



The New Life Mission

SERMONS ON THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW (III)

WHICH GOSPEL PERFECTS CHRISTIANS?



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SERMONS ON THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW (III)

WHICH GOSPEL PERFECTS CHRISTIANS?



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WHICH GOSPEL PERFECTS CHRISTIANS?



Hephzibah

To the People of Jesus Christ, the King of Kings

The Apostle Matthew is telling us that the Word of Jesus was spoken to everyone in this world, for he saw Jesus as the King of kings. Now, Christians throughout the world, who have just been born again by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that we are spreading, are indeed yearning to feed on the bread of life. But it is difficult for them to have fellowship with us in the true gospel, for they are all far away from us.

Therefore, to meet the spiritual needs of these people of Jesus Christ, the King of kings, the sermons in this book have been prepared as new bread of life for them to nourish their spiritual growth. The author proclaims that those who have received the remission of their sins by believing in the Word of Jesus Christ, the King of kings, must feed on His pure Word in order to defend their faith and sustain their spiritual lives.

This book will provide the real spiritual bread of life to all of you who have become the royal people of the King by faith. Through His Church and servants, God will continue to provide you with this bread of life. May God's blessings be on all of you who have been born again of water and the Spirit, who desire to have true spiritual fellowship with us in Jesus Christ.



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Preface

Across the nations, many people are receiving the remission of sin. As a result, we are in need of people to lead them and give them guidance in their walk with the Lord. We should lead those who have received the remission of all their sins into church. I strongly hope that many leaders will rise up in every country of the world. I wish I could dispatch all of my staff workers to go out in the world as messengers of God, as missionaries. However, if they were sent across the nations, who could support the gospel of righteousness here for God's work as the ornamental knobs of the lampstand? I, therefore, hope that God's workers will rise up in every single nation of his/her own country.

This publication is the second volume of my spiritual growth series for the future leaders of

the redeemed. As I serve the Lord, I believe that God's people will rise up. In anticipation of the future leaders, I have prepared these sermons on tape, which I present to you now. The sermons, which have been edited and translated for the purpose of training the leaders of tomorrow, will bring the soul-nurturing messages to your hearts.

I believe that these sermons will be spiritual food indeed for all people. Because it is impossible for all of us to have fellowship face to face with believers and God's workers from other nations, I hope that through sharing this book, I can have spiritual fellowship with them, who have already believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We are all thankful that He made us His workers, by feeding us the Food of Life.

We have, so far, published over 10 books in English. And we have found that many of those who have read the books are thankful for their



receiving the remission of sin by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Now, through the sermons for their spiritual growth, I will once again testify to them that the gospel of the water and the Spirit is the only truth that gives life. I am sure they will come to realize all the Scriptures are filled with the Truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, then. And eventually, all people in the world will deeply understand that the gospel of the water and the Spirit is the only Truth. Once they realize the Truth and throw away their emotion-oriented faith, their hearts will be filled with the gospel of the water and the Spirit, that is the only way to the everlasting redemption. And they all will live as the Disciples of Christ; become His instruments that save the lost souls; and do His work for the lost sheep across the nations by placing their faith in the power of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

As every plant blooms and then bears fruit, I believe the power of the true gospels not only blesses those who believe but also allows them to lead their lives as God's workers. They will be blessed in body and spirit. Now, God's workers in all nations will sow the seeds of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and save countless people from their sins. As we preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we will continue to win. We will bear more fruits of God with the belief in this true gospel. We are living in the time of harvest and we shall have a greater yield of fruits of salvation. Now, we will believe in His words, be thankful to Him, and glorify Him.



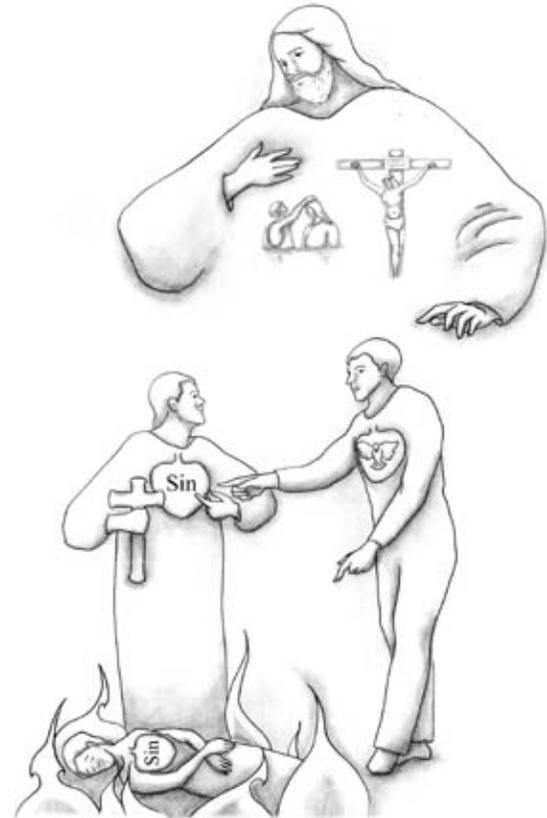
If God permits, we will do these things and more. And I believe He will bless every one of us. May God give abundant spiritual and physical blessings—the blessings of the holy faith of Heaven and the fatness of the earth—to everyone who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. ☒

Paul C. Jong



CHAPTER

14



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The Lips of Spiritual Priests Must Keep The Knowledge of Truth

< Matthew 14:1-12 >

“At that time Herod the tetrarch heard the report about Jesus and said to his servants, ‘This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him.’ For Herod had laid hold of John and bound him, and put him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife. Because John had said to him, ‘It is not lawful for you to have her.’ And although he wanted to put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet. But when Herod’s birthday was celebrated, the daughter of Herodias danced before them and pleased

Herod. Therefore he promised with an oath to give her whatever she might ask. So she, having been prompted by her mother, said, ‘Give me John the Baptist’s head here on a platter.’ And the king was sorry; nevertheless, because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he commanded it to be given to her. So he sent and had John beheaded in prison. And his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought it to her mother. Then his disciples came and took away the body and buried it, and went and told Jesus.”

The Scripture passage that we read today describes the death of John the Baptist. When the Roman Empire ruled Israel as its subjugated colony, it placed Herod as a tetrarch, and it was by Herod that John the Baptist was killed, for



John had denounced Herod's sin. King Herod had a brother named Philip, who had a wife called Herodias. When Herod took his brother's wife and lived together, John the Baptist denounced him harshly for his unlawfulness. Herod was not pleased by this, and wanted to kill John right away, but he could not do so. At that time, people thought of John the Baptist and believed in him as one of the prophets of the Old Testament, because of this it was not easy for Herod to put John to death. So John was imprisoned instead.

One day, at a celebration, Herodia's daughter, who was Herod's niece, danced so well that it carried the celebration. This dance was spectacular. Herod was so pleased by the dance that he swore an oath to the daughter of Herodias, promising her, "I will give you whatever you wish." Then, as prompted by her mother she asked for the head of John the

Baptist. Herod was at a loss, but because he could not renege on his promise, he ordered his soldiers to behead John the Baptist.

Because John the Baptist had rebuked Herod's wrongdoings, he was killed by Herod and his wife. Likewise, many servants of God in the Bible were put to death for proclaiming what was right.

Who Was John the Baptist?

John the Baptist was the last prophet and priest of the Old Testament sent by God. And he was a legitimate descendant of Aaron. Our Lord said that the Kingdom of Heaven suffered violence since the days of John the Baptist (Matthew 11:12). John the Baptist was a servant of God who, fulfilling his priesthood as the High Priest of the Old Testament, baptized Jesus



Christ and bore witness of Him as the sacrificial Lamb of God.

John the Baptist also rebuked ordinary people for their sins, saying, “Repent, you brood of vipers.” Thanks to this, many people who heard his rebuke returned to God. Hearing John’s words of rebuke, the people of Israel came to recognize their sins and many of them returned to God.

The servants of God think of both the kings and the commoners of this world as the same and rebuke both their sins alike. John the Baptist did not just let Herod’s wrongdoing go by, but harshly denounced his sin. John dared to rebuke King Herod’s sin, indicating what a great servant of God he was. It was because John the Baptist was God’s servant that he was bold enough to bluntly rebuke even a king’s sin. In the Old Testament, all the servants of God were like this.

But what about the present age? Are the so-called servants of God pointing out the congregations’ sins and preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit? In their servile attempt to please their own congregations and avert conflict at any cost, not only have they failed to point out the congregations’ sins, but they have also failed to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The believers of the gospel of the water and the Spirit must first point out people’s sins and testify the Truth of salvation that makes it possible for them to be born again.

