the phrase, “I can do it,” means that the believers can carry out morning prayers well and can carry out one hundred days of overnight prayers well.

Pastor Robert H. Schuller once said that after having written a book titled, “Move Ahead with Possibility Thinking.” In Korea, one can find many



frames holding the words, “I Can Do It.” But, what exactly can a human being do! What can a person do? What? Can a human being do whatever he or she wants to do? No, we cannot. Do you think the world would be like this if we had been able to do everything we wished to do? If we had such powers, the world would be really beautiful. If so, will we be living like this? Aren’t we living like this because we cannot? Because we cannot, only when we believe in and follow the Lord, we are guaranteed beauty and blessings. Only by faith can it be done, and the Lord is the only One who can do it. The Lord carries it out as such.

Dear fellow believers, more than anything else, we must quickly realize the fact that we ourselves are of no value. I am not saying that you shouldn’t do anything. “Because I cannot cook, I shouldn’t do it.” I don’t mean that. What I am saying is that we cannot do anything with our volition alone. We cannot carry out anything perfectly. I am saying that we cannot do things flawlessly. Hence, I am saying

that we must realize that we are lacking and that we must believe in God. Do not believe in yourselves, but rather, believe in God. This is the path toward becoming a disciple of the Lord. Only those who realized quickly that they are lacking can become the disciples of the Lord and follow the Lord. With just our own capabilities, we cannot follow the Lord. With just our own capabilities, we cannot keep ourselves. With just our own capabilities, we cannot receive salvation from sins.

If we give up all that is ours and believe in the Lord, everything becomes possible. We get to become disciples of the Lord and receive salvation. We get to receive care and blessings from God for having become His children. I am saying that everything becomes possible in the Lord.

Dear fellow believers, do you want to become a disciple of the Lord? If you want to become a disciple of the Lord, you must know that you are of no value. Instead of believing in your own capabilities, you must believe in the Lord. You must



always empty your heart. Did you and I not face many failures in trying to do something? I am sure there are many people who had experienced failures. There must have been many people who had suffered failures after having fought hard with their mouth tightly closed and with the thought that they could do things with their own strength. Today's sermon isn't just a simple doctrine. I am telling you that we human beings are truly nothing. I am telling you that having faith in God is the only thing that is perfect. I am telling you that only when we believe in the Lord, we will become perfect.

Dear fellow believers, do you believe this? ☒



SERMON

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Lost Souls

< Luke 15:1-10 >

“Then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to Him to hear Him. And the Pharisees and scribes complained, saying, ‘This Man receives sinners and eats with them.’ So He spoke this parable to them, saying: ‘What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!’ I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance. Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not

light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? And when she has found it, she calls her friends and neighbors together, saying, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I lost!’ Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.’”

Does the Lord Find Those Who Have Been Lost?

In Luke 15 that we read today, there are two parables: the parable of the lost sheep and the parable of the lost coin. The Lord here is speaking through two parables; one is speaking of how much joy the Lord had when He, the Master, found one of a hundred of His sheep which had lost its way. It’s speaking of how tiresome and difficult it is for Him to find a sheep that has been lost and that it is a very joyful thing to find it. God is powerful, but I can’t



describe how difficult it is for Him to find a sheep that has left His house as it wanted. My fellow believers, finding one lost sheep is such a joyous thing that all the people in the village gathered and had a feast.

The second parable is a story of losing a drachma. A woman lost one of the coins, turned everything over, looked everywhere on the floor, moved her wardrobe, cleaned where it had been, and she searched through ten years worth of dust. She even wondered if maybe she hadn't lost it between the wall and the wallpaper, so she tore the whole house apart looking for it. Doing that is really annoying and difficult. The woman swept her house, cleaned it, turned it over, and tore up the wallpaper to find a coin she had lost. She wondered if perhaps it hadn't fallen into a bowl and turned all the bowls over. She wondered if maybe it was with her clothes and shook them all out. How much of a commotion do we make when we lose things that are precious to us? When we lost something that was most precious

to us and didn't know whether it was hidden behind the refrigerator, under the television, or behind the wardrobe, we would try our best to find it. It was really precious and we had to find it, but it wasn't anywhere. Didn't we sweep, clean, turn the whole house over, and diligently search for it? That's the way it is when people try to find something they lost. It's also tiresome and hard for God to find someone He's lost. God looks for our souls that way. People think that a coin isn't a lot, but God thus looks for the most precious souls who haven't received the remission of sins, wander, and are lost.

There are quite a lot of people in this world. But the Lord asked here, "*What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it?*" (Luke 15:4) Not all people in a hundred are lost souls. The Lord is saying that He looks for one of those hundred; not all of them are lost.



There Is One Lost Soul in a Hundred; Do You Know How Hard It Is to Find That Soul?

It is a case of having to find one soul among a hundred people. It is a hundred to one. Is that easy or not? It is really difficult. We are also preparing the preaching of the gospel and are looking for people like that. There are really a lot of people, and the question is who the lost souls are among them. God knows who the lost souls are. That's the way it is in God's eyes. When we meet souls, they don't know if they are lost or not. They all think they are righteous. Of a hundred souls, ninety-nine think they are OK. Those people say the following, right? "I'm OK. I believe right, so what's your problem? Why are you acting that way to me? Go talk to someone who doesn't believe."

God said that there was a hundred sheep. He left the ninety-nine in the wilderness to find the one lost sheep and He had joy when He found it. Who has

been saved? It is only one sheep, that is, the lost sheep that has been saved. So, have the ninety-nine sheep been saved? The ninety-nine all died. He said He left them in the wilderness. A pack of wolves probably come and devour them all.

All the many people who believe in Jesus who wish and say, arbitrarily, that they have received the remission of sins are all headed for hell. God looks for the lost with utmost sincerity. He is saying that it is difficult to find a lost sheep. But God tiresomely does that difficult task and definitely finds and saves that lost sheep. I can't describe how hard it is for Him to find it. I can't explain how troublesome it is. He diligently looks for the lost sheep, crossing bodies of water and mountains, turning over forests, and wondering where they are. He wonders if they are behind big trees or perhaps in bushes. He ultimately finds them, embraces them to His chest, and returns with them on His shoulders. He returns and eats, drinks, rejoices, and has a feast with others.

My fellow believers, do you think that you have



somehow been chosen and received the remission of sins when God looks for lost souls among men? No, you haven't. God tirelessly and tenaciously looked for us until He found us. When I studied theology, I felt that I was a lost soul before God. I realized the fact that I was a soul who had never met God. I tried to find the Lord, but there was no way to find Him. I now know that my soul can't meet the Lord on my own but that the Lord is looking for my soul to meet me. I learned the fact that I was looking for Him but that He was also looking for me. So, I came to meet Him. I was saved. I have sometimes said that I have quite a lot of friends, haven't I? I also had quite a lot when I was attending Seminary. There were also a lot of famous people I knew. But of all those people around me, God found me. There are so many people in the world. But of all those people, He found me.

I was a person who had lost my way once. You are the same. You probably didn't know that you had lost your way, but in God's eyes, you were the

same as the sheep that had lost their way. So, He came to find us. When you know the fact that you are lost souls that have not yet been able to meet the Lord, He finds you and meets you through His Word, His Church, and His servants. The Lord thus finds you and me, has a feast, and rejoices.

I can't explain how hard God tries to find these lost souls and how much joy He has after He has found them. We must know and realize what God's heart is like. How hard is it for a lost sheep to find its master? Likewise, how hard is it for us to find God? Of course, we have tried to meet God ourselves. We have even believed in several religions. But it doesn't work. We suffer all kinds of afflictions. However, most people who try to look for God can't meet Him. It is really difficult even if they try all kinds of things. I'm sorry to say this, but you must know how worthless a human being is. You must first know what kind of person you are, feel the nothingness of life by uselessly trying this and that religion, and become a person who



sincerely looks for God for the first time to barely see Him. It is not easy for us to find and meet God.

You and I Also Have Met God by Believing in the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

This is a benevolent thing, but we can also know how hard of a task it is when we read the Word in the Bible. People say they are looking for the Lord and trying to meet Him, and they haven't met Him yet. But they believe that they are standing right in front of the door to Him. There are a lot of people who think they will easily meet the Lord soon. They are people who haven't received the remission of sins yet. People who believe in a certain religion and are satisfied even though they haven't been able to meet the Lord haven't worked hard enough yet. They still have a long way to go. They must suffer some more. My fellow believers, we must really

think about how a lost soul meeting the Lord is this hard. It is extremely difficult. There are a lot of people who can't meet the Lord even though they try their whole lives. People who suffer to a certain extent and surely realize that it won't work no matter what they do have the possibility to meet the Lord; but it is hard to meet the Lord for people who think they can do it by their own strength. Such people don't believe the gospel when we preach it to them if they don't suffer a certain amount. They must suffer to death, be on the verge of death several times, and fall into hell to be able to really believe in the gospel. The Lord comes through the Word and says, "I saved you this way," and when our Master puts out His hand, we say, "Thank you, Master" and can firmly grasp His hand. Otherwise, no matter how tenderly the Master puts out His hand, we don't believe in the Lord like foolish sheep and think, "Is that my Master's hand or not?" We don't grasp His hand to the end.

My fellow believers, there are people here who



are advanced in years and people here who are young. Whether you are old or young, you have suffered a lot and looked for God a lot. That is how we can meet here and praise the Lord. Do you understand? It doesn't automatically turn out this way even though you didn't look for Him so eagerly. We suffered numerous things. All the lives you have lived until now were a process to meet God. The Lord put out His hand and grabbed the hands of you who also put yours out. This is salvation.

I could know the fact that people don't accept the gospel unless they suffer sufficient hardship. If you had not suffered all those things, had accepted the gospel, and were in the Church, you would have to be really thankful. If you had not met the gospel, you would suffer your whole lives. Do you understand? People don't become rich by trying. Even if a person collects property to his heart's content, it can all be spent in a moment if something bad happens. That's so strange. No matter how diligently one saves money, it doesn't pile up. Even

if he tries to make a fortune, it all goes away if a problem occurs suddenly. That's life; your property disappears in all kinds of ways. It will disappear right after you have painstakingly collected it. But we met the Lord in the middle of that. That is the way most lives are. So, if you have met the Lord without suffering too much, you must truly unite with the Lord and give Him thanks. If you suffered a lot until you met the Lord, you surely know how precious this gospel is.

Therefore, you must keep this gospel. You must diligently spread this gospel to lost souls. You mustn't spread it worthlessly but you must spread it valuably. I can't explain how many people oppose this gospel. They do that because they still have only suffered a little. Have you suffered a lot? I am a person who has almost died because of sin. I haven't almost died because of some bodily illness or something else. I have almost died because of my sins. Therefore, I like the Lord a lot. I am very thankful.



Have you ever had the desire to die after agonizing over your sins before you heard the gospel? Or did you somehow happen to hear the gospel and receive the remission of your sins? No matter what your case is, God exerted all His power looking for you and paid a big price, the price of death, to save you and me. You must know that fact. Because you have heard so often that you have been saved by grace, you may think His salvation is nothing; but the Lord saved us by paying an enormous price. We obtained it for free, but God paid a big price.

Beloved saints, you must keep in mind the amazing grace with which God saved us. People must know God's heart and how they must really look for God. They must feel the fact that they need God. People who still don't think they need God still haven't suffered enough. They still have a lot of crises ahead of them. Only then can they say, "Oh God, please save me," and become a person who seeks for God's help.

However, people who still think that they have a lot of strength think, "I only trust in myself. I believe in my own strength." I was like that a long time ago and so were you. We only believed in ourselves. People say so because they still haven't lost all their strength of man. Don't spread the gospel too soon to such people. Instead, prophesy and teach them in advance that they will suffer a lot. Tell them, "You will suffer these kinds of things in the future and almost die because of sin, and if you suffer more and die in this state, you will go to hell and suffer for eternity."

People have to suffer. They have to realize what miserable existences they are. You have to tell them about that misery in detail. I can't explain how much they are standing against you because you speak to them too nicely. Do you understand? Do you know why God gives trials to the people to whom we are trying to spread the gospel? Do you know why He doesn't make their works go the way they want but instead gives them many troubles? He does it to



make them try to find Him.

Here come the Pharisees and scribes in today's Scripture passage.

“Then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to Him to hear Him. And the Pharisees and scribes complained, saying, ‘This Man receives sinners and eats with them.’ So He spoke this parable to them, saying: ‘What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it?’” (Luke 15:1-4)

What does this mean? It means that if the ninety-nine sheep are not the lost ones the Lord is looking for, He thrusts those ninety-nine into hell and looks for the one lost sheep. The Lord doesn't care even if the ninety-nine go to hell. On the contrary, He prepares the way to hell for them. The ninety-nine don't get the Lord's attention. Only one gets His attention. What is that one sheep like? The lost sheep is the one that gets the Lord's attention.

Some people say the following: “Wait, there are probably a lot of people who passed away while believing in the Lord; are you saying that they went to hell even though they believed?” Yes, they did. Many people don't get the Lord's attention even though they believe well in the Lord that way. Why? That is because they think arbitrarily that they're the righteous. They go to hell. It is like the verse of a famous Korean poem that says, “I will send you gently without a word.” The Lord says, “Ninety-nine, Good bye! Enter the furnace of fire.” He doesn't think it's a loss at all.

My fellow believers, you must know the Lord's heart. If you look at the numbers, it's ninety-nine to one; which is more precious? Is it not bad if just one dies? No. One sheep is more precious to the Lord than the pretentious ninety-nine. This means that the Lord saves those who say, “God please save me who cannot but be ruined and go to hell because I am a sinner and insufficient. I am so lacking and weak. I am nothing. I am a grave sinner.” We who became



the righteous also incorrectly think, “There are many people who say they believe in the Lord that way; I wonder if maybe we’re not wrong and they’re not really right. I wonder if maybe we’re wrong.’ We don’t purposefully think this way, but we can have those kinds of thoughts after a while.

But my fellow believers, the Lord came to save the lost souls like you and me. He didn’t come to save the pretentious ninety-nine that claim to be righteous. Our Lord is a Person who came to save one lost sinner. It suffices to know your insufficiencies and be honest before God. Do you understand what I’m saying?

Don’t show too much pity for them. This runs counter to the Lord’s law. If you want to have mercy on people, then show pity for the lost sheep. Lost sheep are people who, even though they are sinners, and really don’t know anything. They don’t know that they are sinners and they follow after whoever leads them, even though those leaders are frauds. Such sinners are the lost sheep. You must show pity

for them. Don’t show too much pity for those who think they know the doctrines and the Lord well and think they are good people. If there is something you should absolutely say to those people and the most necessary news to them, it would be these words: “If you continue believing this way, you will surely go to hell.” That one saying is more joyous news to those souls than the gospel. There is absolutely no need to tell them that they will go to the Kingdom of Heaven if they accept Jesus. What they really need to hear is this: “Congratulations! If you believe this way, you will go to hell. Know that if you are killed in a traffic accident, you will fall into the fires of hell the moment your eyes close. Sleep well all night because you don’t know what’s going to happen while you are sleeping. Know that you’ll surely go to hell if you die.” That is the gospel to those souls. Saying something shocking like that to people who don’t know that they are going to hell is better than saying a hundred things about the gospel.

I can’t explain how tiresome of a job it is for



God to look for us. My fellow believers, you probably felt the same as we made preparations to spread the gospel. We are holding revival meetings in this city of Chuncheon in order to save one lost soul. We mustn't just do that kind of work once; we have to do it countless times. But such ministries sort out the ninety-nine self-righteous people. God works so hard to find one lost soul. He leaves the ninety-nine self-righteous ones in the wilderness, and looks for the lost one.

My fellow believers, you have probably seen pictures of sheep on cliffs or falling from high places and a shepherd grabbing it by the horns and saving it. Having the same mind of God, the workers and saints of our Church are devoting themselves to spreading the gospel on this earth. Souls who haven't met God also suffer a lot, but God shows us through this Word how hard it is to save lost souls.

The Lord said, *"I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need*

no repentance" (Luke 15:7). This is a parable. We are among the ninety-nine just persons. In this case, the ninety-nine refer to those who have received salvation already. God rejoices quite a lot because of one sinner who repents and receives the remission of sins; He does so more than because of the ninety-nine. We who are the righteous have many hardships because we serve the Lord and the gospel, but God's heart totally goes to the one person who receives the remission of sins today. When the lost sheep who thought it was all right to have sins accept God, He asks them whether or not they have sin and they respond that they don't because He already took them all. So, because they answer that way, God puts them on His shoulders, comes back home, rejoices, and has a feast.

My fellow believers, this is the way the Lord's heart is. When one person receives the remission of sins when we spread the gospel, we forget all the hard work we had done in the kitchen, making literature, typing on the computer, and everything



else. We were happy with only that soul being saved, and were really happy, saying, “Do you have sins or not? You don’t, do you? Let’s have a party.” God likes it even more than we do. If you want to know what God’s heart is like, He truly rejoices and is happy when a sinner repents.

My fellow believers, we were also sinners. We were also sinners before we repented and met Jesus. We received the remission of our sins. How was God when we received the remission of sins? He was extremely joyous. People who have just received the remission of sins might wonder if they are such a wonderful existence to make God rejoice like that, but that’s not the case. The Lord rejoices that way because souls that have lost their way have put on God’s love and come back to His fold. Isn’t there a festive atmosphere in the whole Church when someone receives the remission of sins? If one person received the remission of his sins in God’s Church, there is a festive atmosphere no matter who that person is. That festive atmosphere lasts for a

month or two. When we ask them if they have sins and hear from them, “I have no sin,” we have another festival. We ask them and have festivals everyday. The person who should really feel happy is the person who has received the remission of sins; but those who actually like it are God and us. Our hearts are truly joyous and it is a beautiful thing in the eyes of God. My fellow believers, do you understand God’s heart somehow? The Lord said, “*I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance*” (Luke 15:7).

How much does the Lord rejoice over the remission of our sins? It is written, “*He will rejoice over you with gladness*” (Zephaniah 3:17). My fellow believers, the Lord said that He rejoices over us with gladness. God loves us this way. He rejoices over us like this, but He rejoices more if one sinner returns to Him. Don’t we also rejoice when someone receives the remission of sins? Our hearts are so



joyous because God rejoices that much in Heaven. If you read the Bible, you can know a little about God's heart. You can also know how the Holy Spirit does works in our hearts.

We Have Struggled to Meet the Lord of Righteousness

It was hard for us all to meet the Lord, wasn't it? It was truly hard to meet Him. We nearly died as we followed after false shepherds. We really had to get ourselves together or else we would have one day suddenly become cooked mutton. If the Lord didn't take me out of Satan's mouth, we would have been devoured by Satan. Think about it for a moment. It's a really terrible thing. Imagine the scene of Satan grabbing us, putting us on a skewer of sin, and turning us in never-ending fire. That would have happened to us had we made a slight mistake. The Lord came to us in those circumstances and told us

how He saved us. We are so thankful that we could not but say, "Hallelujah!" The Lord told us that He saved us and put His hand down to us and we grabbed His hand. There is no one else but Him. No matter how hard we look on this earth, there is no one besides the Lord who eliminated our sins. There is no one besides God.

My fellow believers, it was a short moment, but if we hadn't abandoned our selfishness and stubbornness and accepted God's salvation, wouldn't there have been big problems? What would have happened had the Lord who is our Shepherd left us in the wilderness and abandoned us? Where did He go? He went to find the other lost sheep. He found a lost sheep. So, He waits for the sheep to return to the fold, but what would happen if it never returned? Won't it be left in the wilderness and ultimately die? That could have easily happened to us.

My fellow believers, it was fortunate that God found us and really put His hand out to us when we



were suffering in difficulty. What would have happened if God found us and said, “I eliminated all your sins,” when we were well off? We would have said, “I don’t need God. What does God care? God’s not so special. I don’t need to look for God until I’m on my deathbed. Why would I look for Him while living well in this world?” Wouldn’t we have really arrogantly swatted His hand away? We would not have met the Lord if we were happy and perfect while living in this world. But the Lord allowed difficulties and hardships to us to save us, and He found us afterwards.

It is written, “*Return, O backsliding children, says the LORD; for I am married to you. I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion. And I will give you shepherds according to My heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding*” (Jeremiah 3:14-15). We have received the remission of sins by this kind of miracle; one from a city and two from a family. That’s the way we were saved. Strictly speaking, the

probability isn’t very high. Out of all the many people in the world, God met us, the little flock. I hope that you know that we are truly chosen among so many people.

There are even now souls that God is looking for and whom He earnestly hopes to meet. My fellow believers, we also must find those kinds of souls. It is our work to help those souls meet the Lord by finding them, sitting them down, and having them listen to the Word. The work we have to do is to look and see if those kinds of souls are around us and look around to find them. This is what we who are little shepherds have to do. We are the righteous who have received the remission of our sins first. Do you see that there are lost souls like that around you? We must find them. Many people read our books and listen to this Word, but only about one in a hundred or thousand receives the remission of sins.

There is no need to be disappointed because of that. It suffices for two people to receive the remission of sins after we spread the gospel to a



hundred people. There's no need to be disappointed. If you have listened well to today's Scripture passage, you probably understand, don't you? Isn't it two times the blessings as spoken of in today's Scripture passage? The Lord said that there was only one saved person among a hundred, but we've saved two. We have truly been blessed by the Lord for we usually save one or more people when we spread the gospel to ten. That's amazing. Not even the Apostle Paul received as many blessings when he spread the gospel on this earth. If we read the Pauline Epistles carefully, there weren't a lot of people who received the remission of their sins, even if you consider the Church in Rome or the Church in Corinth. Even so, if you examine the history of the Church, you can know that several thousand people received the remission of sins in the time of the Apostles and the Early Church age, but the number who received it later was small.

It was also very hard for us to find God, but we have to remember the fact that He looked for us

more tiresomely and we must give thanks for the fact that we could meet Him. We must truly be thankful that God has met us. I hope that you are always thankful to the Lord. What a big blessing this is! Even though we are truly insufficient beings, we are people who have received the blessing of having been able to meet God. Even though we are insufficient, we are people in God's Church. We are people who have received God's blessings. Of all the many stars in the sky, we are one of a thousand or ten thousand that have been chosen by God.

I can't explain how thankful we are. I hope that we become people who are thankful our whole lives, rejoice, follow the Lord in God's Church that is His body, serve the Lord, are capable of the mission of spreading this gospel, and connect lost sheep to the Lord by diligently looking for them. I hope that you become those kinds of saints. ☒



SERMON

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The Lord Who Wants to Show Love and Mercy

< Luke 15:1-32 >

“Then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to Him to hear Him. And the Pharisees and scribes complained, saying, ‘This Man receives sinners and eats with them.’ So He spoke this parable to them, saying: ‘What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!’ I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons

who need no repentance. Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? And when she has found it, she calls her friends and neighbors together, saying, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I lost!’ Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.’ Then He said: ‘A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me.’ So he divided to them his livelihood. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living. But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that



the swine ate, and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.’” And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ And they began to be merry. Now his older son was in the field.

And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. So he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. And he said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and because he has received him safe and sound, your father has killed the fatted calf.’ But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him. So he answered and said to his father, ‘Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends. But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him.’ And he said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found.’”



My fellow believers, how are you?

Our God looked for sinners who were poor in body and spirit. In today's Scripture passage, He said, *“When you give a dinner or a supper, do not ask your friends, your brothers, your relatives, nor rich neighbors, lest they also invite you back, and you be repaid. But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just”* (Luke 14:12-14). What was the reason that the Lord said this? That's because if you invite the rich and treat them to food, they will repay all of it and you won't have any reward to receive from God. Through today's Scripture passage, we are able to know that our Lord loves and saves the insufficient and weak more than the great and those who are well off.

Jesus Who Came to Those Who Were Revealed as Sinners

In today's Scripture passage from Luke 15, Jesus invited tax collectors and sinners and shared food and the Word with them. Jesus was in the house of a Pharisee, but the people He invited were sinners such as the tax collectors. My fellow believers, what does this mean? Jesus invited and treated people who were obviously recognized as sinners, like tax collectors. Jesus Christ, the Son of God who came to this earth in the flesh of man, shared food with tax collectors and sinners, and He spoke the Word of God to them. But the Pharisees and scribes at that time resented and persecuted Jesus for doing that. Jesus knew the hard hearts of the Pharisees and scribes and told them of the Word of the Truth through three parables.

The first of Jesus' parables was about one lost sheep in a hundred.

The Lord said, *“What man of you, having a*



hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!' I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance" (Luke 15:4-7).

This parable of the lost sheep is about the Providence of God's salvation. Our Lord spoke in a parable, saying, "A person with a hundred sheep lost one. So, he left the ninety-nine in the wilderness and went to find the one lost sheep."

What kind of person is the lost sheep here pointing to? Lost sheep imply people who are truly sinners; people who look for God to receive the remission of the sins in their hearts; people who know they are sinners; people who know that they will go to hell, and people who really know that they

are lost to God. The shepherd looking for the one lost sheep means that God goes to look for lost people. My fellow believers, there are truly a lot of people who live in this world—almost 6.5 billion. But those who are lost to God aren't more than one in a hundred or ten thousand.

Not all people are sheep who have lost their homes. Most people live well without any problems even though they don't know God. But what other kinds of people are there? There are souls who struggle to solve the problem of their sins in their hearts. There are souls who earnestly look for God because they have lost their homes and don't know where to go. They don't know what to believe or how they should believe in God. God says that He looks for those souls and wants to clothe them in the grace of His salvation.

Our God used the expression that He leaves people who don't have any problems and those who don't worry about their souls and their problem of sin. What did the Lord who came to this earth and



saved you and me say? He said, *“I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance”* (Luke 5:32). That is true. The Lord never comes to those who pretend they are the righteous. Our Lord came to this earth for people who actually feel guilty because of the sins they have committed, because of their evil hearts, and because of the sins of their pasts and those they commit now. In other words, He came for those who have guilty consciences before God because of the sins in their hearts.