John the Baptist was someone who came before Jesus Christ to prepare the way of His salvation and his ministry was important. Since he rebuked boldly even the king for his sins, it was a foregone conclusion that he would also rebuke the ordinary people for their sins. By doing so, he turned many of them back to God.

In other words, people came to realize their sins from his reproach and returned to God.

Unless God's servants point out people's sins, people cannot realize their sins but fall into their corruption. They commit sin everyday as if they were having regular meals, not knowing the fact that the sources of their sins are latent in their hearts. They do not know what sin is, nor do they know the seriousness of their sins, for they only have a cursory knowledge on such issues. This is why so many Christians today believe in Jesus only as a religion of the world, without even realizing that they are bound to hell for their sins.

So unless the servants of God point out their sins with the gospel of the water and the Spirit, how could they realize the gravity of their sins? They are sinners who know neither God nor the condemnation of sin that awaits them. It is when the servants of God go to them and point out their sins that they can finally realize their hearts'

sins and return to God by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

We who believe in the gospel Word of the water and the Spirit are the royal priests of the Kingdom of Heaven. As spiritual priests, we must carry on these two tasks well: to enable the sinners to realize their sins by pointing out their sins and iniquities, and to make them return to God to be saved by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

People living in this age are so uninterested in the Word of God that we cannot help but point out their sins. There are far too many people who do not realize the gravity of their sins even as they commit sin constantly. And even among the religious leaders, there are far too many swindlers who exploit their congregations through subtle deception. Therefore, the Apostle Paul also warned the true believers of his time that they had to beware of such false ministers,



saying, *“they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame-- who set their mind on earthly things” (Philippians 3:18-19).*

The religious leaders have turned countless people into mere religionists, and they are leading them to destruction. They tell their congregations to be faithful just to their own emotion as they carry on with their lives of faith, and they fill their hearts with fervent emotions with their selection of sad stories or emotionally charged praise songs. Given this, perhaps it is only natural that Christians with a flawed understanding of Jesus would overemphasize their own religious emotions.

On the other hand, such religious leaders are constantly devising new programs that would please their congregations. They know, in other words, how to meet the carnal demands of their

congregations. People are trying to enjoy all the pleasures of life now while they are still living, as if they already know that they are soon to die a miserable death and suffer forever. Knowing the suffering that will come to them, they try to enjoy themselves every chance they get and in anyway possible, so that they may enjoy all the pleasures of life beforehand. This is because their future is dark. In short, in today’s secularized Christianity, the law of supply and demand is strictly being applied, and this is why the religious life is no more than a condition of someone’s well-being.

People say that John the Baptist was a failure, since he was beheaded, but this is far from the truth. John the Baptist was a special servant of God who fulfilled all his duties while on this earth. John the Baptist lived on this earth for about 30 years, and he shouted in the wilderness, “Repent, you brood of vipers,” and he also

rebuked even the king. So although John the Baptist was loved much, he was also hated much as well. We, too, cannot avoid but rebuke many Christian leaders who are misleading their followers. Actually, they do not acknowledge the Word of God or His law. They only try to prevent their followers from hearing the real Word of God, saying, “You should never go to that kind of church where people emphasize only God’s Word. Their faith is only fanatical.” We cannot avoid rebuking them. It is only right for us to rebuke the Christians who have gone astray and be hated by them, just like John the Baptist.

Among Christian denominations, those affiliated with the Presbyterian Church emphasize only the Law of God and demand their followers to live apparently pious lives. Not knowing the gospel of the water and the Spirit, they do not preach it to their followers, but they only point out their sins and render them

immobile and bound by these sins—this, too, is a grave mistake.

What Must We Do?

We who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit are definitely God’s servants. Therefore, we must fulfill these two duties—to point out people’s sins and to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to them. We must point out people’s sins and rebuke them, and as priests, we must offer sacrifices for their sins with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We have been entrusted with this precious task that leads people to the gospel of the water and the Spirit, but this is not easy.

When the servants of God point out people’s sins, they come to realize their iniquities and find refuge in the gospel of the water and the Spirit



given by Jesus Christ. Only when the servants of God correctly point out people's sin can they come before Jesus Christ and receive the remission of their sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit; if they don't, it is all rendered impossible.

Thus far, in various ways, such as through my books, sermons, and articles on our web site, I have pointed out people's sins. When I preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit, I also point out people's sins clearly. No matter who might be standing before me, if this person needs to hear the gospel, then I say to him clearly how sinful he is and how he will go to hell for his sin.

A while ago I preached the gospel to a nurse, and this nurse claimed that she had never sinned before. We talked for a couple of hours and all this time she said that she had never sinned, not even once, and that she had never broken the Law, the Word of God. No matter how I

explained the Ten Commandments to her and told her how breaking any one of them is sinning, she just kept insisting that she had never sinned. So I got very frustrated.

“Are you sure that you never sinned?”

“Yes, I've never sinned.”

So I asked her honestly, “Haven't you had any adulterous imagination lusting after a man?”

Her face reddened then and she confessed that she had imagined such adulterous thoughts. In fact, everyone is like that; how could there be anyone who never sins when strictly applied with the Word of God?

However, what happens when people admit their sins before God? God allows such people to hear the gospel Truth without fail. Then, by hearing and believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, they receive the remission of their sins. The nurse had also claimed to have never sinned at first, but after admitting her sinful



nature and hearing the gospel Word of the water and the Spirit, she was utterly grateful.

Before I preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit, I point out people's sins first. It is not just I who do this, but all gospel preachers do so. This is because only when one receives the remission of his sins by fully knowing and admitting himself, and accepting and believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, can this gospel be rooted deeply in his heart. It is because when people's sins are mentioned only in passing, the remission of sin is not actually fulfilled in their hearts.

My fellow believers, all of us are wicked before God. Do you not commit such sins as evil thoughts, murder, jealousy, adultery, thievery, pride, and foolishness? Do you not commit such sins?

People generally think that they are not the ones who commit such sins. This is why we have

to point out their sins in concrete ways. We should then preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

It is only right for us, the born-again, to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to sinners. When we preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we need to first point out everyone's sins and enable him to realize that he is a grave sinner. To preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit after this is easy. "Jesus shouldered all your sins by being baptized, and then He died on the Cross, rose from the dead again, and has thereby saved us from all our sins." We should then confirm whether he now has sin in his heart or not: "Did Jesus take away not only your sins but all the sins of the world? And was He condemned for your sins or not? If so, do you have sin in your heart or not?" We need to confirm this with his confession of faith.



When we have fellowship with someone trying to enable him to receive his remission of sin, we should approach him with honest hearts. We, the born-again, are God's prophets and priests and we must clearly state what is right and what is wrong. When you and I preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit throughout the whole world, we must clearly bear witness of people's sins, and then testify the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

John the Baptist Was a Servant of God Sent by Him for All Mankind

John the Baptist truly was a servant of God sent by Him. It is not easy to criticize a king for his sins. But John the Baptist was imprisoned because of such faithfulness to his duty. Imprisoned and facing his possible death, he still

continued to point out the king's sins and to rebuke him. John the Baptist himself knew that he would die. He knew very well that he would be put to death if he kept criticizing the king. But he still went ahead and rebuked the king. He was faithful to his role, for truly he was God's servant. John the Baptist lacked nothing as the representative of mankind, and he was more than qualified to be the greatest of all the prophets of the Old Testament. In other words, John the Baptist was greater than Abraham, Moses, David, the Prophet Isaiah, the Prophet Ezekiel, or even the Prophet Daniel. Truly he was God's servant.

You and I need to be strict on ourselves when this is called for. Since we are insufficient, there are areas that need to be sheltered, but before God and in the Word, we need to at least admit ourselves and acknowledge what is wrong as wrong. Only when our hearts are honest and pure



before God can we receive the remission of our sins by faith, by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. And it is such people who can receive the Holy Spirit and become God's servants, for it is they who have received the remission of sin.

If we failed to clearly point out people's sins and instead skirt over them, the remission of sin cannot be attained, for people would not know their sinfulness. Unless we admit our sins, none of us can attain the remission of sin or the Holy Spirit, no matter how fervently we may profess our faith in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. In the Bible, Mark 7:21-23 lists various sins that we cannot commit before God. We must clearly reveal ourselves before God as sinners who commit such sins with both our acts and minds. The Bible tells us that the wages of sin is death and that destruction awaits all who have sinned, we should just admit that we have such sins and

that we are bound to hell unless we receive the remission of these sins. Then we must believe that to save us from our sins Jesus was baptized and shed His blood. If we preach the gospel in any other cursory manner, salvation cannot be reached.

We acknowledge that John the Baptist was the greatest servant of God. This is because, first of all, John the Baptist baptized Jesus in obedience to the mission that God the Father had entrusted to him. He also exalted Jesus by testifying, "*Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world*" (John 1:29)! Due to his testimony, we can now come to know the Truth of how Jesus took upon our sins with His baptism, and we can also be saved from all our sins once and for all by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. As the light of the world, we must fulfill the same role of John the Baptist, and we must also faithfully fulfill our



role as the royal priests who spread the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

However, God's servants must have both faith and wisdom as it is written in the Bible, "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves" (Matthew 10:16). God's servants should speak of the true gospel clearly to those who acknowledge God and admit their sinful nature; if you ask someone who doesn't acknowledge God nor His Word about his sins, "Do you have sins in your heart?" then you will only be hated and denounced by him. In other words, God's servants must also be wise.

In this world there are those whose spirits are poor, those who can find no satisfaction from the things of the world, those who are mourning over their sins, and those who are lost and looking for the Truth. To such people, we should point out

their sins with the Word of God and preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

We are the royal priests of the age of the New Testament, who are proclaiming the gospel of the water and the Spirit on this earth. Because sin is so widespread in this present age, it is easy to uncover people's sins as they are. It's all right if we teach them just what the Word of God is speaking about sin. If we preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to anyone who admits his sinful nature as it is, then he can be remitted from his sins for sure. As we have preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit to people, many have received the remission of their sins, and are returning to God.

The role of the priests in the age of the Old Testament was to offer sacrifices according to the sacrificial system. They made someone lay his hands on the head of a sacrificial animal to pass his sins, drawing its blood and putting it on



the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and offering the sacrifice by burning its flesh. By doing so, the priests made it possible for the just love of God to be fulfilled. And this was how the people were able to receive the remission of their sins by faith.

We are the royal priests before God. The priests stood between the people and God and passed the sins of the people to the offering of sacrifice. We must never forget that we are spiritual priests before God and we must carry out our duties wisely by thus believing so.

Now, we must point out to people whether or not they have sinned before God, teach them that anyone who has sin has not been saved, and to those who acknowledge this, preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit. They will then believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and receive the remission of their sins. To plow the fields of their hearts and sow the seed of the

Word of Life is the main job of spiritual priests. No matter what anyone says, the lips of the spiritual priests must keep the knowledge of the Truth and dedicate all their efforts to the spreading of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

We do not know what will happen tomorrow. But we have to unite with the gospel of the water and the Spirit until the very end of the world. We need to realize that we will be cast into hell if we have sin, and we must have real faith in this. If there is sin in your hearts now, you must realize that all your sins will indeed be blotted out if you believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and you must believe in all the Word of God. We need to follow and recognize what God speaks to us; we all need such wisdom and understanding.

I believe that this world will not last much longer. In these last days, I am determined to spread the gospel of the water and the Spirit to



all before I depart. This is why I want to spread this gospel forcefully with you. I see how people from unknown countries, whose names I've never heard of, continue to request our gospel books and my heart is convinced even more. So many people in such countries are receiving the remission of their sins. I am truly thankful to God for this.

I have a great respect for John the Baptist. As the representative of mankind, John the Baptist was faithful to his duties until the end. He is indeed the greatest of all those born of women and the last High Priest of the Old Testament. There were many priests before him, but he who passed the sins of mankind to Jesus as the representative priest of all mankind is none other than John the Baptist.

This is why Jesus said in Matthew 11:12, *“And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the*

violent take it by force.” This passage implies that Jesus, through John the Baptist, accepted all the sins of mankind with His baptism. The violent here refer to the believers who have concrete and proper faith enough to take the Kingdom of God. Therefore, everyone must receive the remission of sin and take Heaven by force by concretely believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. But the unbelievers will not enter the Kingdom of Heaven, and instead will be cast into the everlasting fire of hell.

For you and I, our purpose for life is to spread the gospel of the water and the Spirit together. And it is my earnest desire to live a faithful life as a servant of God, like John the Baptist. Apart from spreading the gospel, there is nothing that I want from this world. What is there to desire from the world? Not just I, but all the born-again righteous do not have any other desire but to spread the gospel of the water and the Spirit. And



our greatest wish is to enter the Kingdom of the Lord and live in glory. We want to be forever rewarded in His Kingdom for the hardships that we suffered while on this earth. And we want to shed no more tears, nor see any suffering, but to enjoy glory and splendor forever. Since the Lord has promised us that He would fulfill all this for us, we believe in this promise.

I consider it extremely important to keep promises, even if they are made with another man. There are many people in this world who have little regard for promises and take trust too lightly, but I am sure that to keep a promise, no matter to whom it was made, is truly noble. How about the promises of God then? Aren't the promises of God more than enough to be revered, for God has never broken and will never break any of them? So I do not consider it a waste to offer my everything to Him to attain the fulfillment of His promises. To enter the

Kingdom He has promised we have to be faithful to our priesthood that remits away people's sins according to the Word of God.

I have a favor to ask from you, together, let us spread this gospel of the water and the Spirit until the end of the world. I ask you to pray for the gospel, to bear with one another even as we have many insufficiencies, to spread this gospel with me, and to enjoy glory together in the end. Let us all fulfill our priesthood faithfully by placing our faith in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and then go forth to God. ☒



Why Did Jesus Perform The Miracle of Five Loaves Of Bread and Two Fish?

< Matthew 14:13-33 >

“When Jesus heard it, He departed from there by boat to a deserted place by Himself. But when the multitudes heard it, they followed Him on foot from the cities. And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick. When it was evening, His disciples came to Him, saying, ‘This is a deserted place, and the hour is already late. Send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food.’ But Jesus said to them, ‘They do not need to go away. You give them

something to eat.’ And they said to Him, ‘We have here only five loaves and two fish.’ He said, ‘Bring them here to Me.’ Then He commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass. And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitudes. So they all ate and were filled, and they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments that remained. Now those who had eaten were about five thousand men, besides women and children. Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away. And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there. But the boat was now in the middle of the sea, tossed by the waves, for the wind was



contrary. Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, ‘It is a ghost!’ And they cried out for fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, ‘Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid.’ And Peter answered Him and said, ‘Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water.’ So He said, ‘Come.’ And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, ‘Lord, save me!’ And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, ‘O you of little faith, why did you doubt?’ And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. Then those who were in the boat came and

worshiped Him, saying, ‘Truly You are the Son of God.’”

When Jesus was on this earth, He often prayed. This was because our Lord also had flesh. Although Jesus Christ is fundamentally God Himself, He was incarnated in flesh to save all the sinners of the world from all their sins. In other words, He had to come in the flesh of man to fulfill the will of God the Father. Having thus come to this earth, He had to be baptized, be crucified, shed His blood, die on the Cross, and rise from the dead. While Jesus Christ was on this earth, He had to be baptized by John the Baptist to follow the will of God and fulfill the righteousness of the Father.

He could fulfill the righteousness of God by obeying the Father’s will, which was for Him to receive the baptism from John the Baptist. Had



Jesus not been baptized by John the Baptist, then neither would He have shouldered the sins of the world, nor would He have shed His blood crucified to the Cross. To deliver sinners from their iniquities, it was absolutely indispensable for Jesus to be baptized by John the Baptist and thereby take upon the sins of the people of the world once for all. Born into this world in flesh, for Jesus Christ to do all these—to be baptized, die on the Cross, and rise from the dead, all to follow the will of God the Father—He faced many agonizing difficulties in His mind, and this was why Jesus had all the more reason to pray to God the Father for His help.

Because Jesus our God is righteous, He had to be born unto this earth incarnated in the flesh of man. To take upon the sins of mankind, Jesus had to be baptized by John the Baptist. And He had to give up His body on the Cross to pay off the wages of all our sins with His blood, for all

the condemnation of sin would end only when they were paid off properly. Here we have to realize clearly that Jesus had to suffer tremendously to fulfill all righteousness, and that His agony was beyond imagination. When we look at the humanity of Jesus, we can see that it was very fragile. Why did Jesus go to a deserted place when He heard that John the Baptist was beheaded to death? He did so because He wanted to ask God the Father to pass the cup of His death from Him, and to escape from the suffering of the Cross only if He could, for He, too, had the flesh of man.

The context of today's Scripture passage is as follows. Hearing that our Lord was in a deserted place, a great multitude gathered around Him. Jesus saw them and had compassion for them. At that time, Jesus' disciples came to Him and said, "Send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food." But Jesus



said to His disciples, “They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.” But all that the disciples had at the time was just five loaves of bread and two fish, an amount that was sufficient for only a single man’s lunch.