But what are people really like? Of a hundred people, ninety-nine don't have guilty consciences. They live with absolutely no guilt of conscience. People who don't have any pain in their God-given consciences and have no problems, those who have no guilt of conscience and live believing only in their own hearts cannot become God's lost sheep. Of course God wanted to clothe all people in the salvation of the remission of sins. But because God wanted to find sinners and make them into the righteous, He told us through this Word today that

there is one person in a hundred who will be truly saved.

I am sure that the Lord's first parable here is for everyone in the world. All the people of the world must know that those that will be saved are one in a hundred. If you read the Old Testament, it says, *“I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion”* (Jeremiah 3:14). A lot of people are actually living in this world, but there really aren't many who meet the Lord. On the other hand, there are more people than can be counted who go to hell.

If a shepherd raised sheep and just left them in the wilderness to find one lost sheep, what would happen to the fold that was left? They all would either be devoured by wolves or starve to death. Simply speaking, it means that many people who can't receive the Lord's salvation are going down the wide road to destruction. That's really the way it is. Many people are entering the road to destruction from God because of their sins and the price of those



sins after living on this earth.

There are really a lot of people who are lost in God's eyes, and there are quite a lot who will be destroyed. Many people are born on this earth, but it is really rare to find a person who has received the remission of sins in his heart.

All Those Who Are Lost

The Lord speaks in the second parable of the lost coin. The Lord said, *“Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? And when she has found it, she calls her friends and neighbors together, saying, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I lost!’ Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents”* (Luke 15:8-10). Having joy at finding one lost sheep among a hundred, or one lost coin in ten, means

finding people, sinners, who are lost to God.

When God finds a sinner, has him repent, has him receive the remission of sins, and makes him one of the righteous, and when He clothes that sinner in the grace of the remission of sins, He rejoices along with His servants. God's servants also called the people in the neighborhood, rejoiced, and had a feast after finding the one lost soul. All of the three parables in today's Scripture passage are about God saving sinners. God, through His servants, looks for those among the many people in the world who are truly sinners who are lost; those who realize that they are really people who cannot help but go to hell, and that they couldn't be saved and so have gone to the point of suicide; those who have no will to live because they will be destroyed, and those who have absolutely no hope if not for God.

Truly, we who are God's people must find those who are lost among all the many people who live on this earth. We must truly find and clothe in salvation before God those who have no hope if not for God,



whose hearts are broken and wounded; those who suffer hardships because of the sins they've committed; those who agonize over the thought that they cannot but go to hell; those who have no righteousness, and those who hope for God's salvation. It doesn't work to just spread the gospel to anyone. We absolutely must correctly spread the gospel to those who are truly sinners before God and those who need Jesus. The Lord really did not come for people who think, "I don't need Jesus. I can live well even without Jesus. I am not insecure at all or in distress because of sin even without Jesus. I'm fine."

Those whom the Lord looks for are the other people. God is looking for people on this earth who aren't satisfied even though they drink alcohol, sing, and dance. He is looking for people who now really want to meet God because they had no satisfaction even though they seek after every philosophy or religion; people who want to find the Truth and obtain it along with freedom and enjoy joy it, and

souls who want to obtain satisfaction by meeting the Truth, and not anything else in this world. The Lord told His servants to find these souls.

That's right. The Lord did not tell you and me today to spread the gospel to the rich or those with power. The Lord said that we must find those who are estranged, miserable, and search for God's grace physically and spiritually. We must spread the gospel to them. Today's Scripture passage is telling you and me to clothe those lost people in the grace of salvation by spreading this gospel to them.

God's Heart

Let us now look at the third parable the Lord spoke. *"A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me.' So he divided to them his livelihood. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a*



far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living. But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son'' (Luke 15:11-19).

I will take this apart and explain it so you can understand it easily. A certain man had two sons, and the second son took his father's property, left, and wasted it until he had become a penniless man. He couldn't live properly in this world. It went so far that he wanted to eat the slop of pigs secretly, but he couldn't even eat that to his heart's content. So, he

thought, "How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare," and he wanted to return to his father's house. As soon as he returned home, his father came out with no shoes, kissed his son on the mouth, put a ring on his finger, put nice shoes on him, clothed him in the best clothes, and took a calf and gave a feast to all the people in the neighborhood.

But the first son was displeased with the feast for his younger brother. So, he complained to his father, "*Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends. But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him*" (Luke 15:29-30). So, what did his father say, "*Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found*" (Luke 15:31-32).



My fellow believers, this third parable of the Lord was spoken to the saints and servants of God in the Church. What are we actually like? God's servants and His people who have received the remission of their sins first complain to the Lord daily that He doesn't acknowledge them for serving Him in the Church in such difficulty. They say that He always tells them what to do and that He only treats well those who lived wastefully in this world, then came to listen to the gospel, received the remission of their sins, and attended Church. Then, it's natural for them to have jealousy toward the new saints in their hearts. They are prone to harbor a grudge against God, thinking, "I sacrificed myself and served well as soon as I received the remission of sins in this Church. How did such a hopeless person receive salvation? Even if he has been saved, he's got a long way to go before he becomes like me. But only that person is treated well and given interest by the Church."

But, such a notion of the first son in today's

Scripture passage is clearly wrong. The Lord today is speaking to you and me who have received the remission of sins first and have become God's servants and people first. He is saying, "You work really hard, but think that it is natural to have joy and have a feast when your younger brothers return." That's right. We have nothing to be jealous of. We must have joy with God. In other words, we must know the deep heart of God. So, what is God's heart like? He has a feast and rejoices when a lost sinner returns and is saved. The love of God the Father is to bring the dead and the miserable back to life and bless them. Accordingly, we, as God's servants who have received the remission of sins, must have the same hearts as God the Father.

The second son in today's Scripture passage is a person who has returned to God's bosom. He wanted to eat slop that pigs ate, but he couldn't even eat that, and he thought, "I'm going to starve to death here. It would be better to return to my father's country and become one of his laborers. I am his son, but I'll



work as one of his laborers.” So he returned to his father.

The Doctrines of the Religions of the World That Are Like Slop

Actually, all people who exist in this world are God’s children who are in the image of His likeness. Strictly speaking, all people of this world are precious souls who become God’s people and children in Jesus Christ. But those precious souls seek after the world, material things, lusts and pleasure, and then religions. The second son in today’s Scripture passage wanting to eat pig slop, but going hungry because he was unable to obtain even that, means people seeking after the religions of this world in vain. Religions can never give people satisfaction. Religions frequently tell people what to do, merely ask for their sacrifice, and can’t give them true satisfaction in their hearts. Of course,

our God also makes His people work. But what is different between our God and the religions of the world? The grace of the remission of sins given us by God gives clear satisfaction to our souls. People who couldn’t obtain satisfaction by the religions of the world and are spiritually dying obtain true satisfaction in their souls by returning to Jesus Christ.

Think about yourselves for a moment. Could we obtain true satisfaction in any religions of the world? No, we couldn’t. No religion can give satisfaction to the souls of man. Weren’t you lost souls? Weren’t you and I lost souls? We were the one lost soul among a hundred, the one lost drachma among ten, and the lost son between the two sons. Weren’t we all that way?

All of us had the problem of sin. Even though we had sins in our hearts, the religions of the world couldn’t resolve that problem. We were actually people who couldn’t live properly without God. That’s right. You and I were each one of the lost sheep. My fellow believers, we must accurately



recognize the fact that each of us was a lost person before God. We must accurately know that we were those kinds of people in our natures. This isn't about other people; this is about us. We were the lost. Being lost here means death. You and I who were lost were people who would suffer destruction and ruin if not for God.

What will happen to a sheep that leaves the flock of a hundred in today's Scripture passage? It falls into a serious situation. It comes to a cliff and falls and dies by trying to eat the grass at the bottom of the cliff or it goes to a wide field and is devoured by a wolf. This means that you and I are near suffering that kind of death in this evil world. The lost coin and the second son who left his home both refer to you and me. We were such people who had to die and could not help but go to hell. But what happened to us? Our Lord has met us. He has met us and completely saved us.

Do you believe that our Lord has met us and eliminated all our sins through the water and the

blood? Think about it for a moment. If our Lord hadn't taken all our sins through His baptism and received the judgment for them on the Cross in our steads, or if God the Father had not sent His Son Jesus Christ to this world and not done this righteous work for us, what hope would we have? We wouldn't have any. We could not help but suffer destruction. So, we must bear this in mind. No matter how wonderful we are, no matter how smart and wise we are, and no matter how good we are, all of us were among those who are lost. We must keep this fact in mind.

Life

My fellow believers, we could not but cry when we were born and will have to cry when we die, too. Even if the way we live seems different from one another, the end of our lives is inevitably same: eternal destruction. You and I were all born with the



fate of entering the fires of hell. But our Lord saved us who were going to live in that kind of miserable fate. He completely saved us through the grace of the remission of sins. We absolutely must realize this grace of our Lord. How great is the Lord's grace? Think about it for a moment. How could we enjoy the peace of our hearts if not for the grace of the Lord? How could we live in joy? If not for the Lord, how could we laugh? We would be miserable without the Lord. We wouldn't be able to believe anyone, we would deceive one another, and we would be hurt by one another. We would try to live well, but we wouldn't be able to help but live miserable lives deprived by others of all our fortune. You and I were people who could not help but live miserable lives.

Do our lives turn out well if we try? Is there anything that goes well in our lives just because we try hard to achieve it? Satan is the one who says, "You can do it if you just try." Many of those before us lived diligently, believing that saying. But did

they all live happily until they died? Take a microphone and have interviews with the deceased.

Go before a grave and say, "Sorry, I know you're sleeping. I am a reporter for Hephzibah Broadcasting. I'll ask you about just one thing. Did you try hard while living on this earth or not?"

"Yes, I did."

"So, did you believe in the philosophy that things would turn out well if you tried?"

"I did."

"So, did you try because you thought that everything would turn out well, no matter what it was?"

"Yes, I believed that, and I tried hard while living."

"So, did things happen like you believed?"

"No, they didn't."

"How many things didn't turn out well?"

"Not a single thing turned out well."

"OK, thank you."

If you go to some other graves, you will hear



others say, “I received the teaching of this world that said things would turn out well if I tried hard and lived accordingly, but it didn’t work.” Even if you go before several more graves and interview each one, you will hear that they died in desperation and nothing was accomplished from 100% of them. That’s right. There isn’t anyone in this world who has accomplished anything by his will. A person would be happy if just a tenth of what he hoped for was accomplished by his endeavors. They’d be happy with just a tenth of their expectations. People tried a lot all their lives, but man’s power is nothing. Things don’t turn out well by trying.

We Must Meet Jesus Who Is God’s Righteousness

My fellow believers, people who are lost before God must meet Him. He will then bless them, lead them in the blessed way, clothe them in good clothes,

and put precious rings on their fingers. The father in today’s Scripture passage putting a ring on the finger of his returning son is speaking of the change of his status in life. Clothing him in good clothes means becoming the righteous, and putting shoes on his feet means putting the shoes of the gospel on him. The Lord thus made us into the children of God along with giving all God the Father’s blessings and letting us enjoy them all. These blessings are never obtained by trying. That is never the way they are.

If people want to live blessed lives, they must first meet the Good Shepherd. They must meet Jesus. They must receive the remission of their sins in their hearts by meeting Jesus. They must receive the remission of all their sins through Jesus Christ who is the Son of God. Jesus is our Savior. He took all our sins. He saved us from all our sins. He clothed us in the complete grace of salvation by taking all our sins on His body through His baptism and by receiving judgment for them on the Cross. Only people who have the Shepherd and receive the Lord



in their hearts enjoy true peace. When the Good Shepherd leads them into green pastures and beside the still waters, those sheep who have met Him live while being filled, obtaining rest, and are peacefully protected for the first time.

My fellow believers, you and I have met the Lord who is the perfect Shepherd. Aren't you truly thankful for having met Him? It is a big problem if you don't know how to be thankful for having met the Lord. That kind of person is the same as the first son in today's Scripture passage. They are in the same situation as the first son who used to complain. But we are not the first son. We are the second sons who were lost and then found. It is an amazing thing for us to believe that Jesus took our sins when He was baptized and that He shed His blood for receiving the judgment on the Cross instead of us. I hope that you don't underestimate this faith. This is truly amazing. Where can you go and hear this Word of the Truth? You cannot hear it in any denomination of this world.

Let's think for a moment of the Tabernacle that is the model of Jesus. There was a screen gate at the entrance of the Tabernacle that was woven of blue, purple, and scarlet thread, and fine woven linen. Thirty meters (one hundred feet) west of it was another screen door to the Sanctuary. It was also woven of blue, purple, and scarlet thread, and fine woven linen. The veil curtain that blocked the Most Holy Place and the inner curtains that covered the Sanctuary were also made of blue, purple, and scarlet thread, and fine woven linen. What does this blue, purple, and scarlet thread refer to? It means the gospel of the water and the Spirit that we believe in. Your salvation cannot be accomplished by just believing in Jesus somehow. More accurately, we must believe in this gospel that was given by the Lord.

What is the first thing we must believe in when we start believing in Jesus? We must believe that He received the transference of all our sins by being baptized in the Jordan River. That's the first thing



we have to believe. The second thing is that Jesus shed His blood on the Cross and received all the judgment for us. Saints who have received the remission of sins in their hearts by faith must now enter into and live in God's house, do God's work while living there, and live adopting what is God's as their own. God supplies us with what we need.

We have received the remission of sins. This may seem to be nothing to you, but that is actually not the case. Let some time go by. Then, ask yourself if it really isn't anything. Rather, if you return to the world after receiving the remission of sins, you are nothing. At that time, you really become nothing. You become more miserable than you were before. All the diseases you had before return and all your previous pain comes back. More difficulties than before actually come and torment you. So, my fellow believers, I hope that you get your heads on straight.

Above all else, we must know that the Lord found weak sinners and saved them. We must also realize that we who have become the Lord's workers

prior to others by receiving the remission of our sins, must personally find lost souls and bring them back before God. There are quite a lot of lost souls before God in this world. There are a lot of people who live without knowing the fact that they are lost souls.

People in the world are all lost. They are all sinners. They are all people who must receive the remission of sins by believing in this gospel of the water and the Spirit. But those who have now received the remission of sins are extremely few. Jesus came to people who really thought they could not but go to hell and who had no hope in their hearts, and He really eliminated all people's sins. He completely saved them. Our Lord never came to find people who think, "I'm fine without Jesus. I don't need Him." He comes to them but leaves them in disappointment.

Don't treat people too well who live well and have a lot of money in this world. They are people who will go to a hot place after living well without Jesus. However, there are still many people on this



earth who cannot enjoy satisfaction even though they have property, fame, power, and even religion. There are people who really want to find the true God and receive the remission of their sins. This means that there are lost souls before God. It means that there are people who know the fact that they are lost. Those are the kinds of people whom we have to find. We must find them and preach the Lord's gospel to them.

We can classify those who visit the Church for the first time into two groups. One of them is people who think they weren't lost. These people don't believe us, no matter what we say. They are not lost sheep before God. Because they aren't lost people, they can't receive God's salvation, either.

What is the other kind of people then? There are people who come to our Church who think they are among the lost. They say, "I have sins and it's hard for me to live in this world. I don't know anything and things are hard. It would be nice if someone saves me." When we tell them of their sinful nature

based on the Word of God, they say, "That's right. I'm that kind of person." If we preach to those who acknowledge themselves the gospel Word that Jesus saved them by the water and the blood, they immediately believe in Jesus and naturally become His people. That is how it actually is. Those people who know their original natures become the righteous before God and become His children, and they can live forever in the Kingdom of God.

There are two kinds of people no matter where you go: those who are lost and those who aren't. There are two kinds of people who visit the Church and there are two kinds of people in the world. What were you and I who have already received the remission of sins like? We were the lost. We were among those who were lost.

Those who haven't yet received the remission of their sins even though they have been preached the Lord's gospel are people who aren't lost. We must work hard to till their hearts until they realize that they are lost people. We must till their hardened



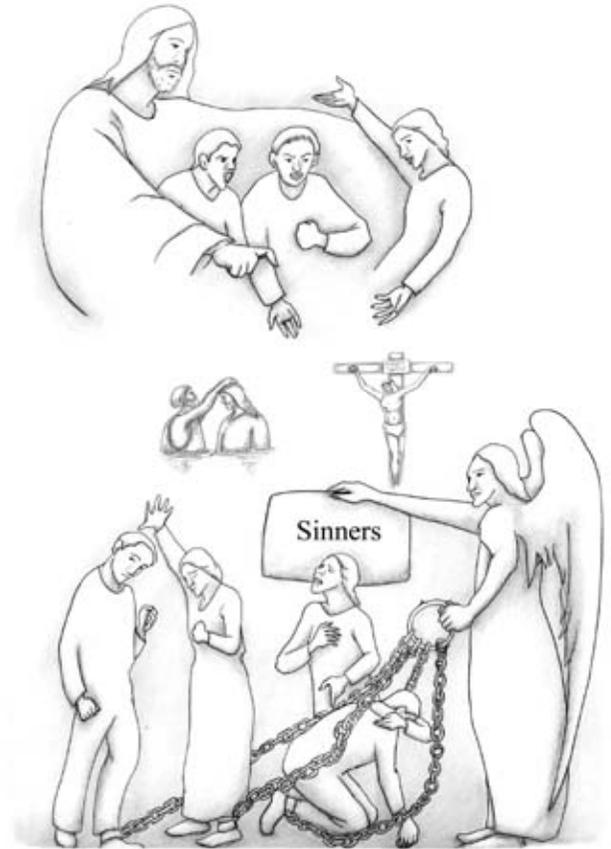
hearts and wait until they realize themselves that they are the lost. We must continually find those people. Do you believe that you and I who have already received the remission of our sins were the lost? Do you believe the fact that we were found by God and have been saved? Only people who believe that can receive God's true grace of salvation.

I give thanks to the Lord who has saved us. We must become faithful servants of God who are always thankful for the Lord's grace and who try to find the weak and the lost. ☒



SERMON

8



We Were Like The Prodigal Son

< Luke 15:11-24 >

“Then He said: ‘A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me.’ So he divided to them his livelihood. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living. But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired

servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.’ And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ And they began to be merry.”



Were We Prodigal Sons Spiritually?

I am sure that everyone at God's Church is quite familiar with the passage about the prodigal son and heard it at least once or twice. Although we are all very familiar with this passage, today at this hour, I would like us to give some more thought to what God is saying to us in His Word and what kind of grace He has shown us.

Let's turn to Luke 15:11-12 together: *"Then He said: 'A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me.' So he divided to them his livelihood."*

Here the second son asked his father to give him his share of inheritance. Think about this for a moment. What are some of the things that all humans desire as their rightful share?

First, we can list material possessions. Everyone has his own share of material possessions to be had. Secondly, people need fame and ambition. This is

what we humans all think in terms of what everyone should have. In other words, everyone thinks that things such as wealth, fame, and ambition are absolutely indispensable to him. Of course, there are many other things that people need, but for most people, the very first thing they want is wealth. Moreover, when they become wealthy, the next thing they desire is fame. Everyone wants to be praised in his chosen field. Everyone desires to have all that he loves and wants. Such desires are universal to every human being. There is no exception to this. Everyone is the same.

The second son in today's Scripture passage also had the same desire. Having set his mind on the usual share that everyone should have, he said to his father: "Give me the portion of goods that falls to me. I will take it and live independently from now on. Give me my share of inheritance." His father then gave him his share of inheritance just as he wished.

But what happened to this second son when he



went out to the world with his inheritance? Let's turn to Luke 15:13: *“And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living.”* As the passage says here, the second son took all his possessions to a distant country and ended up squandering them all.

The father in today's Scripture passage refers to God the Father. As you might have expected, the second son refers to none other than you and me. What does this passage mean then?

Man had originally lived in a paradise called the Garden of Eden. However, when God made us humans, He gave us free will. Due to this free will, man had the desire to leave God and live on his own. Satan then came to him and tempted him, saying to him:

“If you eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you, too, can become like God.” Adam had wanted to leave God and live on his own, so what do you suppose his next thought was? He

thought, “Yes, I can also become like God. I too, can become like the Father. It will all be possible if I eat this fruit as the serpent says.”

Simply put, Adam was full of arrogance. With his free will he had already desired to move away from God, and once Satan tempted him, he actually put his desire into action. In this way man ended up siding with Satan. As a result of swallowing the Devil's false promise, man became completely separated from God. But what were its consequences? Far from being happy from going on his way apart from God, mankind came to live a wretchedly tragic life.

This is the lesson that God is teaching us in today's Scripture passage. It teaches us that those who departed from the righteousness of God, those who went on their own way apart from God, and those who took their share and left God behind were never happy. Can anyone live happily apart from God? Most people are deluded to think that this is possible. They think they can easily prosper all on their own. So every child wants to leave his parents



and live on his own once he has grown up a little. This is what all the youth of today want in their hearts. They want to get their share of inheritance, become independent, and live a better life than their fathers'. Of course, this may be possible if it's about leaving one's fleshly father. But how is it when it comes to our spiritual Father? We human beings can never be happy by leaving God, the Creator who made us.

Take a look at everyone born and living in this world. Everyone is confident that he can live happily on this earth. But what is the actual reality? Far from being happy, many people fail to keep what they already have, fail miserably, and end up trapped in an empty life. There are so many people around us who can't get anything going their way, and as a result despair in their unhappiness. Although all those who leave God try hard to ensure their happiness, none of them has ever led a truly successful life. One may think to himself confidently, "Even if I leave God, I can still live happily without

His help and power," but in the end, he will realize that it is absolutely impossible for anyone to live with any satisfaction by departing from God.

From the Foundation of This Planet Earth, There Has Been No One Who Ever Departed from the Righteousness of God and Still Lived a Happy Life

We can grasp this fact even more clearly if we inquire into the lives of the great sages and philosophers of the past. None of them ever lived a truly satisfying life. No matter how great a sage they might have been, none of them could say with full confidence that he had lived with 100 percent satisfaction. My fellow believers, everyone's heart truly desires happiness. All yearn to live an upright and virtuous life, to be truly happy and honest, and to keep this happiness forever.

But what is the reality? Far from living the kind



of life they want to live, they end up falling into unhappiness. Rather than living the life that they want to live, they fall into failure and despair that they do not want. This is the unhappiness of those who have left God. Do we not say we are unhappy when we find ourselves in undesired circumstances? If one finds himself in circumstances that he desired, then he would not be described unhappy.

There is a story that illustrates how those who have left God can never be happy. Let me take a moment to tell you this story. In Greek mythology, the Sphinx sat outside Thebes and asked a riddle to all travelers passing by: “What walks on four legs in the morning, two legs at noon, and three legs in the evening?” No traveler was able to give the right answer, but Oedipus was smart enough to solve the riddle by saying, “The answer is man. Man crawls on four legs as a baby, walks on two legs when grown up, and then walks with a cane in old age. So the answer is man.”

Do you know what the real moral of this story is?

It is that man does not have that much time to stand on his two legs. Man’s youth, in other words, can never be kept forever.

A proverb in Korea says that pleasure follows pain. Once someone goes through hardship, happiness and satisfaction will follow for sure. What then is the happiness and satisfaction that we will find at the end of our road, after going through so much hardship on this earth? We will meet God face to face. The purpose of so much suffering that we go through on this earth is none other than meeting God the Father.

Thus, those who meet God can realize the real nature of human life and its purpose. However, those who have not met God still do not realize why they are so unhappy. Today’s Scripture passage raises the following fundamental question: “What can we have when all our possessions disappear?” Just as the prodigal son returned to his father’s house after squandering all his possessions, when we become penniless, we will also go to God. Remember this:



The righteousness of the Lord is absolutely indispensable to all who have wasted everything.

People living on this earth waste many things. Even though everyone works hard to make money, everyone let it all go to waste on this earth. That's because no one can take this money with him to the next world. Few people really spend their money on a truly worthwhile cause. Of course, on a rare occasion we see some people who do so, but most people just waste their money. In God's sight, there aren't that many people who actually spend their possessions for a meaningful cause.

Our Lord said, "*You have the poor with you always*" (Mark 14:7). In this world, there are some people who share their wealth with these poor people, but few of them actually do so because they have real compassion on the poor and they really want to help them and make them happy. Quite the contrary, more often than not they share their wealth to secure their own fame; to make themselves famous. Others do so with some compensation in

mind down the road, thinking, "If I help them like this, they will help me later on."

How then, does God look at these people? Our God will not reward them, for their hearts are absolutely not upright before Him. As such, helping the poor with such expectations for eventual reward can also be described as a waste. If you want to help the poor, you must realize the Truth first and then help them.

Any church that's truly worthy of being called God's Church preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit. If a church is wealthy, it must spend its wealth to the benefit of people. Why are Christian churches throughout the whole world facing so much criticism? Most churches just demand that the congregation make donations without providing any justification. They use whatever means to extract money from the congregation, and then use this money to build luxurious church buildings. Even though they claim to be God's Church, they offer no benefit to the people. This is one of the reasons why



so many people today dislike church so much.

Today's Scripture passage says that the second son "wasted" his possessions with prodigal living, and nowadays there indeed are many people wasting their lives. Regardless of whether one professes to believe in Jesus or not, unless he knows the Truth, unless he believes in God and follows Him properly, he cannot help but waste his life, his possessions, and everything else. If a church is indeed God's upright Church, it must lead people to happiness, just as the Church is supposed to be the light of the world. Yet most churches are failing at this. Of course, not all churches on this earth are like this, but the fact of the matter is that there are many churches that are not upright.

What Kind of Gathering Constitutes God's True Church in This Age?

Our Lord spoke of the visible church and the

invisible church in His Word, and of these, the visible church is failing to fulfill its role as the light of this earth. What did the Lord say in the Bible? He said, "You shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." How wonderful would it be if God's Church were found everywhere in this age and time and bore witness of the gospel of the water and the Spirit to all those around it? If your church is indeed God's Church, it should never spend all the offerings on building a church building. This is not what any church is really supposed to do. Its true calling is preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit, God's Truth, to the souls around it, leading them to the right way when they face Satan's temptation, praying for them, and helping them so that they can come to the Church without any hesitation and get their problem of sin solved. This is what God's Church must do today as the light of the world. That's why no church should devote all its energy to building a mammoth church building.