Jesus then told the disciples to bring the two fish and the five loaves of bread, and He then blessed them. Though all that the disciples had brought to Jesus was only five loaves of bread and two fish, when Jesus blessed them, they multiplied so much that they were more than enough to feed over 5,000 men. Before Jesus blessed it, this lunch had been enough for just one man. But because our Lord blessed this small amount of food, countless people were fed and still had leftovers. So the Bible records that there were over 5,000 men, besides women and children, who ate this food.

This miracle shows us that Jesus is the Son of God and that He is God Himself for us.

Had Jesus not been the Son of God and the true God, He could never have performed such an amazing miracle. We can find in Genesis 1 and John 1 that Jesus Himself created the universe in the beginning with His Word. Everything in this universe was created exactly according to how Jesus spoke His Word.

Jesus was able to feed over 5,000 people in a deserted field with only a lunchbox because He was God Himself. This would never have been possible unless He was indeed the Son of God. How could His disciples who saw this miracle not follow Him then? If you had been there, you would all have followed Him as well. When Jesus blessed the five loaves and two fish, broke them and gave them to the disciples, they were more than enough for everyone to eat and be filled. This event manifested the divine attribute of Jesus. It revealed that Jesus is the Son of God and God Himself for us.



In 1980's, there was a man called Uri-Geller. He claimed to possess supernatural power, able to turn the hands of a clock in the opposite direction with His mind alone without touching them. A long time ago, he once came to Korea and performed miracles and signs that were televised. He even enabled the viewers watching TV to bend a spoon through supernatural power. But even this Uri-Geller cannot feed over 5,000 men with a single lunchbox. (In fact, James Randi, who is best known as the world's most tireless investigator and demystifier of paranormal and pseudoscientific claims, later claimed to have exposed the dirty tricks of Uri-Geller.)

In today's Christianity, there are many weird people who claim to have the power to perform miracles. (Incidentally, the same James Randi mentioned above once came to Korea and promised that he would give one million dollars

to anyone who could perform a scientifically provable miracle. Predictably, the many supposed miracle performers in the Korean Christian community fell completely silent during his stay in Korea.) However, no matter what power they may claim to have, they cannot feed over 5,000 men with a single lunchbox. This is the power that only Jesus Christ the Son of God can exercise. Only the God who created the heavens and the earth can feed us with the bread of life, both in body and spirit.

We can realize that Jesus the true God came incarnated in the flesh of man. The name Jesus means the Savior who came to deliver all sinners from their sins. To save us from all our sins, Jesus had to come to this earth incarnated in the same flesh that you and I have, and He had to be baptized and shed His blood to death.



The Lord Has Enabled Us to Spread the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit, the Bread of Salvation, All over the Whole World

Our Lord performed the miracle of five loaves of bread and two fish so that His disciples would know and believe in His ministries. This miracle manifested that God would bestow His grace of salvation throughout the whole earth. In the Bible, the number five signifies God's grace, that is, the gift of God, and fish symbolizes God's Church. During the Early Church era, Christians had used the symbol of fish as a sign of identity. When they came across each other, they drew a fish on the ground to show their faith. Those who drew this fish were saying to one another, "I believe that the Lord is the Son of the living God and my Savior." Therefore, that Jesus performed

the miracle of five loaves of bread and two fish tells us that through His Church, God will give more than sufficient spiritual food to fill the whole world.

The ministry of God's Church was manifested through the miracle of five loaves of bread and two fish. Put differently, God has blessed the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the bread of life, and His Church so that His Church could share this bread of life with all the sinners of the entire world. Through this blessed ministry, God has enabled His Church to save all the sinners from their sins. Through His Church, God is now feeding countless people throughout the whole world with the bread of life. And the souls that have eaten the bread of life, that is, the gospel of the water and the Spirit, are being saved from all their sins.



Jesus Walked on Water

Here another event unfolds, Jesus' disciples were in the middle of the sea, far away from land, to cross to the other side of the shore in a boat. As the wind blew harder and the waves got higher, the disciples began to be gripped by fear. The high waves crashed into the boat, dumping water into it, and the wind was blowing so fiercely that no matter how hard they paddled, they could not move toward the direction that they wanted to go. Jesus' disciples were deeply distressed, overwhelmed by fear and worry. So as they were scrambling to keep the boat afloat, on the fourth watch of the night Jesus appeared before them.

In general, Jews divided the whole night (from 6:00 P.M. to 6:00 A.M.) into four parts. Therefore, the fourth watch of the night refers to 3:00-6:00 A.M., and so it's very likely that it was

still dark. When the disciples of Jesus were struggling in this darkness, on this water with high waves, they saw that Jesus was walking toward them. The Jewish people at that time wore robes. So with high winds, Jesus' robe must have flapped all over. When they saw that someone was walking toward them amid the tossing waves and the foaming sea, just think about how scared they would have been. So the disciples panicked, thinking that a ghost had appeared.

But the Lord came nearer to them and said, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid." Peter then asked Him, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water." When Jesus said, "Come," Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water. No one in this world but only Jesus and Peter must have walked on the water. As Peter was walking toward Jesus, he heard the raging wind and suddenly he was



afraid and lost his faith, and he sank into the water; but immediately Jesus pulled him up and they came into the boat together. And He rebuked Peter, saying, “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?” So when Jesus and Peter got into the boat, the wind ceased, and those in the boat worshiped Him, saying, “Truly You are the Son of God.”

Truly, Jesus is the God who can walk on the water, who is not bound by the natural laws of this physical world. He is indeed the true God. He is indeed the true Son of God.

Jesus wanted to give His disciples true and clear faith. To demonstrate to them that He is the Savior and God Himself in His essence, Jesus showed them such miracles and wonders. What we should learn from today’s Scripture passage is that for us to taste the miracle of five loaves and two fish and to follow the Lord, we must pray incessantly, for it is surely accompanied by

difficulties. Whenever we face hardships, we must pray. We must pray to our Lord, our God, for His help.

Moreover, when it comes to prayer, we must first have faith in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We must place our absolute faith in the Truth that the Lord is the true God and that He is the Son of God who has saved us. Simply put, Jesus is God Himself, but to save us from our sins, He came to this earth as our Savior, and through the gospel of the water, the blood, and the Spirit, He has indeed saved us from all our sins.

Jesus is fundamentally God Himself, exists in Heaven as God Himself, and He is the God who has come into us as the Holy Spirit, dwells with us, and helps us. Our Lord is the Shepherd of the believers. As God Himself, He is taking care of us as our Shepherd, has also become our friend, and reigns us as our King as well.



It is very important to place our faith in the truth that Jesus is the true God. His ministries testify that He actually is God Himself. So when we believe that He is the true God and our Savior, we can trust in Him and rely on Him. As we follow the Lord after meeting Him in the true gospel, there are times when we face hardships, for there are various dangers and difficulties. In times like these, we must pray to Jesus Christ our God placing our trust in Him.

We must have faith in the Lord. To give His disciples strong faith in Him, Jesus had allowed them such a dangerous situation. But He did not leave them in the lurch to the end. He walked toward them on water, told Peter to walk toward Him, and when Peter sank for the lack of faith He delivered him and got into the boat with him. It was to teach us true faith and to plant this faith deep in our hearts, that Jesus performed such miracles and signs.

This miracle also tells us that we must have strong faith in Jesus when we carry out our duty to preach the gospel throughout the whole world. We, too, will not be trouble-free, but we will indeed face hardship in every step along the way in our service to the gospel. In such times, we should not turn into faithless people, only to be disappointed, fall into the world, and die on our own. Rather, we must pray to God for His help by believing that Jesus Christ indeed is God Himself. By doing so, we can get our problems solved and really please the Lord with our faith. Such faith is essential to each of us who are willing to serve the gospel until the day when our Lord comes.

By doing so, He demonstrated to them clearly who He really was. As Peter experienced such a wonderful incident, he later could confess, “*You are the Christ, the Son of the living God*” (*Matthew 16:16*). We, too, should confess our



faith in Him, “Truly You are God. And You are the Savior who came as the Son of God to deliver the sinners of this world from all their sins and iniquities. You are the God of salvation. Though you came in the flesh of man to save us, fundamentally, You are God Himself.”

We, Too, Must Believe in Jesus Christ With a Proper Understanding

As you and I believe in the Lord and follow Him, we, too, are tempted by Satan, and are troubled by all kinds of difficulties. But in times like these when we are struggling so much, we must trust in God for all things and pray to Him by placing our faith in Him. God will then solve all our problems and we can continue to serve the gospel steadfastly with faith like trees planted by the water.

As we pray to God, we must also place our faith in Him. Whenever we pray, we must say our prayers standing firm on the faith that Jesus Christ is the living God and our Savior. It is only when we have this faith that we can succeed in all our endeavors. Unless we have this faith, we cannot follow the Lord until the end.

Because we are so weak and insufficient, we often fall into despair. But no matter what circumstances we might be facing, we must know the divinity of Jesus and His ministries, and believe in Him. We must believe that He is the Savior, who was baptized and crucified on this earth, and who has thereby washed away all our sins and saved us. We must believe that He is the Son of God and we must stand before God by this faith. It is because of our faith that you and I are blessed by God. And as we continue to live our lives following the will of the Father, whenever we face hardship, we must be helped



and get our problems solved through our faith. Such faith is the living faith that we should keep forever.

It is written, *“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour”* (1 Peter 5:8). Satan actually has his eyes wide open, desperately looking for the people of God whom he can devour. When he finds someone weak, he preys upon him like a roaring lion. In times like this, when you do not really have faith in the Lord, you will end up as his victim.

Satan tries incessantly to destroy the faith of the born-again, saying, “How can you believe in God when you are so insufficient?” Therefore, you must stand firmly on your faith. You must make your stand on your faith, saying, “Stay away from me, Satan! I may be so, but the Lord has saved me!”

Having received the remission of our sins, as we follow the Lord, there are many times when we face such worrisome, fearful, and difficult problems. Whenever we face them, we must pray to God all the more, believing that Jesus Christ is God Himself, and by having this faith, we must seek His help. If we have faith, we will surely experience the helping hands of God.

You and I must realize and believe that it was to teach us faith that the Lord performed the miracle of five loaves and two fish. You and I must learn faith through the Word of God, the Truth. We cannot afford to be without faith, either to be saved or to serve the gospel. We must believe in the Word of God. We must also have faith that everything will be fulfilled according to God’s Word. The Bible, the written Word of God, is the Truth.

Lately, my head has felt heavy and I wondered why. Suddenly it dawned on me that it was



because I had been working with someone who was not born again, and that this was why I had been deceived by a worthless weasel. My trouble with him was the cause of my headache. So when I analyzed all the factors of such troubles, I reached the conclusion that the root of the problem was because I had partnered and worked with someone who was not born again. The Bible says, *“Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness”* (2 Corinthians 6:14)? This is the truth; it was because I had ignored it that I faced these problems. When we work with someone who is truly born again God helps us, and so if we pray to God to help us, everything works out fine with His help even if we know nothing. But trying to work with someone who has not received the remission of sin is so agonizing. Indeed, we the

righteous should not work with anyone who is not born again.

We can find another lesson from the Old Testament. When Israel was divided into two kingdoms, by north and south, one of the kings of the southern kingdom allied with the king of the northern kingdom and waged war against and invaded another nation. The faith of the northern kingdom had been corrupted from the beginning, for its first king Jeroboam had made two calves of gold as its people’s gods and altered the sacrificial system on his own authority. Therefore, the alliance between the two kingdoms was formed out of lawlessness. This is why many of their people were killed and faced so much suffering.

We should not take God’s Word lightly. Rather, we have to fear His Word. Through my recent experience, I have realized again even more deeply that the Word of God is true, and I



had a repenting heart for my wrongdoing. And I prayed to God not to face such a temptation again. I hope you also would have the same faith in God and His Word.

Who is Jesus? He is the Son of God and our Savior. He is the Lord of life who created the universe and us, and has blotted out all our sins with the gospel Truth of the water and the Spirit. As you follow the Lord, you must also really place your faith in this true God Jesus. “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” We must have such a mind and such faith in our hearts.

There must be this faith in our hearts clearly, and we must go and stand before God with this faith. Jesus is our Shepherd, and the Father of Jesus Christ is our Father. Therefore, when we ask God the Father and Jesus Christ for help, God listens to our prayers according to His will, and He surely helps us. Because we are the people of God and His children, and because He

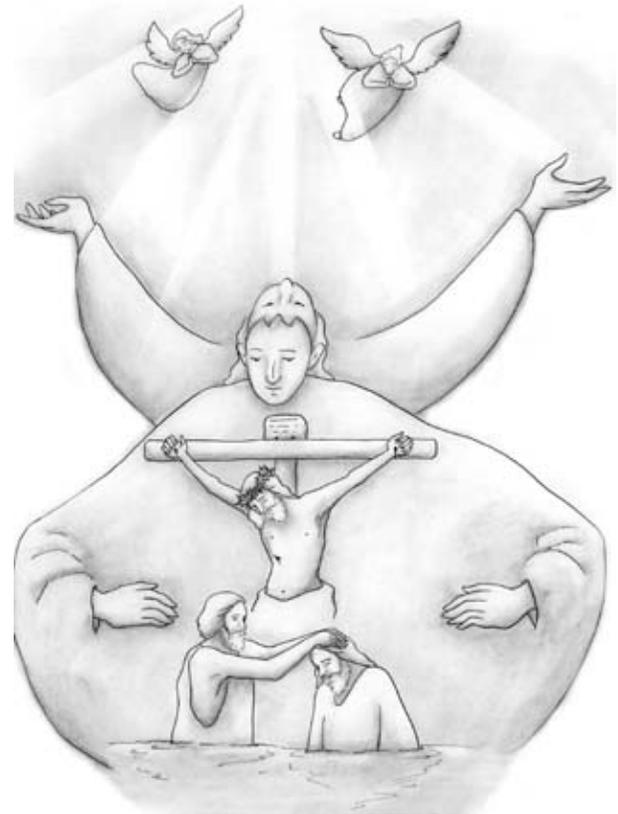
is our Father and our Shepherd, He helps us. We must have this faith firmly. In fact, it is because you and I have this faith that we can live spiritually. And every born-again must live by this faith.

We can summarize today’s Scripture passage into two sentences: “Jesus went to pray,” and “Jesus performed miracles and signs.” In other words, it shows us the truth that Jesus has humanity and divinity in His essence. As we see that Jesus was both human and divine, we should have strong faith in the truth that even though He is God Himself, He is also the Lamb of God who came in the flesh of man as our Savior. And we have to trust Him as the Omnipotent God and live by such faith. ☒



CHAPTER

15



CONTENTS



God Has Given Us Boundless Blessings

< Matthew 15:32-39 >

“Now Jesus called His disciples to Himself and said, ‘I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat. And I do not want to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way.’ Then His disciples said to Him, ‘Where could we get enough bread in the wilderness to fill such a great multitude?’ Jesus said to them, ‘How many loaves do you have?’ And they said, ‘Seven, and a few little fish.’ So He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. And He took the seven loaves and the fish and gave thanks, broke them and gave them to His disciples; and the

disciples gave to the multitude. So they all ate and were filled, and they took up seven large baskets full of the fragments that were left. Now those who ate were four thousand men, besides women and children. And He sent away the multitude, got into the boat, and came to the region of Magdala.”

When we focus on the last part of today’s Scripture passage, we can see just how abundant grace God has bestowed on mankind. The great multitude that was following Jesus Christ had not eaten for three days, and so they were starving. It’s written here that seeing them, Jesus had so much compassion for them that He said, “I do not want to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way.” He then blessed seven loaves of bread and two fish and gave them to the multitude; they were then all filled and there still



were seven baskets full of leftovers. Over 4,000 men were fed, besides women and children.

That there were seven baskets of leftovers means that God's grace is boundless. How amazing is that there was enough food left to fill seven baskets even after feeding over 4,000 men, not counting women and children? God had blessed a lunch that consisted of only seven barley loaves and a few little fish and shared it with the multitude, but seven baskets full of leftovers were gathered even after 4,000 men were fed, besides women and children. This tells us that God's grace is boundless and everlasting. It underscores just how important it is for us to have faith in God. The grace of God is that great. If God's grace were not truly great, then it would be impossible for us not to be discouraged in our lives of faith.

God Is Perfect

In the Scriptures, the number seven is a perfect number symbolizing the attribute of God. God bestows His grace on His hungry and starving people. As it is made clear in today's Scripture passage, there is no doubt whatsoever that God indeed bestows His grace infinitely. The Lord wants us to know and believe in the perfectness of God and His abundant grace.

Then, by what kind of faith should we live? Rather than live according to our circumstances and stage, we should ask for more of God's grace everyday, believe in Him more, yearn for His love more, and live in His love. And firming up our faith in God even more, we must live by believing in Him more. You must realize and believe from the depth of your heart that the love of God is infinite. Although we've often heard people say, "God is great. God is love," God



wants us to truly realize that He has indeed bestowed His grace abundantly. When we properly grasp this limitless grace of God and believe in it, we can then move beyond our low stage of faith that follows our own circumstances and situations.