One pastor cannot lead countless people properly all at the same time. Any pastor with a conscience should know very well that he can't possibly provide proper guidance to so many people. If a church is indeed God's Church, it should lead a few people's souls the right way, and rebuke them as well when they go astray.

I spoke about how so many people are wasting all their possessions. In a similar vein, we also know that our bodies cannot remain healthy all the time. Nor can fame last forever. Your fame can disappear in a moment's notice, as soon as someone new and better appears. No matter how great a contribution you might have made in your field, if someone comes up with a new and better theory, your fame will disappear suddenly like a bursting bubble.

There were many great philosophers in the past, and all these philosophers spoke of admirable things. But what happened with the passing of time? Even though in their own time they had taught great things, these philosophers' fame was supplanted by the next

generation of philosophers advocating new ideas. The same holds true for you and me as well. Our fame is not long lasting. Everything is a waste. There is nothing in us humans that won't disappear. Everything will disappear in time, including fame and ambition.

We all have ambitions. But can we really fulfill all these ambitions? When we turn old and weak, we get tired of the ambitions that we had when we were young. It's only when we are young that we are full of energy and ambition; once we get old, everything turns useless. We turn so fragile in our old age that even a goat can drag us anywhere it wants to go. When one is young, he is full of energy, but once he turns old, all his ambitions disappear. We get tired of everything. People are ambitious only for a short while in their youth; once they get a bit old, all they want is to just find a nice, warm place to lie down and take a nap. Try going to a seniors' residence. Would you find anyone full of ambition? No, you won't find anyone like that. This shows that one has



ambition only when he has energy.

The ambitions of mankind are also ephemeral, to disappear in the end. Even though we all have certain ambitions right now, in time they will all dissipate as water runs through our fingers. The same goes for our possessions, health, fame, and desires. We must realize that all these things will in fact be lost.

God has given us desires. So we all have several representative desires, such as the desire for fame and wealth. However, even these desires will ultimately be wasted and lost. They can never be kept forever. Today's Scripture passage tells the story of one such man who squandered everything. While reading this passage, we need to examine ourselves and ponder if we are not wasting everything God has given us. We should turn around and ask ourselves, "Have I not also wasted all my life?" As human beings, we are fundamentally different from mere animals, and therefore it is incumbent on us to think about our lives before they

are over.

There comes a time in everyone's life when he has to think about his life and reach a conclusion about its meaning. So, although many of us are still young, let's take this opportunity to think about our lives. The conclusion is obvious. Our lives are destined to lose everything and fall into despair. If we could find any happiness or joy in our lives while living on this earth, we could say that we did not waste our lives. But what is the actual reality? If we consider our lives carefully from beginning to end, the inevitable conclusion to reach is that we have squandered our lives and lost everything.

Our lives are already destined to be lost completely. Do we have to reach our last day to realize this? No. Even just thinking about it now, we can easily realize that our lives will indeed be squandered. The conclusion is obvious if we really think about it hard. All of us were born from the wombs of our mothers, right? The end of life is so evident for all of us to see as soon as we are born.



It's completely hopeless. Once born, we grow up weaned on our mothers' milk, go to kindergarten, elementary school, middle school, high school, college, and even grad school to receive a doctoral degree. But by the time we are in middle school, we already know all about our lives. We think to ourselves, "Soon I will go to high school and then move onto college. I'll get married, have kids, and get a job or start a business to support my family. Maybe I'll be fortunate enough to be successful and own my own company. But by the time I accumulate my assets and grow my company, I would have turned 50 and 60. My body will start to ache then. No sooner than this I'll turn 70 and my sight will deteriorate. By the time I am 80, I would want to do nothing but lie down. Life will lose its appeal, my body will languish, and I will die in vain." In other words, one already knows all about life by the time he is in middle school.

If death marks the end of our lives, we've already come to know all about life even if there are

many things that we haven't experienced in this world. Those who realize that life is meaningless like this and look for God are the truly wise ones that prepare for the future. Put differently, those who prepare for the perfect happiness of the future while they are still on this earth are the truly happy ones. Don't you agree with this?

It's written in the Bible here, "*But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want.*" When we are young, we have everything in abundance. We are in good health, and we are also full of ambition. However, the day will come inevitably when we squander our lives, lose everything, and face a great famine. Destitute times will visit us without fail.

No matter how rich one is, and no matter how much food he has, there will be a time when he is visited by physical privation, when he can't even put food in his mouth and chew it. Regardless of how rich you are with the things of this world, there will inevitably come a time when you find yourself



destitute in your heart and spirit. Sooner or later, you will be short of the faculty of the mind, certain joys, and the pleasures of the body. Before such privation visits us, we need to realize clearly that our lives are completely lost. Indeed, we have lost everything in life. Although some people realize this, many people are still wasting their lives obliviously. Sooner or later we will lose everything. What then is the task that remains for us? We need to think about the following question: How can we restore everything that we've lost?

This Means That We Should Think about How We Can Have True Faith

We must look for this truth. Let's then return to the Word of God and examine this Truth from now on. In today's Scripture passage, the Lord admonished us to realize as soon as possible that we cannot find satisfaction from any religion. Only

when we realize this can we restore the original image of man. Take a look at the second son here. It's written that when this prodigal son went out to the world, he wasted all his possessions and had to eat the pods that the swine ate. The pods here refer to the teachings of the false religions of the world.

The foreign country where the prodigal son was residing was struck by a severe famine, and he had no choice but to seek refuge in someone else's home as his servant. In a severe famine, being able to work even as a servant and getting enough food to get by may also be called a great blessing. But what is the truth? With the food that one obtains out in the world—that is, worldly religion in spiritual terms—one can never find any satisfaction in his heart. All of us must realize this as soon as possible. Only with this realization can we recover and put our original image that was made in the likeness of the image of God. The famine was so severe that the prodigal son tried to get some food by cleaning out someone else's pigpens. But the owner was so stingy that he



didn't give him any proper food and instead, worked him to death. So the prodigal son set aside his pride and even ate the sludge that the pigs ate. He was so starved that he wanted to eat even this sludge that the pigs were eating. But one day, he was caught by the owner while eating the sludge.

It's written in the Bible, *"He would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything."* He had so little to eat that he had no choice but to eat even the pods that the pigs were eating. What does this all mean? It means that having lost his everything, the prodigal son was now entering the sunset of his life. Even though he was young, his life was already nearing its end. Having thus lost everything, he began to think about his father and his hometown. So, it is written, *"How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your*

son.'"

In short, the prodigal son wanted to return to his father.

Man Is a Truly Honorable Being

There is no creature in this world that's as precious as man. Human life is a truly precious and honorable life. What's the reason for this? It's because human beings are made in the likeness of the image of God, and therefore just as God is holy, they have the same holy heart. Even though they have lost this holiness for a short while by falling into the temptation of Satan, they still have their everlasting attribute. Take a look at the animals in this world. These animals are satisfied as long as they can find their daily food. But human beings are different. We humans yearn to live forever, and we want to prepare everlasting food. Originally, when God first made man, he was abundant in everything



and had no want whatsoever. If he had listened to the Word of God and obeyed it, he could have lived a glorious life with God.

However, man ended up doing the only thing that God forbade him to do. The Lord God had said, “I will allow you to eat from the tree of life, I will give you everlasting life, and I will make you live happily. I will fill all your needs so that you may lack nothing. But one thing I forbid you, and it is that you should never eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” God had said this to Adam and Eve, the first human beings.

Why did God then tell them not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? It’s because God was worried that they would have their own standard. Yet despite this, Adam and Eve disobeyed God’s Word, ate from this tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and came to have their own standard. What happened to them then? They were forced to leave the Garden of Eden that was overflowing with abundant happiness, took their portion, and ended up

drifting away from God. Everyone in this world today is a descendant of Adam and Eve. This sin committed by Adam and Eve, our forefathers, was inherited by everyone to reach all the way down to you and me today.

Right now we think that we lost everything of the world. Though we are not exactly sure where, we know that the Garden of Eden must be somewhere. We are always missing it. We yearn to return to that place. Although we don’t know the exact details, clearly we long for the lost paradise. What’s the reason for this? It’s because everyone has the fundamental memory of his time in the Garden of Eden. Because we had lived in that place, where there is neither any disease nor any pain, but only happiness, blessings, joy, and pleasures exist, in our sub-conscience we have the basic instinct to desire to return to that place. Like the prodigal son, when we realize that our lives are meaningless, our yearning for returning to that place becomes that much more uncontrollable.



There are some species among fish that return to the place of their hatching. One of them is salmon. The salmon spawn in a river. The fingerlings grow up in the river and then head out to the sea. After roaming around the vast ocean, they invariably all return to their home tributary when it's time for spawning. Even though they have no faculty of mind to know where their home tributary is, they instinctively return to it without fail.

The same is true for both you and me. Spiritually speaking, all of us were raised in the Garden of Eden. Our forefathers had lived there, and although we were not physically with them at that time, when seen through faith, we were as good as being there with them. The place where Adam and Eve had lived is the very place where we had lived. It is also the place where we will live in the future.

The prodigal son went out to the world and wasted everything. He then came to miss his hometown so much that it became unbearable for him. He thought to himself, "My father has so many

hired servants and so much food, and yet I am starving to death here. It's still not too late; I will turn my heart around and return to my father."

Just like this prodigal son, we also wasted everything in our lives. When you lose everything and realize your true self, when you recognize the real substance of your life, your heart finally yearns to return to the place that you had left and you can make this decision.

Fall is almost over now and winter is just around the corner. As the fall season is slipping by us, what do we feel? What do we feel as we look at the rainy fall sky? Do we not feel lonely? Every time the leaves fall from the tree one by one, we feel the sheer emptiness of life, realizing that we, too, will also inevitably fall like them. We feel such emptiness precisely because we know ourselves; because we know that death is inevitable for all of us. Though the turning leaves are beautiful, what's the reality behind this beauty? Changing colors are the evidence of the fact that the leaves are about to see



their lives extinguished. This is all beautiful when expressed in literature, but when looking at life, it is a meaningless end. You may have read O. Henry's *The Last Leaf*. We see that the protagonist of this novel was dying of a disease and that she identified her life to the falling leaves. Like this, when we look at a life form that's dying, we are reminded of our inevitable death. This, my fellow believers, is how empty human life is.

Therefore, as those living a meaningless life of the flesh, you and I must return to God. We must prepare ourselves to return to Him.

King Solomon did everything he wanted. No one has probably lived more prosperously than Solomon in human history, as it is written, *"I searched in my heart how to gratify my flesh with wine, while guiding my heart with wisdom, and how to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was good for the sons of men to do under heaven all the days of their lives. I made my works great, I built myself houses, and planted myself vineyards. I made myself gardens and*

orchards, and I planted all kinds of fruit trees in them. I made myself water pools from which to water the growing trees of the grove. I acquired male and female servants, and had servants born in my house. Yes, I had greater possessions of herds and flocks than all who were in Jerusalem before me. I also gathered for myself silver and gold and the special treasures of kings and of the provinces. I acquired male and female singers, the delights of the sons of men, and musical instruments of all kinds" (Ecclesiastes 2:3-8).

But what conclusion did Solomon reach at the end of his life?

He confessed with lamentation,
*"Then I looked on all the works that
 my hands had done
 And on the labor in which I had toiled;
 And indeed all was vanity and grasping
 for the wind.
 There was no profit under the sun"*
 (Ecclesiastes 2:11).



In conclusion, King Solomon then made the following admonishment:

*“Rejoice, O young man, in your youth,
And let your heart cheer you in the days
of your youth;
Walk in the ways of your heart,
And in the sight of your eyes;
But know that for all these
God will bring you into judgment”*
(Ecclesiastes 11:9).

*“Remember now your Creator in the days of
your youth,
Before the difficult days come ”*
(Ecclesiastes 12:1).

As these passages admonish us, we must realize what life is all about and return to God while we are still young, while we still have the faculty of the mind, and before we are completely seized by the world and rendered totally helpless. This is the truth. All of us must realize our true selves and find the Lord.

What Kind of God Is Our God?

The prodigal son here turned his heart around and went back to God. What was the result?

It's written, *“And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him.”* As you can see here, all that the prodigal son did was just turn his heart around. Having led such a wasteful life out in this world and squandering all his possessions, all that he had was his heart's desire to go to God, and he had no face before his father.

But how did this father receive the son? Even though the son returned in tatters just the way he was when he was surviving on the pods of the swine, the father had compassion on him, ran out to him, and embraced and kissed him. The father had been waiting for his departed son day and night. On this day also, he had kept all the gates of the house open, lit the light, and was waiting for the son that had left



him. “The sun is setting, but my son hasn’t returned today either. I wonder if he has any food to eat. By now he should have no possessions left and he should be returning now. He should return as soon as possible. Why is he then still not here? My son, how can you not understand my heart?”

However, the father began to see something. Far away, he saw something dark, and as soon as he saw it he recognized that it was his son. Even though the son was still far away, he ran to him, embraced him in his arms and kissed him. When you meet someone whom you’ve been missing for so long, manners are thrown out the window. You’d be overwhelmed with joy at seeing him. The prodigal son lowered his head in shame.

“What took you so long? How much you have suffered!” The father kissed the son and embraced him. How could the father have done this if he had no genuine love for his son? The father could receive him with so much joy like this because he loved him so much and he had yearned for his return.

My fellow believers, even though we are too ashamed to return to God and we have nothing, still, we were made in the likeness of the image of God. Strictly speaking, this means that all of us are God’s sons and daughters. Even though we have no possessions, we should at least turn our hearts around and return to God. Then far from rebuking us, God will have compassion and mercy on us, embrace us, and take care of us completely.

Yet many people still do not think so even to this day. They say, “I’ve committed too many sins to return to God. I smoke and drink, and so I can’t return to God.” But the truth is different. So long as we turn our hearts back to God, all of us can return to Him at any time.

The pods of the swine that the prodigal son ate here refer to the teachings of the religions of this world. They are worthless as food, and they can’t fill anyone’s stomach. We have to grasp clearly that the religions of this world are completely worthless just like these pods. Think about it. What has anyone



ever gained from religion? All that's gained from religion is just one's own feelings, emotion, and virtue. The gist of its teachings is merely to lead a virtuous, good, and upright life. This is all that's gained from religion.

But can we really live so virtuously according to such religious teachings? Fundamentally speaking, everyone's heart is filled with piles of sins that were inherited. Everyone's heart is plagued by lustful, murderous, adulterous, and covetous desires. The longer one lives in the world, the more such desires are exposed from him. Therefore, our seed is such that we can never live virtuously no matter how we are taught to do so by any religion.

Of course, when we were young, we all wanted to live virtuously. When we were in elementary school, we tried to live as our teachers taught us. But what actually happened? Even when we were young, we still had a desire to possess something, to buy and eat cookies. It's just that we were too young to express such desires. What happens when one grows

up? By the time one graduates from high school and goes to college, everything that's in his heart is fully exposed. What does this mean? It means that human beings are fundamentally a brood of evildoers who can't help but commit evil deeds. Yet despite this, the religions of the world keep extolling the virtues of mankind, saying, "Human beings are good by nature. So let your acts be good. Live a virtuous life. You'll then become a Buddha. You will become a god. You'll be blessed if you live virtuously." But it is absolutely impossible for any human being to live virtuously.

All of us learned about ethics and morals while we were in school, right? Everything that's taught in such moral training is correct. These moral teachings have been further developed by religion. No matter which religion you look at, if you look deep inside and analyze it carefully, you will see that every religion just teaches us to live a virtuous and good life.

However, even though we all learn these moral



lessons, what happens once we are out of school and live out in society? Do we really live virtuously as taught in school? Is it possible for us to lead a virtuous life? Everyone is taught not to be greedy, not to steal, not to murder, not to commit adultery, and not to have lustful thoughts. But does anyone really abide by all these dictums? No, that's not the case. Of course, we do good deeds once in a while, but strictly speaking, these good deeds are also done for our own sake. In other words, people sacrifice themselves not because this is the right thing to do, but because they think it's in their own interest. It's true that there are some people in this world who do virtuous deeds. But there is no one who is virtuous. Yet every religion relentlessly expounds on the goodness of mankind, even though this is completely untenable. The religions of the world sweet-talk everyone to live virtuously because they seek to cover up their wickedness. It's because no one can live virtuously that they keep teaching everyone to live virtuously.

The way to finding God is not found in these religions. Only the true Word of the Lord can take us to God. No religion can do this. Many Christians are leading a religious life rather than a life of faith, and some of them claim that they received the ability to speak in tongues while praying. But is this a good thing? No, it's like a sorceress levitating while practicing witchcraft. One should be rational as every human being is supposed to be. In other words, one should say sensible things, think clearly, and have the proper knowledge of what he should know.

There is nothing that's not found in the Bible. In other words, the Word of God teaches everything beneficial to us including the proper philosophy of life. Because God made us, He addressed in the Bible everything that we need to know. So if one reads this Word, he can go to Heaven. But if one instead tries to do good deeds on his own rather than following the Word, he cannot avoid but be cast into hell.

My fellow believers, you must realize that



religion is useless. You must also realize that you can never find any satisfaction from any religion. The Bible says, “*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.*” Just as this passage says, no one can actually live by the bread of the flesh alone. Because man is a spiritual creature, he can’t help but have religious beliefs. But these religious beliefs should be replaced with faith in the Truth and in God, and not laden with superstition. Remember this clearly. You can never find any satisfaction from any religion. You and I must realize clearly that we can never go the Kingdom of Heaven through any religion.

If you have now realized the imperfection of religion, you must return to God. You must divulge all your sins to the Lord exactly as they are, ask for God’s mercy, and recover the blessings that mankind had enjoyed at the beginning. When you return to God, do not try to fix and spruce up yourself, but go to Him exactly as you really are. Meet a true leader with this right attitude. If you

want to receive the remission of sins into your heart, and if you want to enter the Kingdom of God, it’s absolutely indispensable for you to find assistance from a priest, that is, a servant of God, just as the Bible says, “*So the priest shall make atonement for his sin that he has committed, and it shall be forgiven him*” (*Leviticus 4:35*).

Without a spiritual priest—that is, if you do not trust in your spiritual leader who has the righteousness of God—you cannot receive the remission of sins. You should realize and believe that there are such priests on this earth. As God is invisible, God has placed such people of faith in this world for you to see them. It is through these priests whom God has prepared, through the people who teach us right and lead us properly, that we can truly meet God.

My fellow believers, whenever you approach God, make sure to approach Him exactly as you are. As this God is full of love, He will then meet you without fail. He will recover your original glory



perfectly. Take a look at what the Word of God says in today's Scripture passage. When the prodigal son returned from the world and said to his father, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son," the father said to his servants: *"Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found."*

When the prodigal son returned exactly as he was, his father told his servants to bring the best robe and clothe the son with it. What does this mean? It means that God has compassion on those who return to Him. It means that He will restore them to their original, righteous state in the likeness of His image. If God is the King of this world, then we are its princes and princesses. My fellow believers, our God has clothed us in the garment of righteousness. What is this garment of righteousness? It is the seal

of approval demonstrating that we are righteous people.

"Take off all the filthy rags, cast them out and burn them all. Bring the best robe and put it on My son. Put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet." Like this, God has restored us as His cherished sons and daughters. When we were born as Adam's descendants, we were born as sinners. But now that we have received the remission of sins, we have returned to Jesus and become righteous people. In other words, because we've realized and believed that Jesus Christ took away all our sins exactly as the Bible says, God has restored us to be righteous people again. Even though we were insufficient sinners before, now we are righteous people who know and believe in Jesus Christ. This means that although we ourselves are lacking, God has blotted out all our insufficiencies.

It is indeed a mystery to grasp this Truth and believe in it. In the world this is often described as finding the path. How can a human being approach



God and become righteous? It's made possible by realizing the Word of God and knowing the Truth, and this is the mysterious way to the Kingdom of God. The Bible says, *“And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent” (John 17:3).*

My fellow believers, it was indeed impossible for us to escape from the religions of the world. We had wasted everything drowning in religion, and we were also destined to be destroyed. Yet God is so full of love that even for such people like us, who had lost everything and were doomed, He has put the garment of righteousness on us. God has given all His precious blessings that only the righteous can receive. Words cannot express just how thankful I am. Our Lord has clothed us in the garment of righteousness and restored us to be His children. If we really believe in the Word of God and return to Him exactly as we are, God will accept us just as we are despite all our insufficiencies. He will also solve all the problems that we are facing. We must realize

clearly here that when we return to God, He will not just solve our current problems, but He will also bless us with the restoration of faith to enjoy everything as the King's sons and daughters.

Just as our God blessed the prodigal son, so has He also blessed us. Hasn't He clothed us in the best robe? Hasn't He put a ring on us? Haven't we become God's sons and daughters? We have indeed put on the garment of righteousness, become God's sons and daughters, and put on our shoes as well.

God has also given us joy. The father in today's Scripture passage said, *“Bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry.”* This passage means that by believing in Jesus Christ, we have come to live a joyful and happy life. God has called you and me so that He may enjoy happiness and joy with us.

My fellow believers, now that you have received the remission of sins, there is no need for you to cry again. There is already enough sadness and suffering while living in this world, so why would you come



all the way to God's Church just to cry? All of us are cheerful, happy, rejoiced, and full of love and joy, living a rewarding life. God has opened the way of righteousness and joy for us. He has restored us all, so that we can eat and drink with Him in the same feast and rejoice together. Did we not receive the remission of sins in order to come to God and live happily with Him? If one really receives the remission of sins, he will taste true joy. This joy cannot be compared to any joy that's attained from achieving anything in this world. This joy is one that makes you smile even in suffering. Once one truly finds Jesus Christ, he can enjoy all such joy.

My fellow believers, God is indeed our God. Jesus is our Savior and our Father. The Holy Spirit is with us now. Everything is guaranteed to those for whom God is their Father. All the happiness, grace, blessings, and glory of this world are guaranteed to them. Can such people ever be sad?

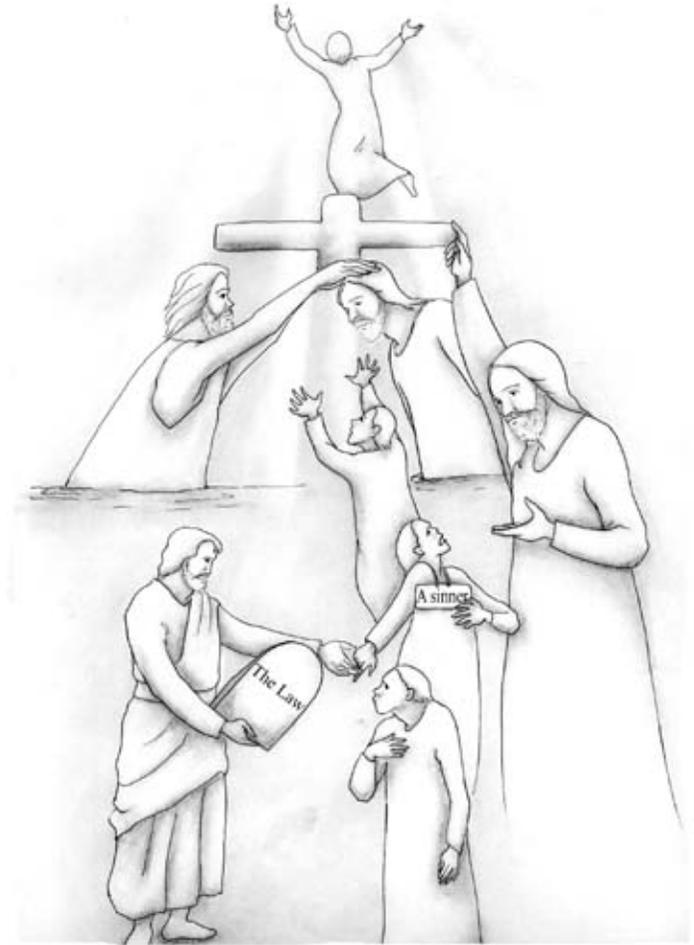
If you ever face hardship while living on this earth, pray to God. I am sure that your problem will

then be solved by the Lord. You will live in joy, and you will also lead many people to the way of righteousness. Let's not go to that wonderful place just by ourselves. Let us instead lead as many people as possible to the righteousness of God. ☒



SERMON

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Let Us Throw Away Our Own Righteousness And Know the Righteousness of God

< Luke 15:11-32 >

“Then He said: ‘A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me.’ So he divided to them his livelihood. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living. But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would gladly have filled his

stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.’ And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ And they began



to be merry. Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. So he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. And he said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and because he has received him safe and sound, your father has killed the fatted calf.’ But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him. So he answered and said to his father, ‘Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends. But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him.’ And he said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found.’”

In God’s Sight, Our Greatest Evil as Human Beings Is Trying to Establish Our Own Righteousness

There are two different sons appearing in today’s Scripture passage, which comes from Luke 15:11-32. The second son asked his father to give him his share of inheritance beforehand, so the father divided his wealth and gave it to this son. The second son then went out to the world, squandered all his possessions, repented, and returned to his father’s house.

Let’s turn again to what the Bible says about the return of this prodigal son: “*I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.’*” And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. And the son said to



him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' And they began to be merry." This is the Word of God the Father for today.

When the second son returned home after going out to the world and squandering all his possessions and living a wasteful life, his father received him wholeheartedly. The father not only accepted his son back, but he also brought out the best robe to clothe him, put a ring to his hand and sandals on his feet, slaughtered a calf, and held a great feast.

How did the first son then react to this, who had not gone out to the world but had stayed with his father? It's written in verses 25-28: "*Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near*

to the house, he heard music and dancing. So he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and because he has received him safe and sound, your father has killed the fatted calf.' But he was angry and would not go in." As the passage says here, the older son did not like that his father was holding a feast to celebrate the return of his brother. On the contrary, it's written that he got very angry.