Do you not believe in God at your own level and do you not also follow Him on your own stage? Have you not been tamed by doctrines instilled by legalized Christianity? If you have assessed your life of faith based on your own standard so far, and found yourself satisfied or tormented depending on this result, then now is the time for you to move beyond such a stage of faith and come into God's profound, boundless, and perfect realm of faith.

If we believe in God, then we can live in His infinite love, for His love knows no bound. I ask you all to believe in this God. You have to recognize that it's only because you don't have

enough faith in God that you are struggling with hardships. When we have no faith in the boundless grace of God, our hearts are often filled with discouragement and suffering. There are also times when we think that God does not know our suffering, and as a result, we bind ourselves with such sufferings. That's why we struggle to carry on with our lives of faith as if we were the only ones suffering. However, even when we feel as if God has abandoned us to our own struggle in our times of suffering, hardship, and pain, God still knows us all and pours His boundless love on us. Therefore, whenever we are suffering or facing hardships, we have even more reason to turn to God, who bestows this unbound grace on us. Even to this day, God is still asking you, "Entrust yourself to Me, rely on Me, and believe in Me."

Our God is not the kind of God that bestows His grace on us only to stop in the middle. On

the contrary, He is the God who left seven baskets of food even after feeding over 4,000 in men alone. He is not the God that would abandon you when you are exhausted desperately needing His help, but He is the God that bestows more than enough grace to feed everyone and still fill seven baskets. Likewise, the grace of God is not something that is bestowed on us only to cease in the middle. It is the grace that is bestowed on us continuously and infinitely.

Was there a moment in your life when you felt that your life was over? Or was there a time in your life of faith when you felt, “my life of faith is about to end here?” As we carry on with our lives of faith, there are such moments when it seems as if our faith is about to be lost. In times like this, when you feel as if you have run out of faith and you think, “my life of faith is over,” remember that God’s boundless love and grace has never ended, even though your own

righteousness, strength, and faith may have reached a certain limit. It’s because our own faith is exhausted before God that we feel as if everything is over, but this does not mean that God’s grace for us is somehow exhausted.

As we carry on with our lives, there are many times when our lives seem to be over. All of us probably have had a few near-death experiences. Yet even so, we have managed to survive and we are still alive. This was all possible because the grace of God has continued to take a fast hold on us, even though our strength was exhausted and we came close to death. The reason why we have been able to continue to carry on with our lives of faith without perishing in body and spirit is precisely because we have had the absolute and perfect strength that has held us whenever we seemed to run out of faith. It’s by this strength that we have been able to overcome crises of faith and remain alive. This strength comes from



God. God has bestowed His boundless grace on us, He has led us to the way of righteousness through His boundless love and grace, He has taught us and guided us justly, and knowing our hunger He has fed us to fullness. If this is indeed the case, then there is no need for us to be discouraged and remain neither in despair out of our present hardships and suffering, nor in our future trials to come. Whenever our faith seems to be exhausted and overwhelmed by our weaknesses, all that we have to do is just remember the boundless love of the Lord who has brought His grace to us according to His time, and believe that He is the God whose grace knows no bounds, for He plans to continue to bestow this grace on us in abundance. It's when we believe in God like this that He is rejoiced.

Contemplate on what it is that God is speaking to us about through today's Scripture passage. All those people who were with Jesus Christ at

that time had gone hungry for three straight days. Many people were starving at that time. As we carry on with our lives of faith, there are times when we go hungry, and there also are many times when we are exhausted. Yet every time, God has clothed us in His grace. This grace will continue on in the days to come, but today I would like to address this issue in more detail.

Who Do Not Believe in God Truly?

God says in Matthew 15:8-9, *“These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.”* Jesus said this with the Pharisees in mind. Religionists only care about outside appearances. The Pharisees, too, were typical religionists of their time, and so



they invoked the name of God only to seek their own interest, saying “All that matters is that you should keep yourself clean and act virtuously in your outside appearance.” They pretended to serve God only outside, claiming, for example, “Since God told us to serve our parents, we should serve them. But it’s not an absolute requirement, if we just say that what we should have given to our parents was offered to God” (Mark 7:11). These Pharisees—that is, religionists—emphasized superficial cleanness so much. They insisted that everyone had to wash his hands without fail whenever he returned home from outside, but on the other hand, they came up with all kinds of excuses for their own behavior, twisting the Word of God all the time to suit themselves, saying “that’s what God’s Word commands us, but there is always an exception.”

The Lord says to us, “Whatever enters through a man’s mouth cannot defile him; it is what comes out from his inside that defiles him.” (Mark 7:18-20). We have to be freed from this superficial cleanness. This means that any doctrine claiming that we only need to be clean outside, as if what enters through our mouths would defile us, is not right. In other words, all these things that enter through the mouth cannot defile anyone, but it is what comes out from his inside that defiles him. Many religious people think on their own, “it’s what enters a man through the mouth that defiles him.” My fellow believers, I ask you all to grasp that what enters through the mouth cannot defile anyone. Regardless of how diligently and virtuously one might have lived his life in outside appearance, if his inside is strewn with filthy sins then he is not a clean man.



Our Lord says that what enters through the mouth is not the problem. People think that if they wash what goes through the mouth before they eat it, then their inside would somehow be cleansed. That's what the Pharisees thought. And it wasn't just the Pharisees who thought so, but many others also thought like this. They thought that if they just cleaned what entered through the mouth before eating it, then they would be preserved in cleanness, but that was never the case. Jesus says, "What proceeds out of the mouth comes from the heart, and it's what comes out of a man that defiles him."

Let's Think about the Sins That Come out of The Heart of Mankind

We then need to consider the following questions here: "Exactly how filthy is mankind?"

And how useless is mankind's outside cleanness?" Jesus said that everything that comes out of mankind's mouth comes out of the heart, and this means that whatever comes out of the heart is the fundamental nature of mankind. The Lord is saying that whatever comes out of a man's mouth is none other than himself and this is what defiles others. What comes out of the mouth is what comes out of the heart and it's imperative for us to know what it is that comes out of the mouth—that is, what it is that comes out of our hearts.

Let us all turn to Matthew 15:19 here: "*For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.*" Jesus said here that what proceeds from the heart are evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, and blasphemies, and that it is these things that defile mankind. If we just look at ourselves as human



beings, leaving out the fact that the Lord has blotted out all our sins, then how would we see ourselves? Take a good look at yourself and also look at others. Once we see ourselves reflected on the Word of God in our lives, and set aside Jesus Christ when we look at ourselves, then we would realize just how exceedingly sinful we all are. We are constantly practicing nothing but evil. We are overflowing with evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, and blasphemies. If we set aside our faith in Jesus Christ, then we ourselves as human beings are nothing more than piles of sin. The nature of mankind, what comes out of human beings, and what comes out of the human heart are all evil. It is no exaggeration to say that the fundamental nature of mankind is stained with such iniquities as evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, and thefts. It's as clear as broad daylight that mankind is simply a brood of sin

that cannot help but spew out only wickedness and filthiness.

Although many people, brainwashed by religious teachings, think that there is some goodness to them, it's precisely because human beings are fundamentally evil that they seek goodness. That's why people seek to practice virtue with their acts, trying to hide their evil fundamental nature with their merits, and think that mankind is also capable of attaining some virtues. However, when we look at ourselves as human beings, we know that mankind itself is filthy. If you knew yourself, then you couldn't help but admit just how filthy human beings are, how evil their thoughts are, how blasphemous they are, and how often they bear false witness. You can realize all this just by looking at yourself. But if you don't recognize yourself, then you would likely be deluded into thinking that you are a good person. Furthermore, on the



other side of this thinking that considers oneself virtuous, it's absolutely certain that this mindset would be associated with religion and interwoven with religious hypocrisy. On our own, there is nothing at all that justifies us to look at ourselves as virtuous. Just as Jesus said in the Bible here, there is no question whatsoever that all the people living on planet earth, including myself, are a brood of evil whose thoughts are wicked, filthy, and depraved, and who indeed practice only evil.

We humans are completely worthless. When we look at the center of the human heart, we see how fundamentally filthy it is. Just as the Bible says, "*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?*" (*Jeremiah 17:9*), there is nothing that's filthier and more depraved than the human heart. All other things in this world, such as flowers, are clean as they are. In contrast, human beings try to

hide their filthiness with their hypocrisy. Of the entire creation, only mankind practices hypocrisy, incapable of recognizing itself. It's precisely because human beings are hypocritical that they delude themselves into thinking that they are virtuous. Yet unlike flowers, which are beautiful just as they are, when human beings are exposed in their true colors, they are so dirty, evil, and ugly that they are even filthier than sewage in the sewer and trash in the garbage dump. What about excrements filled with maggots? Aren't they also included in "all things?" Of course they are. If so, then the human heart is even filthier than such excrements and the maggots living in there. That is the real nature of mankind.