What is the meaning of today's Scripture passage? Of the two sons, it was the younger son who was truly united with the father's heart. It is to teach us this truth that the Lord spoke to us with such a parable.

What actually is our greatest problem? In God's sight, what is the greatest problem for mankind? It is that people have their own righteousness. For both those who have been born again by believing in Jesus and those who have not, their greatest problem is the notion that one's own righteousness is more



exalted than the righteousness of God. When we seek to follow the Lord, you and I must know that we have to cast aside such righteousness of our own. That's because we can follow the righteousness of God Almighty our Father only if our own righteousness is completely removed.

What kind of people are those who have received the salvation of the remission of sins from God, and those who have received the blessed gift of salvation? They are those who have no righteousness of their own. That one does not have his own righteousness means that he is devoid of his own rightfulness. Those who do not have their own virtues, goodness, will, determination, merit, or faculty are the ones who have been saved by God. In contrast, those who think that they are intelligent, meritorious, good, virtuous, and not that sinful can never receive salvation from God. Far from being saved by God, they actually want to challenge Him. "God, let's measure up and see who is taller and who is better. Let's see if You are really more

virtuous, wiser, and better than me." Like this, those who flaunt their own righteousness want to compare themselves to God and challenge Him.

Like the Prodigal Son Here, Those Who Have Lost All Their Rightfulness Put on the God-given Grace of Salvation

The prodigal son in today's Scripture passage lost everything. He had gone out to the world and squandered all the inheritance that he had received from his father, and although he tried to survive on his own later on, he couldn't even do this. He got a job as a hired servant to feed someone else's pigs and tried to survive on the pods that the pigs ate, but he couldn't even do this job and he was eventually fired. In Luke chapter 15, God is saying that His blessings are received by precisely people who cannot live without God, who are devoid of any spiritual righteousness of their own before God, and



who are complete sinners. In other words, in God's sight it is those who have nothing of their own that unite their hearts with God, put on His salvation and love, carry out His work, and are approved by God as upright and blessed people to receive His blessings.

What is the real reason why so many people in this world are still standing against God, unable to believe in Jesus Christ as their Savior who has blotted out all their sins? It's because they are too full of their own merits, righteousness, and virtues. For those whose own virtues and righteousness have been broken down and lost, they have no choice but to believe in Jesus Christ the Savior.

Jesus Christ, God Himself, came to this earth incarnated in the flesh of man as the Savior of sinners, and He accepted all our sins by being baptized at the age of 30. He carried all these sins of the world to the Cross, was crucified to death, and thereby bore the condemnation that we should have borne. Jesus Christ then rose from the dead again on

the third day, thereby becoming the Lord of salvation to all those who believe in Him as their God of salvation. It's so clear that this is God's work of salvation. There is no reason why we can't believe. There is no need to decline, hesitate, or to wait. Like a lovely daughter accepting her father's birthday present with joy, all that we have to do is just accept this salvation that Jesus Christ has fulfilled for us by blotting out all our sins and delivering us from them.

Why must we do this? It's because we humans have no righteousness, or any merit, or virtue, or any goodness. Quite the contrary; all that we have are just inadequacies and sins. That is why we must believe in this salvation fulfilled through the baptism of the Lord and His blood on the Cross. It is only through this process that you and I can be truly saved.

By coming to this earth and being baptized by John the Baptist, Jesus bore all our sins. Through this baptism received in the Jordan River, our Lord,



the God of salvation, took upon Himself all our sins—all the sins that we've ever committed and will ever commit from our birth to our death; from the cradle to the grave. In this way, the Lord shouldered our sins through His baptism. He carried these sins to the Cross and died in your place and mine. Believing in this is true salvation and true faith.

How has Jesus blotted out all your sins and mine, and all the sins of this world and the curses for them? How has He saved us from sin? By being baptized by John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, Jesus accepted all our sins, and by going to the Cross and dying on it, He was condemned in our place. Furthermore, to raise you and me back to life to perfection, He rose from the dead again, thereby completing our salvation. He has become the God of salvation to all those who are devoid of their own righteousness and their own merits; to those of us who believe in Jesus as our God and our Savior.

Indeed, Jesus Christ has saved people who have

neither their own righteousness nor their own virtues, who know that they are insufficient, and who realize that they are sinful and therefore doomed to hell. It's to save precisely these people that the Lord came to this earth. God did not come to this earth to save those whose lives are virtuous, upright, and righteous, and who labor and try hard to dedicate their lives to others. It's not to bless such people that Jesus came. On the contrary, Jesus Christ came to this earth to save from sin those who see themselves as insufficient, weak, and sinful beings, to bless these people, and to blot out their sins. According to this will of God, Jesus has saved you and me perfectly and made us God's own cherished people.

By being baptized, the Lord accepted all our sins, and as He was crucified on both His hands and feet, He poured out all His blood and died in our place. The Almighty God Himself came to this earth incarnated in the flesh, and He was baptized by John the Baptist in order to blot out all your sins and mine. He took away all these sins through this baptism.



This is how the Lord has saved you and me.

Those who are devoid of their own righteousness accept this Jesus as their Savior. In other words, it is people who lack their own virtues that accept Jesus as their God and Savior. However, what about those who consider themselves as good, virtuous, and righteous people? They have trouble accepting the salvation of Jesus. They are not only unable to accept it, but they actually stand against it. They think to themselves, “I’d rather believe in my own fist than in Jesus. I’d rather than believe in my own heart than Jesus. I’d rather believe in my own good deeds, my own thoughts, and my own righteous acts. I’d rather believe in myself.” These people ultimately end up rejecting Jesus because of these mistaken thoughts.

Do You Consider Yourself Meritorious?

We have absolutely no spiritual merit at all. Yet

by any chance, do we not think that we ourselves are good and virtuous, that we are qualified to be saved, and that we deserve to be blessed by God? But such thoughts are just our own human delusion. When we look at ourselves as reflected on the Word of God, our portrait is completely opposite to our own self-perception.

Of the two sons mentioned in today’s Scripture passage, the first son seemed to be a good son: He took care of the house, he helped his father, and he didn’t do anything bad. But how was the second son? He asked for his share of inheritance, went out to the world, and squandered all his possessions. Unable to find any good job, he ended up with the wretched job of feeding sludge to the swine and ate this pig sludge. There was nothing else for him to eat because of a severe famine. What is worse, he was fired from even this job. The owner fired him, saying, “How can you eat pig sludge? It would be better not to have you here.” What did the son do in the end? He couldn’t make a living on that foreign



land, and so he returned to his father; to God. He repented from the depth of his heart, saying, “My father has so many hired servants and workers, and all these servants have plenty to eat. Yet here I am, starving to death after having left my father. I should return to him and say to him, ‘Father, I am too ashamed to call myself your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.’” Having thus repented from his mistake, he returned to the father. He had turned his heart around.

When the prodigal son made his way home, how did the father react? He looked out from his room and he saw his son far away. Overwhelmed by joy, the father jumped up and ran toward the town entrance without even putting his shoes on, shouting out, “My son!” Too ashamed of himself, the son couldn’t even look at his father, but the father embraced him in his arms, kissed him on his filthy mouth that had eaten pig sludge, patted his back, and received him in joy, saying to him, “My son, I am so glad that you’ve returned.”

The father then took the filthy rags off his son and said to his servants, “Throw away all these rags. Bring the best robe in our house and put it on him. Put the best sandals on him as well. Put a ring on his finger. This son is indeed my son. So put a ring to him as a sign of being my son. Slaughter a calf. Play music. Gather together everyone in the town and hold a great feast.”

What does all this mean, my fellow believers? It means that the sufferings we endure in our lives—that is, being born, getting old, falling ill, and dying—are all permitted by God so that we would return to Him. It is all by God’s work that people fall ill and live in suffering on this earth, unable to fulfill none of their desires with their circumstances turning against them and their plans remaining unfulfilled. In other words, God’s work is designed to make each and every one of us return to Him. Take a look at today’s Scripture passage here. The land where the prodigal son was residing was visited by a famine, and as a result he was forced to survive



on the pods and was fired from even this job. Why do you suppose all this happened? It was because of the will of God that sought to make him return to his father's home, nearer to God.

If the prodigal son had found a good job and prospered in the world, he would have never returned to his father. That is why God brought a famine to that country when he found a job to feed pigs. God made him fired by the owner. In doing so, God brought the prodigal son back to His fold. What does this all mean, my fellow believers? It means that it is the will of God the Father for us to take His best robe, sandals, and ring, to hold a feast, to eat abundant food in His Kingdom, to live there and enjoy glory, and to be honored like this.

Indeed, all our sufferings and weaknesses are permitted by God. That is why true salvation can be received from the Lord by those who believe that Jesus is their Savior. They believe that the Lord accepted all their sins by being baptized, dying on the Cross, and has thereby saved them, and that He

has saved them perfectly through the water and the blood. Remember this always, that Jesus has saved you and me in this way.

My fellow believers, how did we receive salvation from our sins? We received salvation by our faith, by believing that Jesus came to this earth, was baptized, died on the Cross, and rose from the dead again in three days. How could we have become righteous by believing in Jesus? How could we, who were all sinners, have become righteous people? How could we have become sinless? It is all because all our sin was passed onto Jesus when He was baptized by John the Baptist. Our Lord indeed bore all your sins and mine. That is why we have become completely sinless and righteous people.

What Kind of People Can Be Saved by Believing in the Righteousness of God?

What kind of people has God accepted to be His



children? Those who recognize their sinful selves before God and desire to believe in His righteousness; those who believe in Jesus as their Savior and also believe in His baptism and His blood on the Cross; those who believe that Jesus bore all their sins by being baptized; and those who believe that Jesus bore our condemnation on the Cross in our place—these are the people whom God truly approves as His own people. Just as the Word of God says, “As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name,” God has indeed given all His rights to those who have true faith.

It’s not because we’ve led a virtuous and righteous life that you and I have been saved. It is by accepting the salvation of Jesus Christ into our hearts, and by believing in this salvation, that we could reach our true salvation. In other words, it’s actually those who are insufficient in this world just like the prodigal son here that can receive the blessed salvation of God. What kind of person are

you then? Are you like the first son or the second son? If you think that you are more like the second son, then you must return to God. You must realize who you really are, and you must admit that you are completely devoid of any virtue, righteousness, or goodness. You must then believe that Jesus Christ took upon Himself all your sins by being baptized. Finally, you must also believe that Jesus bore the condemnation of all our sins on the Cross in our place. Only if you believe like this can you receive the true salvation of Jesus.

What then is the biggest problem for those who have now received the remission of sins by believing in Jesus? It is that even though they have been saved by believing in the righteousness of the Lord and His salvation, they still have too many virtues of their own that exceed Jesus. It’s by believing in Jesus Christ and His water and blood that we’ve received the remission of sins. It’s by the power of the Lord, not by our own power, that we’ve received this blessing. What is then the biggest problem for us,



who have received the remission of sins in this way? Remember this clearly: It is none other than our own righteousness. When you think that you have some sort of righteousness of your own, some goodness, some virtues, and so forth, this is when you confront your biggest problem. This is also a huge problem before God.

Those who think that they are quite virtuous and righteous are prone to judge others. They judge people on their own, thinking, “This man is so and so, that man is so and so.” Those who are self-righteous impose their own standards on everything, thinking, “Why is this Church like this? Why is the worship service carried out on the floor? I wish they would do something different at the hour of worship.” In other words, they think everything according to their own standards and want to get everything done in their own way.

What will happen to these people in the end? As they are full of their own righteousness, far from exalting Jesus, they end up exalting themselves even

higher than Jesus, saying, “I’ve done this and that, I’ve been so good, and I’ve been so right.” Since they keep insisting on their own achievements, it’s impossible for them to take pride in the Lord. Because they are too full of their own virtues and their own rightfulness, ultimately they end up leaving the Church that Jesus Christ has founded. Why does this happen? It’s because they think they are more right, and that’s why they leave the Church, saying, “If it were up to me, I wouldn’t do this. I’d never do anything like that. I’d rather do something else. In fact, I will just go my own way.” In other words, it’s because they are too self-righteous that they tragically end up leaving God’s Church.

While carrying on with our lives of faith, whom are we most afraid of? It’s those who see everything through a legalistic lens. Let me give you an example. While walking in the street, a saved person saw an empty can lying around. If he is a fan of soccer, this can look like a soccer ball to him. Soccer fans sometimes think that even stones can be balls.



So this person dribbled the empty can as if it were a soccer ball and kicked it toward some corner that he saw. Obviously, it's unlikely for him to aim correctly. So when the can he kicked landed on someone else's window and broke it, he picked up his bag and started running. The owner of the house then came out and screamed, "Who did this?" But some other little kids ended up getting blamed for it.

If some recently saved brothers saw this scene, what would they think? They would judge this person, thinking, "This man is supposed to be a saved man, and yet he broke the window and ran away. How can he do this when he has been saved and he has no sin?" When they see someone who has received the remission of sins littering, they think, "How can a redeemed person be so careless? I don't behave like this, and so how can someone who was saved a long time ago behave in this way?"

What does this mean? It means that they've begun to flaunt their own virtues. This is why we are more afraid of those who have received the

remission of sins just recently. That's because we have to be careful about how we act before them. Since we have to always put on our best behavior, you can imagine how difficult this can be.

We are not afraid of those who received the remission of sins long ago. Quite the contrary, we feel intimidated when we stand before those who have received the remission of sins only recently. It's not because they are strong and physically imposing that we feel intimidated, but it's because we think to ourselves, "I'm sure they have their own standard. If I litter, they will think I'm a bad person."

Once enough time goes by since receiving the remission of sins, many of your weaknesses and insufficiencies are exposed in your life of faith, and so this makes you less judgmental. You no longer judge your brothers and sisters for their mistakes, recognizing, "I, too, have made mistakes like them." In other words, you don't judge others for their shortcomings according to your own thoughts. But



what about those brothers and sisters who have just recently received the remission of sins? They are prone to judge others. What does judging mean here? It means flaunting one's own virtues. Of course, one's own virtues are not even comparable to the virtues of Jesus, but some people think that they are more virtuous than those who were saved before them. Because they think they are more virtuous, they judge others according to their own virtues, and because they judge in this way, they don't show any respect to others.

My fellow believers, when we first received the remission of sins, we did so by admitting our true nature and confessing, "Lord, I am such a worthless sinner." But what is the reality? Did we really know all about our sinful selves when we received the remission of sins? No, that's not the case. When we first received the remission of sins, our self-recognition was limited to our own experiences and we just admitted literally what the Word said about our sins. Therefore, even after receiving the

remission of sins, we must realize that we are even more worthless than when we first believed in Jesus and discovered our true selves. Only then can we realize that we are indeed devoid of any righteousness of our own. It is then that we can really take pride only in Jesus, His baptism, and His blood on the Cross. We come to boast of this gospel alone every time we open our mouths, and we become people of faith who preach this gospel that's worthy of being boasted. It is then that we can always be happy and rejoice in our lives despite our insufficiencies and weaknesses.

This means that one can rejoice with this gospel and boast of it only when he realizes clearly that he is devoid of any righteousness. But what about the self-righteous people who have too many virtues of their own? They have no interest at all in how the gospel is spread. On the contrary, they just try to always maintain their own virtues, afraid that their own righteousness and goodness may break down.

My fellow believers, we should be always



thankful to God in our lives. Even though we are so insufficient, the Lord has saved people like us by coming to this earth, being baptized, and shedding His blood to death on the Cross. Because the Lord has saved sinners like you and me is something for which we should all be grateful. It's not the virtuous but the worthless that the Lord has saved, and that is why we are all the more thankful. Such gratitude should always be kept in our lives.

When we turn to Romans chapter 10, we see the Apostle Paul saying to the people of Israel, "*For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God*" (Romans 10:3). Through this passage, God rebuked the Israelites for trying to establish their own righteousness. Indeed, God wants us to show off His righteousness instead. He wants to break down the righteousness of man. God longs for His righteousness to be spread rather than our own human righteousness.

The Righteousness of God Is None Other Than the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

What is the gist of the righteousness of God? It is the water and the blood; it is the gospel of the water and the Spirit. What has saved you and me and everyone in this world from sin is this salvation of the water and blood of the Lord. This is the righteousness of God. What does this God want from this earth, for the rest of your life and mine? He wants us to proclaim His righteousness!

Our Lord has saved you and me with His water and blood. This Lord wants us to become sinless, to enter Heaven, to be made into God's people, and to be able to carry out His righteous work. The Lord wants us to spread His righteousness. He wants us to boast of His righteousness. What God wants from you and me, in short, is for us to exalt His righteousness, to boast of it, and to spread and serve this righteousness.



All of us should realize clearly that God wants to break down the righteousness of man, exalt His righteousness, and spread this righteousness. We must believe so. We human beings have nothing else to say but this: “Jesus has made me sinless with His water and blood. He has made me a sinless person. I have no sin. The Lord has saved me through His water and blood. I have become sinless by believing in this water and blood.” We have no choice but to thank God for this and give all glory to Him. That is the only thing that we have to do. This means that there is nothing in this world that’s worthy of exalting except the righteousness of God.

The prodigal son in today’s Scripture passage returned to his father after squandering all his possessions. He said to his father, “I am not worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants. Take me in as your servant.” Given the context of today’s Scripture passage, we can conjecture here that this prodigal son clearly became one of his father’s faithful workers when he returned

home. I have no doubt that this prodigal son was diligent with his father’s work as if it were his own work, rather than living off his father and saying in arrogance, “I am the son of the landlord.”

But how did the first son react? He got angry. His heart was filled discontent, thinking to himself, “Even though I’ve served my father for so many years, and I’ve never disobeyed him, not even once did he give me a young goat to enjoy. How can he then hold such a feast for my brother, who had run away from home, just because he has returned?” He was so resentful that his face turned red in anger and looked at his brother with an evil eye. The father then said to the angry first son, “Why are you so resentful when all that I have is yours? Isn’t it right for us to rejoice and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found?”

What does this mean? The older son here had worked in his father’s house all his life like a servant. Yet he was actually filled with his own righteousness. That he thought of all the things that



he had done for his father means that he was too self-righteous. In other words, the first son was filled with his own virtues and rightfulness. That is why when his brother repented wholeheartedly and returned home ready to live a new life, far from being rejoiced by this, the older brother actually got angry.

The First Son Was a Self-Righteous Man

How would the father have felt when the first son got angry and tried to vent out his frustration at his younger brother? Would his mind have been at peace? Would the father have been happy? If the father is rejoiced, the son should be rejoiced with him. Wasn't the second son lost but now found, dead but alive now? The first son should have been truly rejoiced at his brother's return regardless of his past, since he had been dead but was now alive. But the older son wasn't happy because he was too self-

righteous.

My fellow believers, we are all very happy now that we have received the remission of sins and we have been saved. But now that you and I have been saved, what kind of people should we become? If we had too many virtues of our own like the first son here, we would have run away from the house of God. This time it wouldn't be the second son leaving but the first son. What's the reason for this? It's because the first son would be thinking that the father was not right. What God wants from you and me is for all of us, the saved people, to lose all our virtues, goodness, and righteousness. He wants us to confess, "I am completely devoid of any merit or righteousness. But if there is one thing that I am thankful for, one thing that I can exalt, it is that the Lord has completely blotted out my sins with His water and blood." This is the confession that the Lord wants to hear from us. Do you grasp this?

This salvation through which our Lord has blotted out all our sins is our most precious treasure.



This is what is most worthy of our pride. The Lord wants us to become people of such faith. He wants us to become people who exalt the gospel of Jesus Christ, serve the Lord's gospel, worship the Lord no matter what happens to them, live for His gospel, praise and spread this gospel of the Lord, believe only in the righteousness of God realizing that they are devoid of any righteousness, and follow and serve this righteousness of God alone.

Indeed, our God is pleased by those who exalt only His righteousness, believe in it, praise it, and take pride in it. These people are the ones who have truly united their hearts with God. I am not saying here that you are doing something wrong. Rather, I am explaining to you what kind of people we must become before God. We go astray when we exalt ourselves like the first son in today's Scripture passage. Even though the first son had lived with his father for a long time, his heart was not truly united with his father.

In my life of faith, if I had thought of myself as a

completely perfect man as the first son had thought of himself, then I would have never tolerated anyone who was worse than me. Indeed, everyone has a high opinion of himself, thinking, "I'm right, I'm good, and I'm virtuous. I am really a man of justice." But if you let such thoughts get a better hold of yourself, you will end up despising all those who seem to be insufficient and not as right and virtuous as yourself. You will ignore them and look down on them as though they were not even human.

But what happens when you recognize clearly before God that you are insufficient and weak? Regardless of your merits and demerits, you will cherish everyone as long as he has accepted the gospel to become sinless. So long as your brothers and sisters have received the remission of sins and are living for the Lord, you will think that these brothers and sisters are more precious than even yourself. So you will respect them more than yourself. Like this, those who have thrown away their virtues before God are all compelled to



recognize wholeheartedly how precious their fellow saints are.

But what about those who think that they are quite decent and virtuous people before God? If you don't know your shortcomings and think of only your own virtues, you will end up completely despising everyone else. My fellow believers, God wants you to exalt only Him. Jesus Christ wants us to boast of this gospel that has blotted out everyone's sins in this world. This gospel is more precious to us than anything else. There is nothing in the hearts of the redeemed that is more precious than this. It is far more invaluable than the most precious pearl and diamond.

Isn't the gospel all about how the Lord has made you and me sinless? Isn't this what the gospel is all about? What else is more precious than this? The famous hymn "Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me" goes in its third paragraph:

"Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to the cross I cling;

Naked, come to Thee for dress;
Helpless look to Thee for grace;
Foul, I to the fountain fly;
Wash me, Savior, or I die."

Like this, even those devoid of any righteousness can now attain it thanks to God. If you and I have any righteousness at all, it is solely that the Lord has washed away all our sins with His water and blood, made us sinless, and saved us all. The only righteousness we have is this righteousness of the Lord. If there is any righteousness, and if there is anything that we've done right, it is solely that we have accepted this gospel of the Lord into our hearts. If someone asks us to show them our merit, the only thing we can say is this: "The Lord has saved me. He has made me a sinless person. I have no sin. The Lord has saved me with His water and blood."

Your strong arms, long legs, pretty face, smart head, virtues, goodness, and obedience to the Word of God—all these things are not worthy of boasting.



Indeed, we are completely devoid of anything to be proud of. My fellow believers, life is nothing. Physical beauty also means nothing. It's only when you are young that you have a soft skin; see what happens when you grow old. It will all turn wrinkly. Your skin will turn so dry that you will have to put on moisturizers all the time. In other words, the physical beauty of human beings will all disappear with age. The merits of human beings amount to nothing, rendered meaningless with the passing of time, and their virtues are also completely insignificant. Even if you've lived virtuously all your life to this day, if you fail to do so even slightly in the future, all your achievements are rendered obsolete.

My fellow believers, we have nothing but this salvation of the Lord. Some of you may be thinking now, "Gee, every time Pastor Jong opens his mouth, he always talks about the water and the blood. How many years has it been already? I've heard him speaking of the same thing for over ten years now.

Yet he is still talking about it. Doesn't he ever get tired?" But I am not tired of preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit at all. Far from it, I will continue to preach the gospel until the day I die. That's because I have nothing else to boast of but the water and blood of the Lord.

In fact, what else do we have to boast of? Should I stand here and just tell you what I did last week, boasting about how I visited orphanages and seniors' residences and donated 50 boxes of instant noodles? No, that's not what I should be preaching. Truly, we have nothing to boast of. Given how I have nothing to boast of like this, what should I then boast to you when I come to God's Church? What should I boast to people? I have nothing to boast of other than to say, "Jesus has made you and me sinless. So believers like you and me have no sin. We are completely sinless, as white as snow. We are clean and spotless." This is because none other than this remission of sins, of the water and the blood, is our everlasting salvation. It's because this is the never-



changing righteousness of God.

Of the two sons mentioned in today's Scripture passage, we need to pay particular attention to the second son who had gone out into the world but returned to God. This prodigal son completely admitted his lack of virtue, returned to his father, united his heart with his father, and worked diligently for him as his worker and servant. No matter what his father asked of him, he was just thankful that he could work for him and that he was accepted back to the family. He lived the rest of his life with such a thankful heart.

But what about the first son? He thought that his father was wrong to welcome his brother. He thought to himself, "All these years I've worked so hard for my father, and yet he has never held a feast for me. How can he then hold a feast for my brother just because he has returned, when he had left home out of his own volition?" How about our own parents then? They are more fond of the children who know themselves and are rightfully grateful to

their parents than the children who are too self-conceited. If this is how parents think, how would our God think? God is far more fond of those who, like the prodigal son, have cast aside their own righteousness.

Our Biggest Problem

You and I have grown just a little bit since we first received the remission of sins. What is our biggest problem then? It's the fact that we still have some righteousness of our own. That we are still clinging to our own virtues is our biggest problem.

My fellow believers, we are serving the gospel always. Serving the gospel is the only thing that we should be doing. That alone is our only pride. We've done well until now, and we must continue to do so in the years to come. We humans are completely devoid of any virtues, just as we have no righteousness at all. When we stand before God's



Truth and examine ourselves, we see that all of us indeed have nothing to boast of before God, nor any righteousness. As such people, the only thing that we should be doing is serving the gospel of the Lord who is always right and upright.

I am deeply concerned that you might still cling to your own righteousness and worry about losing it. Even if you have received the remission of sins, unless you demolish your own righteousness, it will clash with the righteousness of God and a struggle will ensue. It would be fortunate if your own righteousness is defeated in this battle, but if it's still alive, sooner or later it will cause a huge problem down the road. Therefore, you must make the following confession of faith as soon as possible: "Lord, I am indeed like the prodigal son. I have no righteousness at all. I am just thankful that You have saved such a worthless being like me and made me Your servant."

Satan had attacked our sins before we were born again. But, now that we have been born again and

have no sin in our hearts, our own righteousness is the point of Satan's secondary attack on us. In other words, he incites us to flaunt our own righteousness to say, "I've received the remission of sins, but I still think my own way is right." In this way the Devil goads us into flaunting our own righteousness. What will happen if we give into such temptations of Satan? We will end up insisting on our own righteousness, and once this happens, we will begin to look down on our predecessors of faith who received the remission of sins before us. We will end up ignoring them completely, thinking, "They are not better than me. They are in fact worse than me!" What will be the result of all this? The natural consequence is that we will start facing serious problems in our lives of faith.

Those who are self-righteous take the demolishing of their own righteousness as their own death. In reality, when their own righteousness is demolished, the righteousness of the Lord is exalted and they come to realize that the Lord is more right,



cherish Him even more and praise Him. But as they do not know this truth, they think that the end of their righteousness is their death. Indeed, when we the redeemed see our righteousness break down, Satan tries to make us feel as though we are dying. So the Devil tries to make us worry about what will happen when our righteousness is demolished.

What will really happen if we are deceived by such temptations of Satan? Those who fall into this trap will fall into despair every time their own righteousness is broken, as though their lives of faith were over. However, my fellow believers, the truth is far from this. See for yourself what really happens when your righteousness is demolished. Once your righteousness is broken down, you will exalt only the Lord. You will cherish Him even more. What happens after this? Since you now care about God more than yourself, you will serve the Lord rather than yourself, hold onto Him with all your heart, give all exaltation to Him, and completely unite your heart with Him.

It's those who know their insufficiencies that exalt the Lord more than themselves, not those who are full of their own merits. This is the truth. Only the Lord is our most cherished treasure, and He alone is right. Everyone in this world must first cast aside his own righteousness if he wants to follow the Lord. Those who think that they are virtuous and perfect, and who flaunt their own righteousness, can never be led to the Lord.

After Saving Us, the Lord Demolishes Our Own Righteousness

God makes us face many failures, fall into our weaknesses, and find ourselves in difficult situations. By doing so, He completely demolishes our ego. At first, we try to resist this, but ultimately we are compelled to surrender. When our righteousness is completely demolished, we begin to see the Lord's exaltation. Just as Job said, *"I have heard of You by*



the hearing of the ear, But now my eye sees You,” we come to exalt the Lord truthfully and unambiguously. We don’t exalt the Lord just with words, but we begin to exalt Him with a sincere heart. In other words, we come to trust Him with all our hearts and praise Him sincerely when our own righteousness is broken and our hearts are humbled.

Those who quickly realize their true selves even as they don’t discover this through their actual experience are the wisest. Those who realize and believe promptly that the salvation of the Lord is most precious and that the Lord is the most cherished God are the wisest. All of us must abide by our faith in the Lord. We must serve the Lord while abiding by this faith. We must serve Him while exalting Him. In other words, whenever we are gathered like this, we must exalt the Lord, praise Him, pray to Him, and commend Him. Regardless of whenever and wherever, we must always humble ourselves and exalt the Lord in our lives.

Just as we praise the Lord and boast of Him

when we are gathered in the Church, when it comes to our individual lives, and our individual faith as well, we must exalt the Lord. This means that we must become the kind of people who are devoid of their own righteousness, who have lost it all, just like the prodigal son in today’s Scripture passage. “I have no merit. If there is just one merit, it is that I believe that the Lord has saved me. I believe in this. I believe that the Lord has saved me through His water and blood. This Lord has made me sinless. I have no sin. I have no sin because the Lord has made me sinless.” We must become people who believe like this, boast of the Lord, serve Him completely by faith, and follow Him by trusting Him completely.

My fellow believers, do you realize just how precious it is that you and I are serving the Lord? This is indeed a priceless work. Serving the Lord, serving the gospel, making offerings to Him, and supporting the gospel ministry—each and every one of these things is invaluablely precious. That’s



because the One whom we are serving is exceedingly precious. Each and every one of these small things is precious because we are serving this exalted Lord and His precious gospel. Because God is infinitely exalted, and because it is such a precious honor for us that this Lord has saved us through His water and blood, even the little things that we do to serve this Lord is also precious.

Take a look around us. There is a restaurant in the basement of our church building. I heard that some seedy people have been coming there recently. Apparently, all kinds of lewd behaviors go on there while drinking liquor. What the hostesses and their guests do in secret is beyond description. However, do you think that they are fundamentally different from us who now are worshipping the Lord just two floors above them? No. Strictly speaking, we are the same as these people. Do you understand what I mean? My point is that as far as the flesh is concerned, there is absolutely no difference between those sitting in the restaurant and us.

Are you any different from them in the flesh? No. What is so different about the people drinking in the “secret” restaurant in the basement and our brothers? Are they any different in the flesh? They are no different from us. Of course, we cannot be with the Gentiles. Yet we also are human beings with the same flesh that they have. When we look at the clients of the restaurant, we need to realize that we also have the same flesh as they have. We must admit that we, too, are the same human beings. So I have no qualms about ministering a church on top of a seedy restaurant. I am more than willing to do so. That’s because I think that the people in that restaurant and I are the same as far as the flesh is concerned.

When I see people coming to that restaurant, I think to myself, “I am someone who serves only the Lord, for I have nothing else to boast of nor anyone else to serve. Because only our Lord is to be served by me, and He alone is precious, I can’t help but serve Him alone. But you serve your bodies because



you still do not know this Lord. You serve only your mouths.” This is the only difference; in everything else I am the same. When we look at the flesh, they and we are the same. Think about it. Were it not for our Lord who dwells in us, and if we set Him aside and look at ourselves, is there anything righteous in us? Is there any merit at all? No, we have no merit whatsoever.

On the contrary, sometimes I am afraid of the very fact that I myself am righteous, that I am living righteously. I am afraid that such thoughts might turn into my own righteousness. In fact, sometimes I find myself looking down on such people, thinking, “I myself am more righteous than these people. How can anyone compare me to such people?” I then break my own righteousness, realizing, “There still is such arrogance left in my heart.” I break down my own righteousness and turn my heart toward God again, saying to myself, “They and I are the same human beings. Every human being is the same. The only difference is that I’ve accepted the Lord, and

the Lord has saved me, bestowed His grace of salvation on me, and given me the Holy Spirit. Other than these things, how am I so different from these people?”

My fellow believers, remember this clearly: We have no righteousness of our own. If there is any righteousness at all, it is just that the Lord has saved us, made us sinless, and given us this gospel. I admonish you all to grasp clearly here that the only righteousness we have is the righteousness of the Lord. I admonish you to exalt the Lord. Realize the fact that we are serving the Lord precisely because there is nothing else in this world that is worthy of serving. In fact, if there were something else to serve, I would serve it, but I can’t serve anything else because there is nothing else to serve. If I had any virtue at all, I would follow it, but I am completely devoid of any virtue of my own, and that is why I am serving the Lord, who alone is good. Indeed, even though we are insufficient, in our lives we must still serve only the Lord, understand Him alone, and



exalt and praise Him alone. This is the life that we must lead as Christians.

Of the two sons described in today's Scripture passage, in whom was the father pleased? It was the younger son. Because he had broken down all his righteousness, he had no trouble with his father. He did everything he was told by his father. Whatever his father told him to do, he obeyed it with thanksgiving and did exactly what his father asked him to do. He could carry out his father's work as though it were his precisely because he had no righteousness of his own.

But what about the first son? Whatever the father was doing, he always insisted on his own thoughts. He was not pleased by what pleased his father. We must never be like this first son. The Lord has saved you and me. This Lord wants to save everyone in this world. He wants this gospel to be spread so that everyone would believe in it. He wants all people to come into God's Church. My fellow believers, the Lord bore all your sins and

mine and blotted them all out. He took them all away. He has thereby saved you and me, and He wants to save everyone else as well.

My fellow believers, our disposition must be that of a servant. Take a look at the second son. He said, *"I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants."* Like this prodigal son, our hearts must also be disposed like a servant. This means that although we are masters when it comes to the power of faith, our hearts' disposition must be that of a servant when we think of the grace of the Lord.

Our own righteousness is bound to be all broken whether we like it or not. All those whose own righteousness has been broken must hold onto the righteousness of the Lord. They must hold onto the gospel with which the Lord has made them sinless. They must serve this gospel only. Those whose own righteousness still has not been broken even after being saved must now realize through faith that they have no righteousness of their own. They must admit



this. Unless they admit this, they will continue to face problems down the road and therefore they will only have complaints to make.

Let us then truthfully follow the Lord by faith, live by faith, preach the gospel to all souls by faith, and lead these souls to the Lord by faith. Let us become such righteous people who live by faith. Let us not boast of our own virtues. Let us instead boast of the virtues of the Lord alone and His honor, and let us also be proud of the lack of our own virtues, our humility, and the Lord's exaltation. All of us must indeed become such people. As those aspiring to follow the Lord, it is absolutely indispensable for you and me to become such people.

My fellow believers, is there anything that we can boast of apart from the gospel of the Lord? No, there is none. It is also by the grace and blessings of the Lord that we are able to serve the Lord after receiving the remission of sins. This is not something that came about on our own. Rather, it's what the Lord has permitted to you and me. It's the

Lord who has used us as His workers. In today's Scripture passage, the Lord received the prodigal son in joy. Like this, you and I have found grace from the Lord. Truly, you and I are completely devoid of anything to boast of before the Lord. After having met the Lord, the longer I live in the Lord, the more clearly I recognize that I have nothing of which to boast. I have no reason at all to live for myself either. The more time goes by, the more my failings are revealed and the more the Lord is exalted. That is all that remains.

Is there anything exalted about us just as the Lord is exalted? Of course, you will all say with your words that there is none. But there are hidden thoughts in you that crave your own righteousness. We must cast aside even these hidden thoughts. If we practice virtues and righteousness, it is only by the strength the Lord has given us. Had the Lord not strengthened us, had He not entrusted us with His work, had He not blessed us to serve Him, and had He not given us the right faith, how else could we



have served the Lord? It is not by our own strength or our own virtues that we are serving the Lord. It's because the Lord has permitted us that we are able to serve the Lord, because He has given us God's Church and entrusted His work to us through this Church. In fact, I am just one of many servants of the Lord. This means that you and I are no different.

I had taken some rest due to my poor health and just returned to the Church only recently. As someone who is not even healthy, I have nothing to brag about. So I want to boast the Lord all the more, and I can't help but do so. I am just thankful that our Lord has made me sinless, and my only desire is to preach all over the world this gospel that has made us sinless. The Lord has given me such a desire. I am so thankful that the Lord has made me into someone who can't help but confess his insufficiencies, and who can't help but boast of the Lord's righteousness. I want all of you to also become such people. God will shape you into such people in the future.

My fellow believers, I admonish you with all my heart not to take pride in your own virtues. If you have any virtue at all, boast it just to yourself. Never boast it someone else. If you are indeed living for the Lord, then know that the Lord has blessed you with His grace for your sake. So let us all exalt the Lord in this way. Let us all live for Him.

This World Is Now Nearing Its End

My fellow believers, if we are still clinging to our own virtues, these virtues will crumble down when this world falls. So let us exalt the Lord rather than ourselves. Let us remember in our lives just how much the Lord has glorified us, how much He has done for us, and with how much grace He has clothed us. It's my sincerest hope and prayer that we would all thus live by faith. I have absolutely no desire to become like the first son here in today's Scripture passage. The one that we should strive to



emulate is the prodigal son who had gone out to the world but returned to God.

What happens when you receive the remission of sins and begin to lead a life of faith? Aren't your weaknesses and insufficiencies exposed even more, the more you lead your life of faith? It may be that not all your weaknesses and shortcomings were exposed clearly before, but are they not all revealed explicitly now? Will you then keep trying to hide these weaknesses that are exposed? Will you once again try to fill up your insufficiencies to make you whole on your own, or will you exalt the Lord instead? Won't you praise the Lord and follow Him by faith?

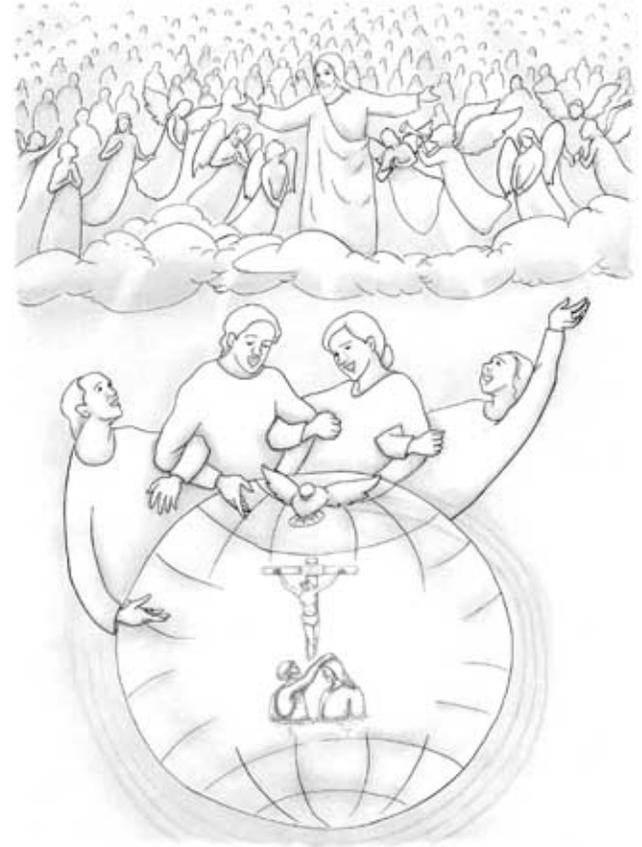
The way to our deliverance is not trying to fix our insufficiencies on our own to make ourselves perfect. The only way to our deliverance is recognizing our inadequacies just as they are, trusting in the Lord, and following Him. This is the only way for us to find deliverance, and this is the only way for us to give all glory to God. Let us

therefore all live by our faith in the Truth, that we are indeed completely devoid of any righteousness of our own and all that we have is the righteousness of God. ☒



SERMON

10



CONTENTS



Our Hope Is In the Eternal Kingdom

< Luke 16:1-13 >

“He also said to His disciples: ‘There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and an accusation was brought to him that this man was wasting his goods. So he called him and said to him, ‘What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward.’ Then the steward said within himself, ‘What shall I do? For my master is taking the stewardship away from me. I cannot dig; I am ashamed to beg. I have resolved what to do, that when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.’ So he called every one of his master’s debtors to him, and said to the first, ‘How much do you owe my master?’ And he said, ‘A hundred measures of

oil.’ So he said to him, ‘Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.’ Then he said to another, ‘And how much do you owe?’ So he said, ‘A hundred measures of wheat.’ And he said to him, ‘Take your bill, and write eighty.’ So the master commended the unjust steward because he had dealt shrewdly. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light. And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon, that when you fail, they may receive you into an everlasting home. He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much. Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if you have not been faithful in what is another man’s, who will give you what is your own? No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the



other. You cannot serve God and mammon.’”

What Kind of Kingdom Did God Give to Us?

It says in the Gospel of Matthew chapter 6 verse 33, *“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”* Our spiritual life is in seeking the authority and the righteousness of the Kingdom of God. The Lord told us to seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness. Where is the Kingdom of God? The Kingdom of God is where the people who have received the remission of sins are gathered. The Kingdom of God is the place where the righteous gather together to worship before the presence of God.

We must expand the Kingdom of God through God’s Church and live the life of seeking His righteousness. What is the righteousness of God? It

is the justness of God. It is the love of God that saved us from the sins of the world with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. God tells us to boast and seek the salvation that saved us from the sins of the world.

We live out our faith in the righteousness of God in order to practice two kinds of righteousness. One of them is the life of seeking the expansion of God’s Kingdom, and the other is the life of seeking the righteousness of God. Our righteousness should be aimed at boasting the righteousness of God, God’s goodness, and the Truth of the righteousness of God rather than our own righteousness. We can live by the faith because of the righteousness of God.

You and I must believe in God with the understanding of what the purpose of our life of faith is. We must live to build the Kingdom of God and lift up and boast His righteousness. Therefore, in a way, we who believe in the righteousness of God live a very different life compared to the people of the world. We put our efforts together to expand the



Kingdom of God instead of living for the world. We the righteous try hard to build the Kingdom of God instead of the kingdom in this world. There already are countless nations in this world in which they live. Therefore, we sometimes enter into a complete state of confusion while we live in this world. In such confusion, we sometimes contemplate for what we should live, for what purpose we should live the spiritual life in the future, and for what we should live. We think that the way we live in this world is not natural and somewhat strange too.

The Word from the Gospel of Luke that we have read today is the same too. This Word is about a certain steward. The steward thought about what would happen if the master came to the steward and told him that he wanted to see the account of his stewardship and found fraudulence. He would definitely be cast away. Therefore, the steward wrote off the debts of many people who were in debt to their master in order to prepare for a place to go to before he would be cast out by the master.

However, what does the Lord think about this steward? Our Lord said, “Those who live like this steward could be said to have lived a life more wisely than the children of the light.” The Lord said to the children of the light, “It is right for you to be faithful to the Kingdom of God that you will go and live in the future instead of being faithful to this world while living in this world.”

The Lord Told Us to Support the Construction of His Kingdom with the Unrighteous Mammon

Our Lord said, “How could I entrust such great work to one who is not faithful with material things.” He is saying that God would not give material things to a person who is not faithful to the Kingdom of God that he will enter and live eternally in the future. Therefore, we who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit live a new life of



righteousness that is different from people in this world. We live by faith in the righteousness of God. The people of this world live according to the principles of nature, but we live to build the Kingdom of God instead of living like that. Therefore, we live as the workers of righteousness for God's Kingdom. As you and I live in this world, we discern what the right way to live is. We can understand this instantly if we ponder on, "What do we live for when we live by faith?" However, we must be aware that there are times when we live an inadequate life without thinking about the proper faith.

Therefore, living in this world would be so arduous if we did not know that we were workers of the Kingdom of God. God saved us from the sins of the world with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We praise earnestly the righteousness of God that saved us from the sins of the world by believing in the righteousness of God, that God cleansed our sins by receiving the baptism from John the Baptist

unilaterally, saved us from the judgment of sins, and that He sits at the right hand of the throne of God and still helps us. God really loved us. Now, we must be thankful over and over again that we have become the workers who are called to build the Kingdom of God.

You and I are the workers for the Kingdom of God. We have been enlisted to do the work of building the Kingdom of God and you and I live all our lives for the righteousness of God because we are workers of the Kingdom of God. The housewives do laundry, do dishes, and cook food, while the husbands work in companies, make money, pray, and live the spiritual life. All these things are for building the Kingdom of God. You and I are living as the workers of the Kingdom of God.

The Lord says, "*But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.*" This Word is telling us to build the Church of God, as we know well. We build God's Church, bring souls and preach the gospel to them in order that they receive the



remission of sins. We have them stay in the Church and surrender to Jesus Christ our God, and make them praise, applaud, and serve Jesus Christ. We build the Kingdom of God to do these works. We live with such purpose.

The Gospel of Luke 15 tells us about the work of finding the lost souls with three parables. The first one is the parable of the sheep: “What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing.” The second one is the parable of the lost coin: “What woman, having ten drachma, if she loses one drachma, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? And when she has found it, wouldn’t she celebrate with her neighbors?” The third one is the parable of the lost son: “A second son went out to the world after receiving wealth from his father, and wasted it all and then returned home from the world. So, his

father rejoiced and celebrated because his son who was dead returned.”

All three of these parables are about saving lost souls by witnessing the gospel. These parables demand us to witness the gospel to the lost, bring them to God’s Church, have them receive the remission of sins, and praise Jesus Christ the King who saved them in the Church. The parable of the second son returning home after living a life of debauchery illustrates his seeking the righteousness of God in the Church. The second son implies God’s worker who does not have his own righteousness and does not have his own goodness, and all his own have been shattered and is even ashamed to return to the Father as a son. Therefore, he asks to become a servant. Such a worker, whose own righteousness has broken down completely, only boasts of the righteousness of God.



You and I Are Workers of God's Kingdom

You who are building the Kingdom of God must not boast of the righteousness of your own flesh after entering His Church. Instead, knowing that God has made you the workers of His Kingdom when your own righteousness all crushed down, you must be people who are thankful that you have been appointed as workers before the presence of God who work all your life to build the Kingdom of God. God has appointed us as workers who are faithful to the Kingdom of God. That is why we must be faithful to building the Kingdom of God and fill this world with the life of lifting up the righteousness of God.

Then, what is the blessing God gives to a person who seeks His Kingdom and His righteousness? It is that God will give us the Millennial Kingdom. The Millennial Kingdom is God's Kingdom that will be established on the earth. All our endeavor and

devotion to His Kingdom will be rewarded physically in the end. That is the Millennial Kingdom. God will establish His Kingdom that lasts one thousand years on this land. God establishes His Kingdom on this earth and gives reward and compensation for His workers who worked hard for the Kingdom of God and makes them enjoy His splendid glory. We should be rehearsing such glory in this world so that we would not die of heart attack because of sudden dose of excitement when we go to Heaven. God is considerate to let us have time to adjust ourselves in the new heaven and new land.

The Millennial Kingdom is the gift God gives to His workers who have worked hard to build the Kingdom of God. That is the new heaven and the new earth. We who have been born again do not live to build the kingdom that belongs to this earth. People who have received salvation do the work of building the Kingdom of God as they keep the laws and regulations of the society of this world. For this purpose, you and I who have received salvation



came into the Church and live with grace like this.

God said, “An unrighteous steward of the world has lived a life wiser than the life of the Son of God. If you were not faithful with unrighteous material wealth, who will entrust you with true riches?” God is saying, “How could God who is the original master of all material things entrust the material things to a person if he does not use the material things that he has for the work of building the Kingdom of God?” Referring to the example of the unrighteous steward, the Lord said that all the material things are His, that He has given the material things to the righteous, and that the righteous should manage them as good and shrewd stewards. How could God entrust us with the material things that would eventually perish if the righteous who have received salvation do not use the material things for building the Kingdom of God? God is saying that He would not give the resources if the workers who are constructing the Kingdom of God do not use them for building His Kingdom.

Therefore, God is saying to the righteous that they must live for building the Kingdom of God and that they must lift up and boast of His righteousness. Now, after receiving the remission of sins and coming into God’s Church, all our lives must be aimed at constructing the Kingdom of God. Therefore, we actually live for building the Kingdom of God and we live to lift up the righteousness of God now. We live for this purpose.

Do you have anything of your own to boast of? You will recognize that you have nothing to boast of in the flesh a few years after you have really received the remission of sins. You probably thought you were very smart before. But if you come to know more and go beyond your own righteousness, you will no longer have anything to boast about.

We have received the remission of sins and live for the righteousness of God. We should have something to boast of after receiving salvation and the remission of sins, and becoming righteous by believing in the baptism and the blood of Jesus.



However, God follows us around every moment, tramples the things to boast of, and breaks them down so that we would not have any human things to boast about. If that is not enough, God grinds them into powder and makes it swept away by the winds. Of course, it hurts every time you lose something to boast about. But, like the returned second son, only those who have no righteousness of their own can serve the Lord and His gospel with thankfulness from the bottom of their hearts.

If there is anything to boast of after coming into God's church, it is just the works that are done for the gospel. It is stacking up the bricks for building the Kingdom of God. Giving material things for the gospel is worth boasting about. They are worth boasting about because such a thing lifts up the righteousness of God and does not weaken them, even if we boast about them. There is nothing to boast of besides this.

In the matter of building the Kingdom of God in His Church, the standard for beauty lies in whether

or not a person devotes himself or herself to serving the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It means that anyone who works hard for building the Kingdom of God is handsome and beautiful. That is the standard of the Kingdom of God. This painful work of building the Kingdom of God is the only thing worthy of praise and boasting.

You and I are people who have been called and chosen to build the Kingdom of God. That is the purpose of God calling us. You and I live in this world with the purpose of building the Kingdom of God. We do not live for anything else. We must understand this clearly. We must believe it. We must go forth toward the signpost that God has set for us. Our adult brothers and sisters, members of youth meetings, members of junior high and high school group, Sunday school students, and the servants of God are all called to build the Kingdom of God.

That is the purpose of our life. That is why we give the material things to this ministry. That is the reason we pray. That is the reason we preach the



gospel. That is the reason we gather together. What is the purpose of living for you and me? It is building the Kingdom of God. If someone asks us, “What is the reason you live for?” we must say, “I am a worker chosen to build the Kingdom of God. Therefore, I am a worker who lives for the Kingdom of God,” and believe and live with this purpose.

Moreover, This Is the Age of the Confusion of Values

A certain economist said, “This is the age of uncertainty.” The international relations and politics are in disarray and the world economy is unstable. Not only the people of the world, but even the people who have been born again are prone to drown in chaos. This is the period when people do not know what to live for and do not follow God’s Word.

Even though people have sins, they just hide them as they live in this world. A certain sister

testified that she took a vacation from her spiritual life because she was disappointed with her life of faith and put her sins deep in a certain storage room because she could not do anything with them. Then, she said that her face trembled and she became so upset when a person who has received salvation came to her one day and revealed her sins that were hidden deep inside. Later, she said that she admitted that she had sins and received the gospel of the water and the Spirit and thereby received the remission of sins. Like this, whoever wants to be saved should admit his or her sins before the Word of God, but people of this age do not want their sins revealed even before God.

We are people who have been called as God’s workers to build the Kingdom of God in this era. We have the duty of the workers who find the lost sheep of God, make them receive salvation by preaching the gospel to them, building the Kingdom of God, and gathering the people of the Kingdom of God. In other words, the work we must do in these end times



is to look for the lost people, witness the gospel to them, and bring them back to God. It says that there were one hundred sheep and one was lost. There are so many people in this world, and among them, there is a person like the one sheep that is lost. We must search for that lost sheep everywhere and look for it carefully. We must look and see carefully whether the lost sheep is hidden underneath the carpet, inside the garbage can, on the shelf, stuck on a pot, or inside the wall closet. You and I must do the work of finding the lost soul because we are God's workers. We live for this work.