Do You Know Yourself Well?

The problem, however, is that we don't know ourselves that well. Sometimes even those who have received the remission of sin do not know themselves. So as a result they become prideful when they achieve something, but when their insufficiencies are exposed, they end up with far greater disappointment than the pride they had once felt.

There were many hungry people following Jesus Christ. Jesus had so much compassion for these people exhausted from hunger that He performed a miracle to feed them, but what kind of people are those who truly hunger in spirit? They are those who know who they really are. Once human beings know themselves, they spiritually starve so much that they get completely exhausted. So they come to ask the gods of the world for help desperately but in

vain. Only God can give them His divine grace, and that's indeed true.

On the other hand, there are many people who live without knowing themselves, but it makes no sense for them to come before God and ask for help when they don't even know themselves. Nor does it make any sense to beg God, "Please help me just a little; please forgive me just once this time." This is the wrong prayer to give, which is nothing more than saying, "I'm just slightly unclean and I only need a little help. I'll take care of the rest by myself." When you realize your total depravity, come to know the full extent of your wickedness, and admit, "I am completely filthy. My thoughts are filthy just as my acts are also filthy; I am nothing more than human trash"—it is then that you can become poor in heart and your heart can really come to hunger and thirst for righteousness.



If you and I still think that we have something virtuous on our own even after being born again, then we need to think again. If, by any chance, you think that you can somehow practice righteousness, that there is something good about you, and that you have certain virtues, then this can only mean that you are still not hungry in spirit. All human beings, including you and me, are completely depraved just as our Lord said. From the very moment we were born, we were already destined to be corrupt by fate. Since the fall of Adam and Eve, all human beings were born as a brood of complete filthiness and depravity. If you and I come to realize our true selves like this, then far from boasting about ourselves, we would find ourselves sighing in mourning. Even though we would be grieved when we know and admit ourselves, what will happen next? We will come to realize that it's precisely such people on whom our God bestows

His grace. It's then that we are able to believe in God by trusting and accepting this grace, and those who believe in this are able to find His grace by faith.

In contrast, those who still do not know what kind of people they are, consider themselves as someone capable of producing something righteous, and so they busy themselves to serve God through their own virtues. Such people waver back and forth, serving God and themselves half and half. On the other hand, those who know that they are insufficient recognize that they are completely depraved and rest all their expectations only on the grace of God entirely, even though they may also waver back and forth a little. In other words, by relying on God and trusting only in His grace, they come to have faith in His Word and His grace.



God Bestows the Same Salvation on the Gentiles Also

One day, while Jesus was traveling through the region of Sidon, a Canaanite woman from that region came to Him and cried out, “Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely demon-possessed.” What does it mean when it says a Gentile woman living in the region of Canaan sought out Jesus and said, “Have mercy on me?” Essentially, it means that this woman knew the full extent of her depraved and filthy self and admitted herself. Moreover, the woman not only saw her true self, but she also saw how her daughter was possessed by a wicked demon and once she saw such filthiness, she had no choice but to completely rely on Jesus and hang on to Him.

That is why she ran toward Jesus shouting out, “Have mercy on me, Son of David!” This

woman, who knew herself well, begged Jesus to help her daughter, saying, “My daughter is suffering terribly from demon-possession. Please have mercy on me!” Yet despite this, Jesus did not even turn around, and instead said, “*It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs.*” Jesus was treating this woman like a dog. He was saying straight to her face, “You are no better than a dog!” Take a look at how the woman responded in spite of this insult, saying: “Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table.” In other words, the woman frankly admitted herself to Jesus, saying, “Yes, you are right. I am a woman that’s no better than a dog. I am a dog.” Jesus had mentioned dogs in indirect reference to the woman, for He knew all about the human heart, and in return, this woman also admitted herself exactly as she was, for she, too, knew that she was like a dog. In other words, she had set



aside her daughter for now and first accepted that she was such a woman. That is how this woman was able to find grace from God.

My fellow believers, even though we have been born again, what kind of people are we fundamentally? We ourselves are no better than a dog. Jesus said that what proceeds from the human heart defiles mankind. What comes out of the heart of mankind are all kinds of sins, from evil thoughts to murders, adulteries, thefts, envy, conflict, pride, and so forth. In other words, Jesus told us that none other than we ourselves were born with such sins like a dog. A dog is said to return to where it had vomited once (Proverbs 26:11).

A dog scoops up and eats its own vomit. Mankind is the same. People pull out filth from their inside only to swallow it again; they commit sinful acts, repent, and then commit even more sinful acts all over again, repeating this

time after time. But what do you think? Do you think that we humans are any better than a dog? No, we are no better. Instead, our hearts are filthier and more depraved than a dog. When you really take a close look at yourself, you will realize just how lowly and wretched you are that you will have no choice but be thoroughly disappointed at yourself.

What would happen if people were to see their true selves accurately? They will all be disappointed at their filthy and depraved image. They will end up discouraged, thinking, “How wretched I am!” Isn’t this the case? When you look at yourself, are you not disappointed? All those who really take a close look at themselves are bound to be disappointed. However, sometimes even disappointment can be a good dose of medicine, for it is in times like this that people finally come to hunger and thirst for righteousness. It’s precisely because you know



you are insufficient that your heart is aroused with the desire to hold on to Jesus Christ and to believe in whatever He says exactly as it is. It is then that you come to deny yourself totally and rely on the Word of God. As you come to realize your completely worthless self, you realize that this worthless body of yours cannot live without the Lord, and in gratefulness, you come to yearn for the grace of Jesus Christ, His blessings, His infinite love, and His boundless salvation.

However, most people still do not know themselves that well. Socrates once said long ago, “Know yourself,” but so many people still continue to be oblivious to who they really are. There are so many people who don’t realize that they are no better than a dog and that they are nothing more than human trash; even now, still drunk by the teachings of religions they continue to delude themselves into believing that their own self-portrait, embellished with pretense and

hypocrisy, is their true portrait. We humans, by ourselves, are completely worthless trash. Therefore there is no doubt whatsoever that if faith is taken away from the born-again and religion from those who have not been born again, everyone alike would be invariably useless and worthless before God.

If Jesus, who has blotted out all the sins of the world, were taken away from you, what kind of a person would you be? Imagine what would happen if you were left without the gospel Word of the water and the Spirit. What kind of people would you and I be then? We would be revealed as completely worthless. We would turn into useless people no different from an animal. We would end up no better than leeches, eating and drinking everyday, and yet wanting more and more (Proverbs 30:15). Is this not true? Of course it is. That is why we have no choice but to believe in Jesus, who has blotted out all our sins.



It's because we were useless sinners that we needed Jesus. After starving so much, we were only too glad, grateful, and rejoiced to meet Jesus.

That is why we believe in Jesus. We believe that Jesus accepted all our sins and was condemned in our place. We also believe that when we believe in Him we attain eternal life. We believe that He has blotted out all our sins out of His love for us. We also believe that we have been saved by faith. We truly need Jesus Christ.

Even after being born again, we still need Jesus Christ. As human beings, we are still filthy in and of ourselves even after being born again, but Jesus Christ speaks to us and enables us to believe in Him, and therefore our faith in the Lord cleanses our heart, makes our acts upright, and leads us correctly. Do you believe in this? On our own, we are incapable of practicing any

righteousness at all. It's all because of the Lord that we practice righteousness. It's because of the Lord that we practice virtue. It's because of the Lord that we know God's love, and it's because of Him that we love others. And it is because of the Lord that we are now walking on the right path, for it is all too clear that we ourselves as humans are incapable of doing so.

If a born-again person has practiced goodness, preached the gospel, and served the Lord in various ways, then it's all because God has given him a good heart, faith, and the ability, strength, and circumstances to practice righteousness. We have to grasp here that it's only because the Lord has led us that we are now able to love Him, serve Him, and preach the gospel to people; if we were to love the Lord all on our own, then we would never be able to love people, nor serve the Lord.



Sometimes We Lead Our Lives of Faith in Delusion

While we the born-again are carrying on with our lives of faith, it's possible for us to sometimes fall into delusion. "Lord, I've served You all this time, but what have You done for me? Have You done anything for me at all? All that You've done has just brought hardship on me. What is it that You've done for me? I don't want to serve You anymore. I'd rather give up my life of faith now." Some of us have such mistaken thoughts.