It is very hard to find the lost sheep because the lost people are rare although there are so many people in the world. We leave the ninety-nine sheep, and go out to look for one sheep. We search all over the house for one drachma that is lost. We must go to this country and that country through literature ministry. That is the life of the workers who are building the Kingdom of God. We must seek the lost person. You and I must do that work.

Our life has already been decided. Your life and my life have already been decided. Whatever I do, I do it passionately. I will write many books. I want to be passionate for the work of seeking the lost souls. I will choose titles of my books carefully and make the cover art neatly, and go around distributing them and witnessing the gospel.

I don't want to do this alone. You and I must do this together. I am saying that we must look for the lost sheep together. Let's go to this corner and that corner. Even if we just passed by, our hearts would become passionate for the salvation of those neighborhoods. Then, God will save the souls in those regions. In addition, even though it may not be right away, they will some day receive the remission of sins. We must go out and look for the lost souls. We must go out and look for them even if those souls do not return to God. You and I must do this work. Fleshly sheep will not want to return if the field is wide and the pasture is green. However, there will be a lost sheep among them that is in



difficulty. We must look for those souls. You and I who have become God's workers must do that work.

Let's build the Kingdom of God together. Let's live the life of seeking the righteousness of God. We live only for this work since we have been called for God's work. Nothing can satisfy us. There would not be satisfaction even if we published tens of thousands of books. We were really happy when we first published our first book, but it does not satisfy us now that many books have been published.

Is there a true satisfaction? There is no satisfaction in the work of the world. There are people who live for the enjoyment of making money, but there is no satisfaction even if they make much money. There are people who live for the enjoyment of studying. There is no satisfaction for them no matter how passionately they do this. The only thing that could give us satisfaction is bringing in a lost soul to the Church. This is the only work that we who have become God's workers must do and that is the only work that gives satisfaction in the end.

I believe that we must seek after the lost souls until the Millennial Kingdom comes after the end of the earth, until the Lord comes, and until we go before the presence of the Lord. That is the work God's Church must do, the work you and I who have received salvation, who have become the workers for building the Kingdom of God, must do. We must live only for this.

I really have a desire not to do anything absurd outside of this. I do not want you, all saints, to live for any other thing. I believe that God will entrust us with even more material wealth and blessings while we live in this world if we live the life of a worker for the Kingdom of God and live to save the lost souls.

As I read this Word, I believe that becoming wealthy is simple. You do not become rich by trying hard. God entrusts more to a person who works more faithfully for God. The thing you and I who have received salvation must do is doing our best to build the Kingdom of God. We must live for



building the Kingdom of God, and live the life of seeking and boasting the righteousness of God. I reiterate again that our life is seeking the righteousness of God and living for the Kingdom of God. I believe that you will also do like that. You are lacking but it is God's providence to make you live the life of seeking the righteousness of God. God made you and me receive salvation and made us dwell in this Church. It is to make us live as workers to build the Kingdom of God. Many people do not come to Church after receiving salvation. Such people will never become rich. They will be destroyed. I know this even though I don't see this. The end of those who seek the path of evil is obvious. The work you and I, who have received the remission of sins, must do is the work of building the Kingdom of God and seeking the righteousness of God. That is the goal and the purpose we have to seek all our lives. There is nothing else.

I often preach sermons with dual points. Today's sermon is one of them. The second point of this

sermon is this: The secret to becoming rich is joining our hearts with the Church and serving to build the Kingdom of God. Then, you will become rich even if you do not want to. This does not fit the logic of this world, but it fits God's principle. The logic of the world is that you become poor when you serve more, but God's principle is that you become rich when you serve even more. I was able to know this clearly after meeting and serving the Lord. God made me preach the gospel instead of making me earn money, and I became better off when I chose to do the work of God. Love is serving. It is giving. Becoming rich when you share and becoming poor when you hold onto it; that is God's principle. It is really strange. You lose that much more when you do not invest in the work of God, and you attain even more when you invest in it. That is the principle of the Kingdom of God.

I do not want to exploit your material wealth. Rather, I want to live well together with you as we build the Kingdom of God in this world. God has



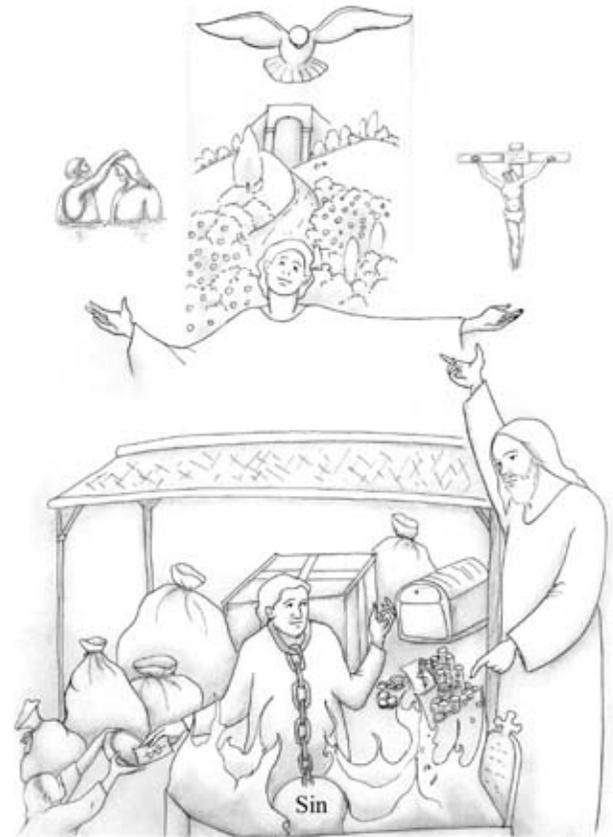
called you and me as the workers to build the Kingdom of God. The Lord said, “*But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.*” God made us live for these two things. He promised us that we would become well off when we live for these purpose. I believe this Word.

I give sincere thanks to God for making us live for the Kingdom of God like this, even though we have nothing to boast of, and made us seek the righteousness of God. We do not have anything to boast of fleshly. However, we have testimony in our lives and we have something to boast of if we have sought the righteousness for the Kingdom of God. Therefore, we must live the life of building the Kingdom of God and seeking the righteousness of God unchangingly. ☒



SERMON

11



CONTENTS



Make Friends for Yourselves by Unrighteous Mammon

< Luke 16:1-13 >

“He also said to His disciples: ‘There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and an accusation was brought to him that this man was wasting his goods. So he called him and said to him, ‘What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward.’ Then the steward said within himself, ‘What shall I do? For my master is taking the stewardship away from me. I cannot dig; I am ashamed to beg. I have resolved what to do, that when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.’ So he called every one of his master’s debtors to him, and said to the first, ‘How much do you owe my

master?’ And he said, ‘A hundred measures of oil.’ So he said to him, ‘Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.’ Then he said to another, ‘And how much do you owe?’ So he said, ‘A hundred measures of wheat.’ And he said to him, ‘Take your bill, and write eighty.’ So the master commended the unjust steward because he had dealt shrewdly. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light. And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon, that when you fail, they may receive you into an everlasting home. He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much. Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if you have not been faithful in what is another man’s, who will give you what is your own? No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or



else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”

Should I Serve the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit by Using Unrighteous Mammon?

We can realize our insufficiencies if we discern the light from darkness in our lives and examine whether or not we are living in the light or in darkness. When we examine our lives before God, many flaws and shortcomings are exposed. However, when we transferred them all to the Lord, He saved us and gave us an opportunity to serve His righteousness. Even though we are too insufficient to lead our lives as the light of this world as perfectly as Jesus or the Apostle Paul did, when it comes to serving the Lord and being faithful to God, who has given us the grace of salvation and faith, we ought to be as faithful as God has apportioned us.

In today’s Scripture passage, Jesus taught His disciples through a parable: *“There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and an accusation was brought to him that this man was wasting his goods. So he called him and said to him, ‘What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward.’”*

My fellow believers, just as we are insufficient, so was the steward here wasteful and insufficient. Even though we have received blessings from the Lord in His time, in both body and spirit, we are insufficient people who don’t measure up to these blessings. The steward heard from his master that he would be fired. His stewardship was about to be taken away from him because his master had heard that he was wasting his possessions. Knowing that he would have to make a living elsewhere if fired, the steward became worried about how he could make his ends meet. With this in mind he called and gathered together his master’s debtors and told them to calculate how much debt they owed him.

He asked one of the debtors, “How much do you owe to my master?”

“A hundred measures of oil.”

“Then write fifty quickly while I am still the steward.” Then the steward said to another debtor, “How much do you owe?”

“A hundred measures of wheat.”

“Take your bill, and write eighty.” In this way, the steward reduced the amount owed by the debtors.

For whom did the steward take such an action? Was it for his master? No, it was for himself. He knew that he was about to be fired by his master and would have to make a living elsewhere, and so he thought that if he did a favor to his master’s debtors by forgiving some of their debts while he still had his stewardship, these people would take care of him later.

Our Lord said that though the steward’s actions were unjust, he was wise. Those who have not received the remission of sins yet are faithful to the world. That’s because they think that this world is their home. So it may seem as though the children of

darkness who are faithful to the world are wiser. But what about us? As those who have received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, to whom should we be faithful? Where should our allegiance lie while we the born-again are living in this world? Should we be faithful to God or the world that persecutes us?”

Our Lord told us to make friends by unrighteous mammon. This world has uprooted the redeemed and cast them out. We are not welcomed by worldly people, for we are not faithful to the world as they are. Therefore, even though our bodies are living in this world, at least our hearts must be faithful to God. A wise life is one that’s faithful to God with all the heart. This is the lesson today’s Scripture passage is teaching us. Through the parable of the unjust steward, the Lord is teaching us clearly where we should place our allegiance.

How should we then demonstrate this allegiance? My fellow believers, when we examine our hearts and thoughts before God, neither is that virtuous.



Although some of them are spiritual, there are many aspects that are not spiritual. When we look at such shortcomings, we have neither any excuse before God nor any face. The wise thing for us to do is to be faithful to Jesus, the Master of the Kingdom of God where we will go and live, with everything that He has permitted us in this world, including the possessions and time that He has given us. This world is not our everlasting home. God Almighty will transform the born-again into glorious bodies and make them live forever in the Kingdom of the Lord. It is not in this world that we will live forever. To whom then should we be faithful? We should be faithful to God. We are the Lord's stewards. A steward should manage his master's assets wisely according to his wishes rather than squandering them. He has the duty to manage them wisely both for himself and his master.

Whom should we then serve in our lives? Whom should we serve with all the possessions, time, thoughts, minds, strength, and circumstances that the

Lord has permitted to us? It's none other than the Lord. We must be faithful to the Lord always. That is the proper life for us the born-again. As those who have been entrusted with the things of the world to take care of them temporarily, what's the wise way for us to live? We should be faithful to the Kingdom of God. Our allegiance should lie with the kingdom where we will enter and live in the future, and with our fellow saints. Do you understand what I am saying here?

What does it mean that we should make friends by unrighteous mammon? The things of the world are all unrighteous. What did the Lord say we should do with them? He told us to make friends with them, so "when you fail, they may receive you into an everlasting home." If we spend what our Lord has given us on the spreading of the gospel, there is no faithfulness to the Lord that is greater than this. Faithfulness is what's demanded from every steward. All of us must think carefully about the light and darkness, and we must grasp which way is the wise

way to live. What is the wise course to take? A wise life in this world is not one that's lived for the world, but one that's lived for the Kingdom of God. What should we do to live the rest of our lives in this world wisely? If we were faithful to this world and society, and accumulate all the possessions and treasures in this world, would we be able to take them all when we move onto the next world? No, that's not the case. We should make use of what God has permitted us on this earth until the day we go to the Kingdom of Heaven. When we enter Heaven, the Lord will reward us for our faithfulness, saying to us, *"Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things"* (Matthew 25:21).

We Will Go to Heaven and Live There for Eternity

God will transform our weak bodies into

glorious bodies and we will enter His Kingdom and live there. We are now living as the redeemed, as those who have received the remission of sins. Even though our thoughts and minds are truly evil, the Lord has entrusted such insufficient people like us with an extremely important task. This task is none other than serving the gospel of the Lord. If we preach this gospel, the precious Word of God, many people will receive the remission of sins. The Lord has entrusted such a great and glorious work to us.

My fellow believers, to where should we be faithful? Should we be faithful to this earth and this world? Or should we be faithful to the Kingdom of God? We should be faithful to the kingdom where we will go and live in the future—that is, we should spread the gospel so that many more people would be born again, and we should please the King of the kingdom where the born-again will enter and live. That's the wise life. We need to reconsider here what is the wise way for us to live the rest of our lives.



We have received the remission of sins. We are God's own people. Just as the Word of God says, "You are citizens of Heaven," we are indeed citizens of Heaven. We are the saints of the Most Exalted. We are the people of the Kingdom of Heaven. Our lives should therefore be faithful to our kingdom. Such a life is the life of the wise.

That's what today's Scripture passage teaches us. The Lord continued on to say, "*No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.*" Through this parable, the Lord is telling us to live wisely while in this world, teaching us that we should not serve both mammon and the Lord as though we were serving two masters. To live wisely is to please the Lord, the Master of our future kingdom. Do you believe in this?

For what should we live the rest of our lives? No matter how much one invests in the world, how much charity work he does with orphanages and

social services, and how much he helps the less fortunate around him, unless he receives the remission of sins, he cannot avoid being cast into hell in the end. Unless you receive the remission of sins and are born again, God does not recognize any of your good deeds in this world. Amassing the riches of this earth by being faithful to it is not serving the Lord; it is just being faithful to this world, even if you were to donate \$500 million on your deathbed to establish a scholarship so that the less fortunate children can get an education. Such deeds have nothing to do with God.

If you offer God, who has saved your soul, even a small amount from your possessions to expand His Kingdom—say, \$500—you will surely be rewarded for this. If you don't have that much money and offer an amount that's even smaller than this, you will still be rewarded. If someone lived to spread the gospel of the Lord and expand the Kingdom of God within his means rather than serving the world, then this person would have led a wise life. It's such



people whom God blesses, saying to them, *“Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things.”* When the Lord comes again, He will praise those who have been serving the gospel faithfully, saying, *“Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me”* (Matthew 25:34-36). Like this, if we live for the people of God, try our best to lead sinners to receive the remission of sins, and use everything the Lord has given us for this purpose, the Lord will compensate us fully.

What is living wisely then? It’s all about faithfully carrying out the pleasures of the King of the kingdom where one will go and live. The unrighteous steward, knowing that he would be cast out by his master, reduced the debts of the master’s

debtors. To whom was this steward faithful? He was faithful to himself. The Lord said that this man was wise.

The Lord said, “Make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon.” We must be faithful to the Kingdom of God and the spreading of the gospel. Do we have enough faculties to do this? Are we 100 percent perfect and holy? Although we’ve been made perfect by believing in the Lord, are all our acts also perfect? Are our minds and thoughts perfect? Are our plans perfect? We have many insufficiencies. How can people like us then be approved by God and live wisely? There is no other way but to be faithful to the Kingdom of God.

Being faithful does not mean that you have to offer everything. Rather, it means doing your best to fulfill your assigned task and carrying out the pleasures of the King of the kingdom where you will go and live, and this is done for yourself. This is what is meant by faithfulness.

The Bible has many seemingly strange passages.



Today's Scripture passage is one such instance; it commends a liar for being wise. When I was in seminary, I was given an assignment to write three sermons based on this passage. But when I read the passage back then, I couldn't understand why Jesus said that the steward was wise even though he had lied. So I turned to a commentary and copied it off as it was, and I just got a passing mark for turning in this assignment.

Today's Scripture passage speaks to the born-again clearly: Live faithfully; live wisely; and do not live in vain. Even though you may have no possession now, you must still live a wise life. You should live wisely for yourself. You should live for the kingdom where you will go and live in the future. You should live for the reward that you will receive when you go to this kingdom. So, my fellow believers, do not let your allegiance lie with useless things.

Some mothers are so protective of their children that they give all kinds of gifts to their children's

teachers, including money. But do you know how these mothers treat God's Church? Even as they cozy up to their children's teachers with their gifts, when it comes to God's Church, they neglect it with indifference. If you are one of them, stop behaving like this. It's so foolish. Don't live a foolish life. You have to realize where your allegiance should lie. Strictly speaking, it's foolish for you to live for yourself just fleshly and amass riches on this earth. If we use our wealth appropriately according to our spiritual desires, then it would be wise, but it is foolish to accumulate so many riches in this world that they cannot even be spent in our lifetime.

I once heard of an old woman in the United States who, upon her death, was discovered to have stashed away hundreds of thousands of dollars under the carpet of her home. But the cause of her death was malnutrition. What a foolish act was this? Who will spend all this money? As the woman died without any kin, the government took the money and spent it on a public project. It's foolish. Do you want



to accumulate your wealth on this earth? When this world burns during the Great Tribulation, it will burn together.

Think about it carefully. What kind of life is the most worthwhile for us to lead on this earth? It is one that is lived for oneself. Serving the gospel is also for our own sake. We will be commended and rewarded by the Lord, the King of Heaven, for having spread the gospel diligently in our lives. There is the Millennial Kingdom waiting for us. We have to live properly for our own sake. We have to live for ourselves rather than for anyone else. Is this too strange for you? But strictly speaking, this is right.

My soul and body will be transformed to live in the Kingdom of the Lord for eternity. That's why I am preaching the gospel, so that I can gather more people to live with me. There are so few people who will live in that kingdom with me. So I am spreading the gospel diligently. I believe that the Lord will never put the faithful together with the unfaithful.

Although I do not know exactly when the Lord will reward me with the Millennial Kingdom, I believe that this reward is coming for sure. I believe that seeking the Lord's interest is seeking my own interest. I am convinced that when the saints seek the Lord's interest and serve the gospel, they are in fact serving the interest of their own families and descendants. Believing in God is in one's own interest. We must believe in God in order to receive the remission of sins and enter Heaven. We must live wisely. Do not be faithful to useless things. You must live a wise life.

Jesus Told Us to Make Friends by Unrighteous Mammon

Jesus told us to make friends by unrighteous mammon. Even making friends requires money. Without money it's difficult to not only make a living but also to maintain personal relationships.



It's hard to make friends. So you have to make money to make friends. You have to make money to preach the gospel to your friends. Spreading the gospel inevitably requires the money that the Lord has given us in this world. Why must our saints make money on this earth? It's to spread the gospel and make friends. Money should not be made in a wicked way. It should be made in a way that neither breaks the law nor bothers your conscience, and with this money you should serve the gospel.

The reason why the saints must work diligently to make money on this earth is to make spiritual friends. Try spending your hard-earned money on your friends for the sake of the gospel, treating them to a nice dinner and taking the opportunity to bear witness of the gospel to them. In all likelihood, this will aid you in preaching the gospel to them. But if you just try to preach the gospel to them without spending any money, it won't make a dent.

We need to remember here that the Lord told us to live wisely. To live a wise life, we need to make

money. We have to do our best to make money in order to spread the gospel. A hundred thousand dollars that are spent for the world are worthless. But if \$100,000 is spent for the gospel, it will bear fruit by ten-fold and a hundred-fold. If you drink in a fancy bar and tip the bartender \$100, you won't likely hear any thanks. But if you spend \$100 for the gospel of the Lord, no one will complain from behind your back, but this money will be used for a truly worthy cause. Like this, you should spend your hard-earned money wisely.

Through today's Scripture passage the Lord has told us clearly, "*Make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon.*" Money is indeed important in spreading the gospel. Of course, the gospel cannot be spread only by money. Also needed are faith, prayers, God's Church, spiritual readers, faithful workers, various tools such as books and computers, and so on. But that doesn't change the fact that money is also necessary to spread the gospel. We must carry out this work faithfully. Put differently,



rather than being faithful to anything else, we should spend our possessions for the Lord, for the spreading of the gospel, just as we have one Master to serve. The Bible says, *“The wicked borrows and does not repay, But the righteous shows mercy and gives”* (Psalm 37:21). The righteous are eager to give. This is their disposition. Jesus said that those who give are more blessed than those who receive.

Except for full-time ministers, everyone must make money. Strictly speaking, even the full-time ministers should make money to serve the gospel just like the Apostle Paul did. Everyone must know how to spend it appropriately on his family and the Church. If you and I were to hang onto our money as though we would live for a thousand and ten thousand years on this earth, we will never be able to serve the gospel. This is serving the world. Between the gospel and the world, which will we serve more? The wise thing for us to do is to set aside some of our possessions for essential needs such as living expenses for our families and the education of our

children, and spend the rest on the gospel.

At the end of our lives, we will look back and see how we led our lives before God. Whatever little that was given, those who used it appropriately before the Lord will receive the glorious crown of righteousness, but those who lived for the world will face punishment rather than a crown. Such people will be scorched by the Lord, saying to them, “Why did you live just for your flesh when I entrusted you with My righteous work?”

A wise life is one that’s faithful to the gospel. The Bible says that whatever we do, whether we eat or drink, we should do everything for the Lord. The Lord is demanding our loyalty. Even though every human being is weak and insufficient, those who are faithful follow the Lord with all their strength, and the Lord will commend whoever serves Him to the best of his abilities regardless of whether his service is good or poor. However, if one hides his possessions for himself even if he has plenty of wealth to share, he is not being faithful to the Lord,



nor is he wise.

We ought to live wisely. When we turn to the Pauline Epistles, we see that there were certain brothers and sisters who followed the Apostle Paul and served him and his ministry. The Churches Paul had served with God's Word should have served him, but some brothers and sisters who followed him did so instead of these Churches. The Apostle Paul called such people His coworkers, describing them as the workers of righteousness, his brethren, and God's messengers. Although these people did not preach the gospel themselves, they had worked with the Apostle Paul to raise financial resources for his ministry. It is because of their faithfulness that the Apostle Paul called them God's messengers.

My fellow believers, I ask you to work hard for the gospel. I wish you prosperity. At the same time, however, don't just try to prosper for yourself, but live for the gospel.

Some people take a look at church members and think to themselves, "It looks like everyone in the

Church is poor and I am the only one who is rich. I'd have to give up everything for equalization." So they stop attending the Church. Such people are not faithful. Does anyone in the Church ever demand that they give up all their possessions? No, of course not! God knows very well that we all have to take care of our families and provide for their basic needs of food and clothing. Do I ever say to our brothers and sisters to make a lot of donations because they are rich? No, this is just what someone greedy thinks on his own. Regardless of how much or little we have, as long as we have the God-given health, time, and intelligence, the proper thing for us to do is to work hard to make money, and spend this money to serve the Lord and spread the gospel. The right thing to do, in other words, is serving the Lord to the best of our abilities.

Those who have the means should serve the Lord diligently in the fields that they can best serve Him. Some people say that although they want to serve the Lord faithfully, they can't do this because



they don't have any money. But money is not the problem; anyone can make it. Our Lord said that deep poverty abounded in the riches of liberality. The less your heart is set on the world, the more it is set on God. However, if your mind is set more on the world, then relatively speaking, your offerings to God will become less.

My fellow believers, if you and I are not engaged in the ministry of God on a full-time basis, then we should work hard to make as much money as possible in this world. Money is such that if the born-again are really determined to get it, and they do their best and pray to God, then they can succeed better than anyone else. Is there anyone among us who can't make any money? If I had not gone into ministry, I could have worked hard and made a lot of money no matter how hard it might be. If one were absolutely determined to serve the gospel materially, he could make at least \$2,000 - \$3,000 a month. Money is always on the move, circulating from one person to the next. All you have to do is just grab it.

You can all do this. So, my fellow believers, I admonish you all to work diligently, make a lot of money, and live a wise life by spending this money not just for yourself but also for the gospel.

Many people nowadays are having a hard time trying to make money because their educational credentials are too high. One can make and save money better if he is simple and ignorant. People give up after trying just a bit because they want to live for themselves and they do everything only for themselves. If it's for the gospel, you must work with all diligence and dedication. Only then does \$10 turn into \$1,000, and then turns into \$10,000. The Bible says that the ministers who give up their bodies for the gospel, for their kingdom, are blessed. But if the ministers of this kingdom eat and drink only for their own welfare, the Bible says that they will face a great woe.

My fellow believers, you must be diligent. Don't be indolent to waste away your days. If you work hard for a day, you could make at least \$50, but if



you sit around at home doing nothing as a lazy man saying, “*There is a lion in the road! A fierce lion is in the streets!*” then poverty will visit you like a hungry lion in no time (Proverbs 26:13). How will you find any time to preach the gospel if you are lazy? There are so many different places where you can go and preach the gospel according to the times: If it’s cold and windy, you can go to hospitals to preach; if it’s too hot and humid, you can go to the air-conditioned banks to preach. Today and tomorrow, there are many places where you can go to bear witness. If you spread the gospel to the souls in every corner of the world who haven’t been saved, your life would be far more worthwhile than just living in indolence.

My fellow believers, we need to make money with a determination. Jesus told us to make friends by unrighteous mammon. Money, too, should be made for God and for souls. When we spend the money, it should be spent for ourselves and souls. That is wise. Work hard to make money for God’s

sake and the sake of other souls. Spend it for yourself, and for the gospel. This is the truly wise life before the Lord. Don’t try to make money just for yourself, but instead, pray to God, saying, “Lord, help me make a lot of money. Help me serve the gospel as much as I can.”

We must live wisely. What merit do we have? All that we have is that we have received the remission of sins. Even if we were holy, what benefit would this bring to God, and even if we sinned, what harm would this do God? However, God has saved us and He has something that He wants from us, His saved people. He desires our loyalty. Even though we are insufficient, He wants us to be faithful to Him. For whose sake? For the sake of the King, God’s Kingdom, and other souls. Although we will all be rewarded for our faithfulness in the end, that is not why we are faithful to God. Live a worthwhile life. There isn’t much time left to your life; live it for a worthwhile cause while you still can.



Our lives are like a river. As the river flows, so does life go by fast. Christmas is just around the corner, and we will soon bid farewell to this year and give New Year's greetings to each other. Time will continue to pass by us like this, and soon flowers will blossom in the hills, summer will be here in no time, and it will be time for our summer discipleship training camp. Autumn will then be upon us with its falling leaves, and we will be once again holding another winter discipleship training camp. We will then add another year to our age.

If a paper boat is floated at Inje Discipleship Training Center on the river that passes by it, it will soon flow down here. It doesn't take much time for the water to flow from Inje to here. Once time passes by, you cannot turn it around. That is why we must live each and every day wisely. We must live wisely without relying on others. Though you were born from your parents, don't go to them with hat in hand. You should be thankful to them for having raised you this far.

My fellow believers, I admonish you all to live wisely. I ask you to be faithful to God. Only those who are faithful to God do not serve this world, and those who serve the Lord can be truly faithful to God. Those who are too attached to the things of the world cannot be completely faithful to God, nor can they receive His blessings.

God listens and pays attention to the prayers of those who are faithful to His work, and He is deeply interested in everything that's related to them. He bestowed His grace on them. However, if we don't carry out God's work after being saved, and we are not only unfaithful to the work of the Lord but even give up on it, then God will also give up on us. He will say, "Since you are not interested in Me, I have no interest in you either. I'll see you at the end."

Why would God be interested in anyone who doesn't even fulfill the small task that's been entrusted to him? We see with our own eyes that even if one is insufficient, if he attends the Church and serves the Lord faithfully in whatever way



possible, then God blesses him no matter how well or poorly he does his job, and He bestows His grace on him when he prays to Him for his needs.

The life of the light is led for Heaven, for other souls, for the gospel, and for the Lord. It is not led for oneself. It is neither led for the earth nor for the world. Jesus told us to make friends by unrighteous mammon. If we don't serve the Lord with our bodies and our possessions, they will be used to commit sin. Unless we use our bodies and our possessions for the Lord, we will all invariably spend them on useless things. That is why the Lord told us to make friends by unrighteous mammon.

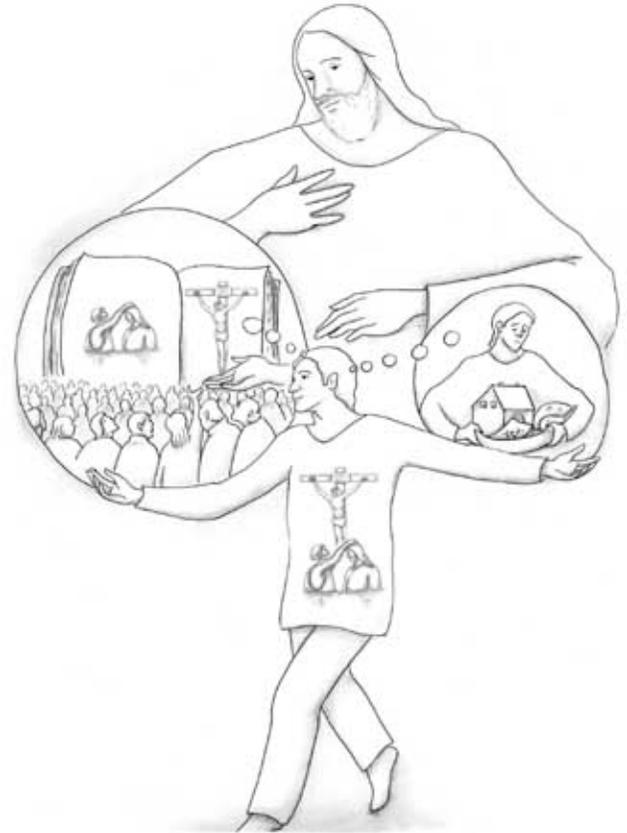
We must lead our lives wisely and faithfully. Turn around and examine your life to see what it is that's really wise. Once your life passes by you, it will never return. So, my fellow believers, let us all live faithfully. Let us live wisely. When given a choice, let us do the kind of work that will elicit God's approval and blessings. Let us not invest too much of our lives into the useless things of this

world rather than serving the Lord. Just as the Word of God tells us to make friends by unrighteous mammon, I pray to the Lord that He will give us the wisdom to indeed make friends by unrighteous mammon and use the things of this world, our bodies, our minds, and our possessions for a precious cause before God. ☒



SERMON

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True Salvation That Never Changes

< Luke 16:14-17 >

“Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, also heard all these things, and they derided Him. And He said to them, ‘You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God. The law and the prophets were until John. Since that time, the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is pressing into it. And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one title of the law to fail.’”

What Kind of Salvation Does Not Change?

I want us to think about a few things through today’s Scripture passage. The Lord said to the Pharisees, *“You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God.”*

Prior to this passage, the Lord spoke through the parable of the wise steward that a servant cannot serve two masters; he cannot serve both God and mammon. Then, the Pharisees felt uncomfortable in their hearts as they heard the parable and the teaching of Jesus Christ. Therefore, they slandered Jesus and sneered at Him. So Jesus said to such Pharisees, *“You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God.”*

Pharisees were people who were recognized



religiously. They believed in afterlife and God's Law and tried hard to obey the Law. Therefore, Israelites admired the Pharisees because their outward appearances also seemed very holy. They were exalted before all the people. Jesus said to them, *"What is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God."*

Jesus would not have disliked the Pharisees if they had accepted the Word of God's Truth, that is, the Word of Jesus Christ and tried to learn from His teaching. Jesus would have loved them even more if they were lifted up and they received admiration from people because their hearts were like that. However, the Pharisees did not receive love and admiration from Jesus Christ.

Actually, the Pharisees hated Jesus the most. The relationship between the Pharisees and Jesus was antagonistic. Pharisees were people who received much admiration from people for believing in God. Ironically however, the Pharisees did not accept the Word of Jesus Christ when Jesus, the true God,

came to this world. The Pharisees could not accept the Word of Jesus that said, *"No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon"* (Luke 16:13). It is because the Pharisees were people who only liked material things even though they were upright religiously. That is why Jesus sneered at them, saying, *"For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God."*

This Word is also saying that we could be hated by the people of the world if we believed the Word of God's Truth. However, it is the hate from the false believers. In other words, we could be hated by the false prophets and their followers if we believe in God's Word, but we are lifted up and are approved by them if we do not believe in the Word of the righteousness of God and we are instead faithful to the worldly religion. Jesus said clearly that those who are lifted up among the people are



hated before the presence of God. Those who have heard the gospel of the water and the Spirit in the gospel class of this discipleship training camp and received the remission of sins must definitely remember this.

Even at this moment, I know there are many people that you admire and some who are admired by many people. Of course, there probably are some people who think there would not be anyone who admire him or her because the person doesn't think himself or herself to be somebody special. However, that is not true. Someone that you do not know admires and loves you for some reason. The reason is that you know the gospel, the Word of the Truth. You deserve to receive such admiration and love because you have truly realized the gospel and received it in your hearts instead of just hearing and knowing the gospel. You are people who have become truly born again.

We can find the meaning of being born again in the Word, *“For with the heart one believes unto*

righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Romans 10:10). It means that a person can believe in the gospel with his heart when a person comes to know the Word of the Truth clearly. Such a person acknowledges that he was a sinner based on the Word of the Truth. He comes to realize that although he was a being destined to go to hell because of the sins he has committed and will commit, the Lord came to this world to save such a person, took all his sins upon Him by receiving the baptism from John the Baptist, and remitted all his sins and saved him through His death on the Cross and His resurrection. He has experienced with his heart that Jesus Christ became the perfect Savior for him. That is truly faith, salvation, and being born again.

The Gospel of John chapter 8 in the New Testament says, *“And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”* The ‘Truth’ here means the Truth of salvation. Salvation that we are talking about here is the salvation humans receive



after recognizing that they cannot but go to hell because of sins, at the moment of believing that Jesus Christ received the baptism from John the Baptist to save us from sins and that He saved us with the blood of the Cross. Receiving salvation from sins like this is the beginning of new faith and we become born again with a new life at that moment.

Now, You Are New Creatures and You Can Begin Anew

I am sure that some among you were admired before many people. However, you must understand that you will be hated by Jesus if you are reluctant to be freed from receiving such admiration and love. On the other hand, you will be lifted up high if you are hated by the people of the world because you believe in the Word of the Truth God has spoken. Actually, many people who have been held in high

esteem by other people, struggle with the matter of being hated by the people because of the gospel after being born again, and eventually go to hell because they give up following the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Therefore, Jesus Christ said, “Whoever goes through the wide road is going on the path of destruction. Choose the narrow path. It is dangerous and many people do not go through the narrow road. However, those who want to go on the path of life must try hard to enter the Kingdom of God through the narrow path and enter through it. Then, the Lord will be with you, lead you, and love you even though you will be hated by people at times.” People who have met the Lord actually experience such things frequently.

Many theologians or laypersons throughout the world say that Christianity must be reformed. They are saying that there must be a religious reformation like that of Martin Luther. However, most do not know how the reformation must happen and how we must change our behaviors and doctrines.



However, the true reformation of faith must be like this: The reformation of true faith and returning to the gospel of water and the Spirit, which is God's righteousness, is to realize the Truth of the true salvation, and accept it in our hearts exactly as it is. By doing so, we can be born again from sins and lead the unrighteous world to the light of the Truth. We who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit are the light of the world. True reformation of faith cannot manifest, no matter how Christianity changes its outward appearance and rituals, if it does not accept the Truth that our Lord Jesus who made us become born again through the water and the Spirit is the true God. It cannot be reformed through such people no matter how many Bible passages they memorize, speak holy words well, and receive so much outward love. It means that they must understand God's Word correctly in order for their inner faith to be reformed, and that just reforming outwardly does not have much use.

Their outward appearances also can be changed

naturally if their hearts change through the gospel of the water and the Spirit and their hearts become righteous as ours did. It is the same as the fact that our laughter sounds exaggerated and empty when we just laugh on the outside, but we can feel the energy of faith when the laughter comes out from our hearts with faith. Such peace and joy that comes from the gospel of water and the Spirit is different from the joy that comes from the world. True faith is definitely different from fullness of emotion. Therefore, it has been decided already whether our faith will receive love from God or receive hate from people.

I really congratulate you and give thanks to God for the fact that you have received the remission of sins at this time. You are the people who have actually received the remission of sins by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit, but I think I am happier than you for that. That is because we have the Holy Spirit in our hearts. You have heard, understood, and believed the gospel of the water and



the Spirit and received the remission of sins because you are adults who have already established your own identity. However, those who are still children are a little different. You must teach and guide the faith of your little children with the Truth well. It is because children depend and follow the word of their parents who gave them birth.

The Lord said, *“The law and the prophets were until John. Since that time the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is pressing into it.”* *“The law and the prophets were until John”* means that when humankind was created in this world and they were at the doorsteps of death because they ate the fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil due to the temptation of Satan the Devil, God promised the Word of salvation when humans were about to be destroyed. Furthermore, He said, *“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel”* (Genesis 3:15). At that time, God said to humankind that

committed sin and fell into sins and destruction, *“The Savior will come as a descendant of a woman and save all humankind.”* To accomplish His promise, He gave the Law to the people of Israel. God gave the Law and then gave the sacrificial system of the Tabernacle. Then, He sent the prophets to the people of Israel. Those prophets, without exception, rebuked the sins of the Israelites and pointed out that the Messiah would come in the future and save them.

All these were the things that were fulfilled until the time of John. The reality of the Word of promise in the Book of Genesis is Jesus Christ and the Old Testament is just a shadow. God promised that He would send the Savior to us before Jesus Christ actually came, and the prophets proclaimed that promise to the people. They promised that the Messiah would come in the future and save all humankind. They gave us the promise of salvation as the Word that says, *“Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His*



name Immanuel, which is translated, 'God with us.'" Then, the prophets such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Hosea were sent to the world continuously. They proclaimed consistently that someone who would save us would definitely come to this world.

Then, Jesus Christ really came. At the time when Jesus came, John the Baptist, who was a descendant of Aaron the High Priest, was already born 6 months prior to Jesus. Moreover, because he was the greatest among those born of woman, he was able to fulfill the role of transferring all the sins of all humanity to Jesus Christ by baptizing Him in the Jordan River as the representative of all humankind. By this ministry, God fulfilled all the righteousness of the salvation that loved us, the righteous love of God. John transferred over all the sins of humankind to Jesus Christ by baptizing Him. Jesus took over all the sins of humankind through John the Baptist like that. Then, the Lord fulfilled the salvation of all the sinners by carrying all the sins of the world, being

crucified on the Cross, being resurrected from death, and ascending to the right hand of God the Father. So the Scriptures said, "*Since that time the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is pressing into it.*" It means that anyone can enter the Kingdom of God if one just hears and believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit with one's heart.

Those Who Believe in the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit Enter the Kingdom of Heaven

That is why Jesus said, "*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*). John the Baptist fulfilled only the role of transferring sins of the world to Jesus Christ by baptizing Him. Then, Jesus took over all the sins of the world through John the Baptist and saved us by resurrecting from death after going to the Cross



and dying on it. Jesus Christ became the true Savior for us sinners. You must know and believe the fact that through this, anyone who believes in this Truth can enter the Kingdom of God if he has true faith. Do you believe in this fact? I ask a question to the new saints who have received the remission of sins during this discipleship training camp: Have you received the remission of sins by faith? Or, have you received the remission of sins through the good works you have done here and through your prayers of repentance? We have received salvation because we have heard and believed in our hearts the Truth of the salvation, the gospel that saved us. Jesus Christ took all our sins upon Himself through John the Baptist and carried the sins of the world, and was resurrected on the third day after being crucified on the Cross and dying on the Cross. You have received salvation by hearing and believing now in your hearts the fact of the gospel that God saved us already. That is the salvation we receive through grace. This salvation is the gift of eternal life and

blessing the Lord has given to us. Only the people who believe in the Word of God's Truth can receive that gift.

The other thing God is saying in today's Scripture passage is, "*And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one title of the law to fail.*" This Word means that God's command, that is, the Word of Truth, will exist forever. This Word is saying that the Truth of the work of salvation of the Lord that He has accomplished by coming to this world will never change. Do you believe that such Truth will never change? I will ask you again. Has the Lord saved us with the blood only, or has He saved us with the water, the blood, and the Holy Spirit? He has saved us with the water, the blood, and the Holy Spirit (1 John 5:4-8). This Word of salvation that God has fulfilled and spoken to us will never change even if the entire universe and the world were to be destroyed. Furthermore, the Kingdom of Heaven that God has promised, or the fact that God has made us His children, will exist



forever and never change.

Certain people have some doubts even after they have received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. They ask, “Can we receive the remission of sins only when we know and understand all the Word of God? We receive salvation if we believe in our hearts and understand the fact that Jesus Christ died on the Cross. Why do you say that we receive salvation only when we understand and believe without one iota of misunderstanding that Jesus came to this world and took all the sins of the world through the laying on of hands of John the Baptist, carried the sins of the world and died on the Cross? Why do you compel us to believe that all the righteousness of the world was fulfilled by Jesus baptism, His death on the Cross, and His resurrection from the dead?” There are people who say such words.

However, the fact the Lord saved us through the water and the Spirit is the unchanging Truth. The fact is that the Lord blotted out all our sins at once

through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and the Word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has spoken many times through the Scriptures will never change. It means that the method of salvation or the promise of salvation God has spoken to us, all the blessings that God has given to us, and all the Words God has said will never change, even if the world is destroyed

Could the Bible be changed? The Bible is also referred to as ‘Canon’ in Greek. It means a measuring rod. The Scriptures include all such things like how our sins have been blotted out, how we have been born again through the water and the Spirit, who the Lord is, and what our fundamental nature is. It also includes what the Kingdom of Heaven is like, what is in Heaven, and who the Lord will resurrect first.

The Lord said, “*And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one title of the law to fail.*” All people, regardless of who they are, will become the way the Scriptures have spoken.



Regardless of whether a person is a great person from a Christian perspective, or whether he is a person who has believed in Christianity for a long time, the fate of human beings all becomes the way the Lord has said. Regardless of what John Calvin, the creator of the Calvinism has said, all the people eventually become exactly the way the Scriptures have said. As the Word spoken here, everything besides the Truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that enables us to be born again is all deceitful because the Lord truly has made us born again through the water and the Spirit. Regardless of how great a character and morality you used to possess before, and ruled over other people's heart and mindset, you are now a very different person because you believe in the salvation of Jesus with sincere hearts. You have been born again. This fact cannot change. Can the salvation with which the Lord saved us change?

However, there are still many people who are willing to preach the other gospel that is different

from the Word of Truth. A certain preacher once told me that he could preach some other word besides this true gospel and people could receive salvation even if they believed this. He and his followers keep on preaching that word. The thing that person said was "You do not have sin even if you just believe in the blood of the Cross only." Moreover, he was saying that people are thankful to believe the fact the Lord died for them on the Cross even if we just preach that gospel to such people. He said we should acknowledge that such people have received the remission of sins since they receive salvation just by hearing that word. To his saying, I refuted like this: "Even just looking at the First Epistle of John chapter 5 verses 6 through 8 would show us that it is written, *'This is He who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ; not only by water, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth.'* And it is also written, *'And there are three that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and*



these three agree as one.” Then he could not say anything when I refuted his preposterous claim based on many biblical facts.

Our Lord was conceived through the Holy Spirit when He came to this world. He was born to the world clothed in human flesh through the Holy Spirit, and when He became thirty years old, He took all the sins of the humankind by receiving the baptism from John the Baptist, the representative of all humankind. He saved us and became the eternal Christ for us by taking the sins of the world to the Cross and dying on the Cross, and being resurrected from death. Then, how could we say that Jesus Christ saved us just by the Cross without receiving the baptism and taking over our sins? That is not the Truth.

When we look at the Word from the Scriptures, we can see that there is a consequence when there is beginning in the Word. Every account of the Bible is just and correct rather than erroneous. Jesus Christ was born to this world through the body of the virgin

Mary in order to save us from sins, took all our sins through the baptism from John the Baptist when He became thirty years old, and He was able to carry the sins of the world to the Cross, be crucified to the Cross and die. He was able to become our eternal Savior by being resurrected from death. Therefore, the Lord is the Truth, the just God, and the One who saved us through the water and the blood like this. He became the eternal Savior for the people who believe in the Lord. Isn't that right?

The Lord came to this world and lived like that until He became thirty years old, when He appeared before John the Baptist and told John to baptize Him. John declined at first, but he allowed it immediately after the Lord's saying, *“Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness” (Matthew 3:15)*. The baptism of Jesus was fulfilled like that. The Lord was saying, “It is proper for you, John the Baptist, to transfer over all the sins of humankind to Me by baptizing Me. By doing so, I can take over all the sins of humankind through you



and carry the sins of the world to the Cross, die on the Cross, be resurrected from death, and become the Savior of all humankind.” This is why the Lord was baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan River. Otherwise, if Jesus received the baptism simply to show humility before the people, then Jesus would not have been able to carry all our sins nor be crucified to the Cross properly and die on the Cross. He is God who has never sinned before. Even so, the fact that the Lord received the baptism in order to blot out all human sins was itself a great humility.

Many people were jealous of Jesus. Therefore, some people even took Jesus to the cliff of a hill and tried to push Him down the cliff. However, Jesus performed a miracle. In an ordinary situation, it would be normal for a person to die if a lot of people took a person forcibly and pushed him down the cliff. However, Jesus was not like that. In Luke 4:29-30, it is recorded that people clearly tried to push Jesus down the cliff but the Lord passed through the forest of people leisurely with invincible authority.

Although Jesus came to this world in the flesh of man, He was essentially God, our Creator, and our Savior. No matter how humans tried to harm Jesus, they could not harm Jesus if God the Father did not allow it. Jesus is not the being whose existence is decided according to human will, but He is instead the Lord who came to this world, received the baptism, died on the Cross, and saved us. That was His will and the will of the Father.

He was not crucified on the Cross because He was weak. When Jesus stood in the court of Pilate, the Governor of Judea, he asked, “Are you the King of Jews?” Jesus then said, “That is what you said.” Pilate asked again, “What authority do you have when I have the authority to judge you and even the authority to release you if you say the right things?” Because Jesus had taken all the sins of humankind through His baptism, He resolutely acknowledged Himself as the King of the Kingdom of God, and received the judgment for those sins. He knew the wages of sin was death, so He gladly faced death



because He knew that all humanity could not escape the judgment for the sins eternally if He did not receive the judgment. But He was resurrected from death on the third day and became our eternal living Savior. Do you believe in this salvation?

You cannot believe the wrong doctrines of today's Christianity that say we receive salvation only through the blood of the Cross apart from the gospel of the Holy Spirit. We must definitely blot out such absurdity of Christianity as a religion that lays importance just on the outward appearance of the Scriptures. We must cleanse everything that belongs to the old leaven by hearing the Word of Truth the Lord has given to us. When our hearts become clean and white as snow, then we can finally become the righteous who have true faith. We must become the people of faith.

The Lord gave us unchanging salvation. That fact does not change forever. I give deep thanks to God who gave us such salvation. We are God's children. Therefore, we are also Christ's possession.

However, we must remember that only those who have been born again can become His children. People who have not been born again are not of Christ, and rather, they belong to the Devil. So they are shaken left and right according to the Devil.

Then, as I end today's sermon now, I want you to ask questions about today's Word to your predecessors in faith and read the Scriptures during the remaining time of this discipleship training camp.



SERMON

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Now Is the Time to Wake up from Sleep

< Luke 16:19-25 >

“There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. Then he cried and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in

this flame.’ But Abraham said, ‘Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented.’”

Through today’s Scripture passage, the Lord is telling us that we should not be interested in just worldly affairs such as our own material prosperity. What really matters is not how wealthy a person is in this world, but that one should be a happy person able to enter the Kingdom of God. This is what the Lord is teaching us with His parable of a poor man and a rich man in today’s Scripture passage.

In this parable the Lord told the story of a wealthy man who, after living a prosperous and worry-free life surrounded by opulence in this world, died a peaceful death. While alive, this man had always worn purple garments, had many servants, lived in opulence without any worry, and enjoyed a great deal of wealth. However, once the rich man



died, he ended up in hell.

The wealthy man was thrown into the fire of hell filled with scorching heat to suffer from extreme thirst. In contrast, Lazarus, the poor beggar who lived at the gate of this rich man's house and ate the crumbs that fell from his table, went to Heaven after his death. While alive, Lazarus had lived on the leftovers that the rich man's house threw away, but after his death, he went to Heaven instead of the rich man.

In today's Scripture passage, this is described as Lazarus being "carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom." It means that Lazarus went to the Kingdom of Heaven where Abraham had entered before him. In other words, Lazarus went to the Kingdom of Heaven filled with blossoming flowers and wonderful music, where he was to be served by all of creation and every angel, and where the Lord was to be with him. Even though Lazarus had been a beggar in this world, he was able to enter the wonderful Kingdom of God. In complete contrast,

however, the rich man ended up in hell.

From this passage we can realize clearly that our carnal lives in this world do not mean everything. As such, while living in this world, we must always trust in the Lord, the Master of Heaven, and preach His gospel. Yet despite this, my fellow believers, are we not being too myopic, judging our happiness and unhappiness based only on what's visible? We know that this is wrong. Indeed, we should realize that life in this world is not all that matters. In other words, how one lives in this world is not what's really important, but rather where he can go after his death.

For human beings, this world is like morning mist, that is, a temporary place to stay and live, and after this await judgment. Therefore, what's important is not how much we prosper in this world, but what comes after our death—that is, whether we are embraced in Abraham's arms like Lazarus or cast out into hell. My fellow believers, we must always remember that what comes after one's life in this world is far more important than the present life.



Even if we set aside the issue of Heaven and hell, how one's life is assessed after his death is more important than how he was evaluated while he was alive. Ultimately, in other words, how a person is assessed and where he ends up after his death is more important than how wealthy a life he lived in this world. You must remember that your life in this present world is not all that matters. The most important issue is how you will live your second life. No matter how wealthy anyone may have been in this world, if he has no choice but be cast into the fire of hell and suffer in it like the rich man in today's Scripture passage, then this person's life is a complete failure. In contrast, someone who has prepared the faith that can take him to the heavenly Kingdom of God has lived his life a hundred times better than someone who has to suffer so much in hell that he thirsts after a drop of water, even if the former lived a poorer life in this world.

When We Look at Sinners, How Should We Really Look at Them?

Therefore, when we look at people's souls, we should examine whether these souls have received the remission of sins, and where they will go after death, rather than looking at how they are living in this world. With this parable of the rich man and Lazarus in mind, we must look at other souls with such spiritually farsighted eyes, and being mindful of the Word of the Lord, we must preach the gospel in this world. We ought to have compassion for all these souls that are bound to hell, and we ought to live our lives in such a way as to preach the gospel to as many souls as possible, so that they may be saved.

My fellow believers, some people in this world live in mind-boggling opulence without anything to worry about. Others spend their entire lives in abject poverty and unhappiness. But this is not an important issue at all. If you think about what



happened to the rich man and Lazarus after death, you can easily grasp what's really important. While living in this world, Lazarus ate the crumbs falling from the rich man's table, which is just another way of saying that he ate garbage. The rich man, on the other hand, feasted on good food and wore expensive clothes all his life, and died a peaceful death without any suffering. At first glance, it may seem as though this rich man had lived a far more meaningful life, but where his soul went after his death is much more important than the lifestyle he enjoyed in this world.

By any chance, are you thinking to yourself, "I don't care what happens after my death? All that matters is that I enjoy a wealthy and comfortable life while I'm still alive"? This is absolutely not the case. Just as there is no gain without pain, what's really important is the end result. Even if you are struggling a lot now, if at the end of the road you are able to reach your goal, and the end result of your present suffering is rewarding, then all has gone well.

Your end must be better than your beginning. Only when your life ends well can you say that you've lived a truly worthy and meaningful life.

Whenever we come across anyone, we must ask ourselves, "Will this soul go to hell, or will he go to Heaven?" Put differently, we should treat everyone based on the question of whether this person will go to hell or Heaven at the end of his life. If this soul is bound to hell, then it is our duty to preach the gospel to him so that he may not end up in hell.

My fellow believers, countless people see their stations in life change drastically after their death. There are surprisingly many people who, after having lived a prosperous life in this world, actually end up in a completely opposite situation after their death. Then there are others who, even though they have lived in abject poverty in this world, enter the Kingdom of Heaven, having met the Lord, believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and received the remission of sins and salvation. It is a very common occurrence for people to live in this



world without any worry, only to end up facing the opposite situation after their death. In short, our lives in this present world are not all that matter to us. A far longer life awaits us in the next world. You should also keep in mind that just as I said now, one's way of life in this world is not necessarily continued in the next world.

Many people think that if they've lived like a king in this world, they will be able to continue to live like a king in the next world. For instance, in ancient times, when a king died, it was believed that he would be able to carry his power into the next world, so his subjects in the court, his servants, and his wives and concubines were buried alive together with the king. This is not only a foolish practice, but it is also inhumane. If you think that a servant is still a servant and a king is still a king even after death, then you are making a big mistake.

As mentioned before, even though Lazarus had been a beggar in this world, after his death he was embraced in Abraham's arms, whereas the rich man

who had enjoyed a good life in this world was cast into hell to suffer. The fire in hell was so hot that the rich man said, "*Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.*" The rich man said this because he still was not aware of what had happened. He must have thought that Lazarus was still a beggar. Even as he was suffering in the fire of hell, he still thought of Lazarus only as the beggar at the gate of his house feeding on the crumbs falling from his table. In other words, the rich man said these things because he still thought that he could dictate Lazarus to his liking, even though their circumstances had now changed. This is the very delusion that's plaguing many people.

Like this, even though one's present life in the flesh does not mean anything, many people take this life as the standard to judge everything. As such, we need to think carefully about how we should deal with souls—that is, from what perspective we



should approach them. Should we look at them based on their wealth, fame, knowledge, or beauty, or should we look at them from a different point of view? This question deserves serious consideration. Whenever we look at people, we must view them based on the question of whether their souls will go to Heaven or hell.

Based on what standard do people evaluate other people or things? For those who are not of the people of faith, the standard is how they can prosper materially in this world. They don't care about the means; as long as they are prospering, they think this is their happiness no matter how they attained their prosperity, even if they had to steal or murder to get where they are. It is with this standard that they look at others, themselves, and everything else. But that is not what's important. Those who are truly happy are those whose hearts have been set free, who have been liberated from sin to enjoy peace, and received the remission of sins in their lives.

What is our point of view then? How should we

approach people? We should see and discern people based on whether they are bound to hell or Heaven. Put differently, we should have compassion on those who are bound to hell, and when it comes to those who are going to Heaven, we should be grateful to God for them and consider them as blessed people.

Value System Is Shaken a Lot in These End Times

In this present age, worldly wealth is considered to be the supreme value. We may very well say that this age is the golden age for the rich. Most people in developed countries are quite prosperous. In contrast, in underdeveloped countries there still are many people worrying about meeting their basic needs for clothing, food, and housing. North Koreans are among such poor people, and it saddens us deeply to see our brethren in North Korea suffering like this.



At any rate, even if one is living in a rich country, and he is also individually wealthy, if he has not received the remission of sins, then he is as good as facing starvation. Even worse, his life in the next world will be far more wretched. You probably have family members or relatives who are sure of themselves just because they are rich, even as they have not received the remission of sins. However, if you think about them more carefully, you will realize just how miserable they are. Where are those who have not received the remission of sins bound? They are all destined to hell. That's why they are pitiful. No matter how powerful, how rich, and how attractive they may be, they will all be cast into hell in the end; so what use are all these things, even if they were to live for a hundred years in this world? My fellow believers, anyone who does not receive the remission of sins is bound to hell.

Such souls are truly pitiful souls. I am not saying this because I have received the remission of sins, but because these souls are indeed wretched souls

destined to hell. You must realize clearly that Heaven and hell do exist. You must also grasp clearly that such souls will inevitably be cast into hell. Since they are destined to hell, what is the point of having all this power, driving around in a Benz, or even throwing around money on the road? Driving a Benz or other luxury cars is akin to wasting away money. Of course, I don't know the details since I've never driven such a car, but the point is that these luxury cars guzzle that much gas.

If I wanted to, I could actually buy a Benz right away. How much does a Benz cost? Fifty thousand dollars? One hundred thousand dollars? I could afford it if I really wanted to. If I were to cut back on all my living expenses except for basic needs, then I could buy at least one Benz, if not five, and drive around in it. It's all possible if I just pinch my pennies a bit. Do you think that I don't drive around in a Benz or a BMW because I don't have enough money? No, I don't drive around in such a luxury car because that has absolutely nothing to do with



where I will go after my death. Every sinner is destined to hell, even if one happens to drive such a luxury car. Put simply, even if you have the most expensive car in the world, this car will not lead you to Heaven. No high-performance car in this world can take us to Heaven. What difference does it make for a hell-bound person to drive a Benz, a BMW, a Ford, or even a run-down piece of junk? Which car one drives in this world is absolutely irrelevant to where he will go after his death. A car is supposed to take you from point A to point B, something that you use temporarily while in this world; so what difference does it make whether you drive a luxury car or a compact?

Those who are truly happy are those who are going to Heaven, and those who are truly unhappy are those destined to hell. That's all that matters. It is from this perspective that we must look at other souls and preach the gospel to them. My fellow believers, life is short. Some people say that life is like disappearing mist, here to stay only for a short

while. Others say that life is like a wild flower, growing and blossoming during the warm months, but withering and perishing in the winter. Like this, people have known from long ago that life is meaningless. Life is indeed like morning mist and a wild flower. Life in this world is so ephemeral.

From time to time, I still remember how I was a little kid doted on by my parents. I remember my house, and I remember how I once fell from somewhere and hurt my head, and how my mother put some red medicine on it. That's not all that I remember: I remember how I was once stung by a bee and had to put some home remedy on it. I remember my friend Malsun in my neighborhood, and I even remember the dog that another neighbor had. I remember playing around with my friends; I remember falling into a ditch and hurting my forehead; and I remember spending so much time to prepare myself for the field day and not being able to run the actual race for some reason. I even remember who were good neighbors and who were



not good neighbors, and who treated my parents well and who didn't.

However, my fellow believers, when I turned 20 and was drafted into the military, from then on my life just flew by me as swiftly as an arrow. Once I reached 20, time began to fly by quickly, and in a moment's notice I was already 30. I got married at 30, and soon I turned 35 and 40. Life seemed to slow down a bit in those years, but all of a sudden I found myself turning 55.

My fellow believers, life passes by in the blink of an eye like this. Even now, I still can't believe that I am over 50. I still feel as though I am only 25. At least that's how I feel in my heart. Even now, if I were not to do anything else but only take care of my own flesh, then I could very well shout out that the real life begins at 60. But because I am struggling with not only my physical health but also my spiritual work to help others, I sometimes get weary and feel saddened. It wasn't long ago that I turned 50, and now my sixtieth birthday is just

around the corner.

Someone once said that turning 50 is no big deal. But is this really the case, when one ought to plan his life again and live an upright life until the Lord returns? It may seem at first glance that 50 years are a long time; but if you divide your life into different stages and look back at them, it's such a short time. One lives without a care when he is a kid, and all the subsequent stages in his life—middle school, high school, college, and so forth—go by in the blink of an eye.

As soon as one enters elementary school, he finds himself in middle school. As soon as he finds himself in middle school, in no time does he find himself in high school. Then comes college. Time goes by so fast. Some of our students here may wonder, "What is Pastor Jong talking about? Time goes by so slowly for me. I wish I would grow up faster!" But life goes by fast. Just wait a bit more. Time goes by slowly only because one hasn't finished what he is supposed to do. If you are



diligent and do what you are supposed to do, then you will feel with both your body and mind just how fast time goes by.

Because life flies by so fast, there is all the more reason why one must receive the remission of sins. Life doesn't wait for anyone. You will turn 50 and 60 in no time. Just ask your parents and you will see what I mean. Your parents didn't get old for no reason. They turned 50 and 60 in no time because they had lived their lives diligently. You hear them saying, "My back is killing me! Every joint and bone in my body are aching! Close the door; it's so chilly in here." You may think they are exaggerating, wondering why they feel so chilly when it's so warm, and how it's possible for every bone to ache. But if you turn your parents' age, you, too, will complain how every bone in your body aches so much. My fellow believers, everyone must receive the remission of sins before it's too late. Only then can everyone be happy.

When you look at other souls, you must always

be able to discern those who have received the remission of sins from those who have not, the blessed from the accursed. If you come across anyone who has not received the remission of sins, you should see him as someone who is bound to hell, and if you come across anyone who has received the remission of sins, you should see him as someone who is heading to Heaven, as a happy person. My fellow believers, even though all of us are living in this world, this doesn't mean that it's okay for us to look at the world and people from a carnal point of view. Instead, we must look at everyone and everything through our spiritual eyes. Only when we discern whether people are destined to Heaven or hell can we preach the gospel to their souls, have compassion on them, and realize just how happy we are.

My fellow believers, in all things, we must always see what's inside rather than what appears outside. When we look at another person, we must also be able to look deep into his soul. However,



myriad things in this world are tempting us so that we would not be able to see everything in this way. Once we are deceived like this, we will end up thinking that our own prosperity and comfort are all that matters, but we should never allow this to happen. Moreover, people in the world today are not prospering that much anyway. If you take a look at college students these days, you will see that few of them can actually enjoy their college years because they are so preoccupied with their future. As soon as they step into college, from their freshman year they are already worried about finding a job and what major they should choose to secure a good livelihood.

What worth does such a life have, if it has any at all? We the born-again should therefore not fall into such worldly concerns, but when we look at people, we should always look at them based on the question of whether or not they have received the remission of sins—that is, whether they are destined to Heaven or hell. We must have such eyes at all times. This

perspective must be the guiding principle in our lives. We must always have compassion on those who are heading to hell. This means we must preach the gospel to them. We have compassion on these people precisely because they are ultimately bound to hell no matter how rich and talented they may be. What virtue would they have when they are destined to hell? They have nothing. They are totally empty inside, and their hearts are completely devoid.

My fellow believers, there are only two kinds of people on this planet: those going to Heaven and those going to hell. There aren't any other types of people. There are only two types of people, one heading straight to hell, and the other going to Heaven. We must indeed live for these two types of people. We should have compassion on one kind of people, and we should consider the other kind of people as the truly blessed, cherished people of God, unite with them, and treat them well.



What Does It Matter If One Is a Pastor?

It doesn't matter if one is a pastor or an elder; as long as one has not received the remission of sins, he will be cast into hell. The rich in this world are confident of themselves while living in this world. But where do they go once they are dead? They end up in hell. Unless they receive the remission of sins, they will all be thrown into the burning fire of hell. Even if one professes to believe in Jesus, if he still has sin in his heart, then he can't avoid hell. What does it matter then, for anyone to live a comfortable life in this world if he is bound to hell? Even if one is a pastor at a huge church, if he hasn't received the remission of sins, then what use is it? What's the point of being paid \$5,000 a month in salary and a 1,000 percent bonus at the end of the year? Will he use all this money before he ends up in hell? Or will he take it with him when he dies? Alexander the Great also returned empty-handed on his death. You know very well that no one can carry anything with

him on his death. The dead cannot take anything in this world with them. All that you have left upon your death is the clothing you are wearing, your cramped casket, and a tiny parcel of land where you are buried. Even this tomb of yours will be just barely enough to bury you. Apart from this, you will have nothing to carry, and this is true for all of us human beings. So it is absolutely imperative for everyone to realize where he is heading in the end. Put differently, you cannot afford to live without knowing where you will end up. My fellow believers, if any soul lives without even realizing where he is heading, then such souls would be the most pitiful souls.

Any soul that has not received the remission of sins is a soul that's bound to hell. We should discern every soul based on two criteria: One is bound to hell, and the other is bound to Heaven. Only when we are able to discern souls like this can we have compassion on the sinners destined to hell and preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to these



sinner. It is then that we can also pray for such sinners.

Life in this world is not everything there is. Yet there are too many pitiful people in this world who don't even realize this. But rather than denouncing these souls, we ought to have compassion on them. Such poor souls are everywhere around us. Their end result is predictably clear. Yet they still continue on with their lives as though nothing will happen to them, even though there clearly is a Heaven and a hell.

Some people might then say, "Have you been to Heaven then?" I've been to Heaven by my faith in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and I know it by faith in the Word of God. From time to time we hear some people claiming that they were brought back to life from death. These people make outlandish claims, saying that they saw the tree of life, a river flowing next to it, and all kinds of wonderful fruit-bearing trees in Heaven. But that is not what Heaven is all about. Such people's claims

are nothing more than lies. It's true that some people fall into a coma and do not regain consciousness for a long time. But once anyone dies definitely and goes to Heaven or hell, he cannot return. Once someone enters either place, he cannot return to this world in any way. Nor can he move from one destination to the other. There is such a great gulf between Heaven and hell that no one can go to the other places once he arrives at his destination. So how can anyone say that he's been to Heaven and hell? Such a claim is not only preposterous, but it is completely unfounded. It might have happened in their dreams, but to claim to have seen Heaven and hell makes no sense.

Don't you agree, my fellow believers? Such people might have dreamed about it, but none of them has actually been to Heaven. If they've been to Heaven, then how is it possible for them to have returned to this world? Anyway, we must carry out the work of spreading the gospel, believing that there indeed are two types of people in this world.



When dealing with those bound to hell, we should have compassion on them rather than discriminating against them. We must cherish all souls alike, whether it is our own children's souls or someone else's soul. Every soul is equally precious; it is never the case that the souls of my own family members are somehow more precious than other people's souls. The soul is free of its earthly relations once it's dead.

The Reality of the Resurrected

Jesus was once asked, "There is a certain woman who had seven husbands. Whose wife would she then become when she is resurrected?" Jesus answered this question by saying, "You are asking such a question because you think only according to the standard of the world. After the resurrection, there is no difference of sex. There is no man, nor woman." My fellow believers, the resurrected have

no distinction or classification. There is no gender. So there is no marital relationship either, as there is in this world. The relationships you have built in this world are all rendered obsolete in the next world.

Some people say, "I will follow you until the end." "I will go to where my parents are." "Your parents went to hell." "Still, I will go to where my parents are." Do you think that your parents will remember you when you see them? Not only will your parents not recognize you, but you will not recognize your parents either. Parents and children will not recognize each other. Such relationships are valid only in this present world. There will be no such relationships in the next world. As such, we must always cherish other souls just as we cherish our own families. As those who have received the remission of sins, we ought to cherish not only our own families but also other souls, and preach the gospel to every soul.

Whenever we deal with any souls, we must treat them without discrimination and see all of them



through the eyes of our faith in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. This means that we should have compassion on the hell-bound souls, feel sorry for them, have mercy on them, and thus preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to them with even more motivation. My fellow believers, we must remind ourselves once again that the end of this world is not too far away. It's true that I do not know the exact timing. However, even though I do not know the exact hour, day, and year of the end of the world, given the signs of the time, I can still feel that it is near. Take a look at what's happening in this world, including climate changes. This world is a depressing and scary place. Everything looks ominous. Dark clouds loom over everyone's head.

Indeed, the world is like a powder keg that can go off at any time. No one knows when and what devastation might fall on the whole world. People are trembling in constant fear. The end times will be ravaged by earthquakes and wars. Although now is not the time for the Lord to return yet, once such

disasters strike, the Great Tribulation will descend without fail.

My fellow believers, this world is filled with too many disasters and calamities. To repeat, when we look at such signs, we can realize clearly that the days of this world are numbered. For most people, however, the present age may seem like the most peaceful and quiet age. So they sit around all day long, eating and drinking without a care, and even though calamities are breaking out endlessly, it's hard to find anyone who has any sense of urgency, as most people have become desensitized. Intoxicated by the world, they are going about their everyday lives as though nothing is going to happen to them. However, my fellow believers, the Lord said, "*As the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be*" (Matthew 24:37). In other words, our Lord will come when people least suspect His return, when they are busy eating and drinking, dancing and singing, and committing sin without any inhibition.



This present age is a totally depraved age, no different from the days of Noah. This world is so similar to the end times of which the Bible spoke. In times like this, it is all the more important for us to set every soul straight, based on the right standard. We must discern this age correctly. Now is the time for us to wake up from our sleep. I've already said how we must look at souls from two perspectives. We should examine them to see if they are bound to Heaven or hell, and we should look at them based on a spiritual standard. On those who are heading to hell, we must have compassion.

What about you then? Have you received the remission of sins? Didn't you receive the remission of sins in the midst of troubles and hardships of life? Be thankful for this salvation. Rather than just ending at your own salvation, open your eyes and see your family members and the souls that are around you. Examine them to see if they are heading to Heaven or hell. Of course, you will inevitably find some people who are bound to hell, and when you

do, have compassion on them, knowing for sure that such people who have not received the remission of sins will end up in hell. These souls are all heading straight to hell. My fellow believers, the Lord said that those who believe in Him in the end times are blessed. He also said that in the end times there would be those who lose their faith.

We must prepare ourselves beforehand for everything we will face. We must store up spiritual food beforehand for both ourselves and other souls. We must show compassion to all souls and preach the gospel to them. For this age is such an evil age, the Devil will knock on the hearts of the born-again in his attempt to devour them. The Devil would be looking for every opportunity to devour the born-again, including you and me. In this way, he is trying to undermine your faith and mine. It's all possible in this present age.

My fellow believers, once you realize that this present age is such an evil age, you have all the more reason to not just stare idly at your



surroundings and your family, but to preach the gospel to your family and those around you even more diligently. As those who are spreading the gospel, when we look at other souls, we must not fail to examine whether they are bound to hell or Heaven, and if they are destined to hell, then above all else, our hearts must have compassion on them. In other words, we ought to be capable of showing compassion on all the souls that still have not been saved. Rather than just looking toward the world, we must examine carefully whether other souls are going to hell or Heaven. We must empathize with the souls that are heading to hell.

However, even though there are so many such souls around us, the reality is that we don't have enough workers who would preach the true gospel to them. Yesterday, brother Phillip visited us, and he will return to Russia on April 1. I heard from him how the Russians people have a good heart. Although he had met a few unscrupulous people, such people are found everywhere, and he found it

easy to engage with Russians as most people there are good-hearted and optimistic. So I was very encouraged to hear that our gospel ministry in Russia was going well.

Like this, the true gospel is being spread throughout the whole world, but on the other hand, it seems as though Christianity is asleep. In no college campus can we find anyone preaching the true gospel of the water and the Spirit. In the past, there used to be some people preaching the gospel everywhere on the campus, even if the gospel was a false one. They even preached the gospel in lecture halls. But now, even those people have disappeared. In times like this, we the born-again have all the more reason to wake up from our sleep. We should never allow ourselves to indulge in indolence.

We Must Be Spiritually Awake

We must wake up from our spiritual sleep. Even



if everyone is asleep, we must be awake. What must we do to wake up then? When we are able to see straight through the soul and see where the soul is going, we can wake up from our minds' sleep. Unless you see the souls that are heading to hell, you cannot wake up from sleep. On the contrary, you will fall into an even deeper sleep. However, if you can see that the soul standing right before you is heading straight to hell, your mind will be jolted and you will wake up from your sleep right away.

We are preaching the gospel regardless of whether people believe in it or not, whether they come to our church or not. There is a certain college student who had been afflicted with nightmares every night. After we preached the gospel to him, he no longer has any nightmares, but he now drinks all the time instead of coming to our Church. Being liberated from nightmares itself is a good thing anyway. The point is that it's okay for people not to attend our Church. Even so, one thing is clear; even if a demon visits this brother, he now has the

strength to stand up against him. Why? Because this brother now has the gospel in his heart, because he is sinless. So he can rebuke the demon and say, "Get away, Satan!" He is now empowered, and his heart is bold.

The problem, however, is that even though this brother has been remitted from all his heart's sins by hearing and believing in the gospel like this, he still is defeated by his flesh. His Lord has been replaced by alcohol. He has replaced the heavenly Lord with an earthly lord, and now he is struggling to serve two lords. So this is a problem, but still, I am grateful that he has come to believe clearly in God the Father our Lord. He is probably making a friend of the earthly lord, that is, liquor. It's because he can't forsake this friend that he is unable to attend our Church. My fellow believers, there is nothing we can do if people don't attend our church. Even so, far from being disappointed, we the born-again must continue to preach the gospel diligently. We must become the workers that spread the gospel to



everyone heading to hell.

I don't believe that everyone who receives the remission of sins becomes a worker of God. I believe that those who become the Lord's workers are those who love other souls, love the Lord, and despite being insufficient in their flesh, cherish both their own souls and others' as well. As such workers of God, we must continue to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit regardless of whether those who hear the gospel attend our church or not.

It is very important for us to help as many souls as possible to receive the remission of sins and teach them the gospel of the water and the blood. This is my only wish in this world. My only wish is for everyone to know the gospel of the water and the blood, and to believe in this gospel. Remember always that this is also our Lord's wish. As long as people hear the gospel, I don't care if they don't come to our church. I don't mind it at all if they go somewhere else after receiving the remission of sins. It doesn't matter where they go, for they are still in

the palm of the Lord's hand. Where they go is not their home, but here is their home. Let them go to someone else's home, make as much offerings as they want, and serve as much as they wish.

My fellow believers, what we really need is the eye that can see the state of every soul. We ought to pray to the Lord to give us this eye and preach the gospel. Even though few people have the gospel, and there are too few true workers of God. If we pray at all times like this, prepare a bit more, plant churches, and spread the gospel abroad, everyone all over the world will be able to know this gospel in the end. All will come to believe in this gospel Truth of the water and the blood and receive the remission of sins.

My fellow believers, I am confident that this day is not too far away. Soon, our fellow Koreans will also come to know the gospel of the water and the blood. In the years to come, the number of believers in this true gospel will increase evermore. The churches in this city are now changing. Anyone who



believes in Jesus is said to be a righteous person. In other words, every Christian is unconditionally said to be a righteous person regardless of whether he has sin or not. In the past, when a Christian said that he was a righteous person, he was accused of being a heretic. But now pastors in this city speak without hesitation that they are the righteous because they believe that Jesus has blotted out all their sins with His blood on the Cross. But, is it really true that all their sins have been blotted out from their hearts just by believing in the blood of Jesus? Does everyone really become righteous when he believes in the blood of the Cross alone? No, that's not the case.

In times like this, all that we have to do is preach the genuine gospel to people, to demonstrate to them clearly the evidence of the fact that we are the righteous. I am sure that countless people in our country will then receive the remission of sins. I am also confident that not just Koreans, but many people all over the world will also receive the remission of sins in this way. Soon, before the end

of this earth, many people will know the gospel of the water and the blood. So that this may indeed come to pass, our Lord will strengthen us, and we will fulfill our calling without fail. No matter what, we will devote all our energy to preaching the gospel of the water and the blood to everyone throughout the whole world.

My fellow believers, we are awoken people. We have much to do. Do not be so attached to yourself alone. You should first preach the gospel to your family members so that they may be saved. Wouldn't you feel sad for your family members if they are not saved? Would your heart be at peace even as your own family members are heading to hell? We must pray also. We must pray to God with one heart for the gospel to be preached. God will answer us if we pray united in one heart. That's why we have to pray day and night. We must pray to God by faith time after time to save all these souls. After some time has gone since praying like this, we should approach them and admonish them to accept



the gospel. If they don't listen to us, then we have to start praying again. If we pray by faith, then sooner or later all these people's hearts will change and they will come to believe. My fellow believers, we must continue to pray. How did I say we should see souls? We should see them as one of two types—those bound to hell, and those bound to Heaven. In other words, before we preach the gospel to anyone, we need to discern carefully whether one is heading to Heaven or hell.

I admonish you to remember the parable of Lazarus and the rich man in today's Scripture passage, discern the two types of souls, and, having compassion on those bound to hell, preach the gospel to them. Above all else, I ask you to move forward by faith. Be on guard. The end is not far away. Even if the Lord returns tomorrow, we must faithfully carry out our entrusted work today. Whether you are working at a job or have your own business, you should work diligently, and even if the Lord returns tomorrow, you should faithfully finish

today what you've been entrusted with. However, although you should take care of your fleshly affairs like this, you shouldn't lose your focus, and more than anything else, you should be devoted to saving souls and preaching the gospel to them out of compassion.

You and I have been called by the Lord for this work, and seeing our faithfulness, God has made us His workers and put us in this Church. Above all else, you and I must be awake and live our lives for the salvation of the soul. Our Lord said that He will come when people think they are comfortable and safe. Take a look at this present age. Isn't it time for you to wake up from your sleep? My fellow believers, remember that now is the time for us to be awake. We must be on guard. We must get our priorities straight and preach the gospel to all the souls in this world. While you should be diligent in your everyday life to take care of your studies, your job, and your family, you must do all things, whether eating or drinking, for the glory of God and



the preaching of the gospel. Let us then all lead our lives in this way, and then go to the wonderful place together when the Lord calls us.

My fellow saints, remember that when you use what you have for the gospel, and when you thus take many souls to the Lord in the next world, this is the most worthwhile thing to do. It is the most virtuous and most righteous work. If we are unable to do this, then what we have would be meaningless. An earthquake can render the things of the world completely useless, and all our possessions will mean nothing when tribulations come. Therefore, everyone is ultimately the same before the Lord, whether rich or poor. My fellow believers, let us all live to spread the gospel of the water and the Spirit. I will carry out this work until the day I take in my last breath. I believe that if I live in this way, the Lord will take me away. But I won't go before you. Despite my appearance, I am far more resilient and stronger than what many people think. Even if I look exhausted, all that it takes for me to recover is just a

couple of days of rest. So you have nothing to worry about me. No matter what, I will preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the last drop of my strength. I am convinced that the gospel flower will then blossom soon, and I am sure that you also believe the same. ☒





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EASIER WAY TO READ
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Using Bookmarks

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