But that is not right. If you have indeed served the Lord wholeheartedly, then you should be grateful to Him for giving you a heart of righteousness, allowing His Word to come into you, and enabling you to serve Him. And you should thank Him for using you as His righteous instrument. It's not we who have served the

Lord, but is the Lord who has served us, so that we may be able to serve Him. We have to realize that it is not we who have practiced righteousness on our own, but it is the Lord who has given us the strength to practice righteousness.

Even among our born-again saints, some people are disappointed in their hearts wondering, "I've followed the Lord, but what have I received from Him?" That's because they still do not realize just how filthy and depraved they really are, how their existence is like a dog. Because they themselves do not truly know just how depraved and worthless they are, they front their own righteousness and are stiff-necked before the Lord, thinking that they still are worthy of esteem. You, however, must realize that you are nothing as a human being. Indeed, we are nothing if the Lord leaves us. Without the Lord we are incapable of practicing



righteousness; we will only commit sin. Nor will we be able to love, but far from it we will only be cursing in our lives. Is this how you want to live the rest of your life, bubbling with filthy sewage and reeking of foul smell?

It is all too evident that if the Lord were taken away from us, we would all be drowning in filthy water, dwelling in this cesspool and vomiting filthy things, only to fall deeper into the swamp of sin and be destroyed forever. Yet even though we could not help but live like this, God has still saved us and so in light of this, I admonish you all to really grasp that you can only thank God. Because God had compassion for us, even though we were wicked, depraved, and filthy, He came to us, blotted out all our sins, led us all, and made it possible for us to practice righteousness. He has taught us what is right and what is the truth, He has made us love Him, and He has enabled us to live a righteous life. None other

than this is what God has done for us. That is the reason why we should all give glory to God. It is not we who have loved God, nor is it we who have served Him. It is the Lord who has loved us, it is He who has enabled us not to waste away our lives, and it is God Himself who is leading us to the right path, so that we would be rewarded by Him.

My fellow believers, who is the master of our lives? Is your life really yours? No, that's not the case. Then who is the driving force behind our lives, and who has enabled us to practice righteousness and virtue, to love, and to lead an upright life? It's none other than Jesus Christ, not we.

Without the Lord, human beings are completely worthless, always making one mistake after another. From time to time when I look at myself, I realize even more profoundly, "If I weren't doing the Lord's work, I would be a



man completely useless to do anything but commit sin throughout my entire lifetime.” Not only would I commit sin, but I would be an expert at it. I’m sure that I’d be able to live in this world very shrewdly, enjoy all its pleasures, and commit every evil deed imaginable, all the while escaping from the law cunningly to avoid jail. Perhaps you are too virtuous for this to be true in your case. Some of you may think that there is still some virtue left in you even if you don’t follow the Lord, but as far I am concerned I know that I am nothing but a pile of sin unless I follow the Lord. So I know very well that whatever I do I cannot help but only do what is evil. Of course, it was only after receiving the remission of my sins that I saw myself as such a man.

As a matter of fact, before I was born again I never thought of myself to be so evil. I considered myself quite virtuous, even if

everyone else might be wicked. Whenever I came across a lost child on my way home, I always made sure to walk the child safely to his home; whenever I saw the owner of the coal store in my neighborhood struggling to pull the cart, I made sure to give him a hand and push the cart from behind; and whenever I saw an elderly man carrying a heavy load on his shoulder, I always shouldered it in his place. So I thought to myself that I was a very good man. However, with passing time, once I took a close look at myself, I realized, “Ah, unless I follow the Lord, I would become a worthless swindler and a completely useless man.”

How about you then? Is this not who you are also? Can any of you really live an upright life without Jesus? Can you live like the great sages of human history even if Jesus is taken away from you? It’s as clear as the broad daylight that



without Jesus you would all infallibly turn into wickedness itself.

Without the Lord, We Are Completely Worthless

You and I alike, as well as everyone else, should all recognize and admit that we are worthless, and entrust ourselves to the Lord. Without Jesus Christ and without the Word of God, we are completely useless junk for both mankind and this world. Without the Lord, our lives are absolutely worthless. There is a hymn entitled “I Cannot Live without My Lord,” and there is indeed nothing remaining in us if we are left without Jesus. If Jesus Christ and the Word of Truth are taken away from us, then we will all be incapable of speaking the Truth. Without the Lord, we would be like a boat sailing the sea

without any sails. Our direction in life would then take a wrong turn, and therefore it would be impossible for us to lead an upright life. A life without the Lord is wasted thoughtlessly in whatever way, just as a boat without a sail drifts with the tide in the vast sea. Without the Word of the Lord, we cannot even set the right direction in life, and without the Lord dwelling in us, we cannot help but continue to commit only sin—this is who we are.

Open your ears to what this woman from Canaan said. Even though Jesus Christ had told her, “It is not good to take the children’s bread and throw it to the little dogs,” this woman responded by saying, “Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table.” In other words, the woman said to Him, “Even though I am like a dog, I still yearn to attain and feed on even the smallest of



Your grace in my life. Lord, please bestow Your grace on me, even though I am a dog.”

Hearing this woman’s words, the Lord said, “*O woman, great is your faith!*” Who are those whose faith is truly great? They are those who know that they themselves are like a dog and admit that they are worthless trash. These are the people who acknowledge the fact that without Jesus, they are completely helpless to avoid hell because there is absolutely no virtue to be found in them. They are incapable of practicing anything else but wickedness. They then ask Jesus Christ for the grace of salvation and the gift of God and they believe in them. It is none other than these people whose faith is truly great. The Lord Himself told the woman that her faith was great.

Traveling with His disciples for three days, our Lord had taught a great multitude. But there were many in the crowd who had gone hungry

without any food for their flesh while following Jesus for three days. On the third day, Jesus said, “I’ve been with this crowd for three days, and I have so much compassion for them that I can’t just send them hungry.” When Jesus said this, someone brought a lunch to Him consisting of a few fish and seven loaves. Since these fish and bread were the usual lunch carried by ordinary people, they must have been quite small. Someone had brought a small lunch to Jesus Christ. Yet when Jesus put His hands on it, blessed it, and distributed it to the crowd, no less than 4,000 people ate it, just counting men alone. In the Bible, women and children are usually not counted. This doesn’t mean that the Bible ignores them, but when the Israelites counted people, they always counted only the number of men. It’s only after the arrival of Jesus Christ that women finally came to be treated equally



and the women in the Bible imply none other than us, the brides of Jesus Christ.

We Must Ask the Lord for His Grace, Who Is the Fountain of All Blessings

It is written in today's Scripture passage: *"Now Jesus called His disciples to Himself and said, 'I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat. And I do not want to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way.' Then His disciples said to Him, 'Where could we get enough bread in the wilderness to fill such a great multitude?' Jesus said to them, 'How many loaves do you have?' And they said, 'Seven, and a few little fish.' So He commanded*

the multitude to sit down on the ground. And He took the seven loaves and the fish and gave thanks, broke them and gave them to His disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitude. So they all ate and were filled, and they took up seven large baskets full of the fragments that were left. Now those who ate were four thousand men, besides women and children."

My fellow believers, all of us are starving people. We are insufficient, we are poor, and we are devoid of any righteousness. We humans do not live just by eating the bread of the flesh, but we must eat the spiritual bread also. That is how every human life is sustained. When we were too starved to carry on with our lives in this world anymore, the hands of Jesus reached and touched us. Indeed, had Jesus Christ not come to this earth, then we would not have been able to eat any spiritual food, nor any bread for our souls, nor any bread of the heart. Without Jesus, the



whole planet earth and everything on it are nothing more than trash. Even though many people have left wise sayings, from Buddha to Confucius, Plato, Socrates, and Gandhi, without Jesus everything that has come out of mankind is in fact all garbage.

But what happened? It's said in today's Scripture passage that Jesus Christ fed all those multitudes. And it also says that even after they were all fed to their hearts' content, there was still enough leftover to fill seven baskets. Now as before, the grace of God is always boundless. It's when we believe in the infinite grace of God that we can live enjoying this boundless grace. If human beings, who are all finite, were determined to follow the Lord, would they be able to follow the Lord and practice righteousness through their own effort and their own merit? No, the righteousness of mankind is exhausted in no amount of time.

The Lord has given us His prayer, teaching us how and for what we should pray. Among these prayer requests, He told us to pray, "Give us our daily bread." Since the Lord Himself told us to ask God for our daily bread, wouldn't God then take care of our need for bread? The grace of God is eternal and boundless. God's bread, which is His infinite grace, is our daily bread of love, Truth, and grace. Our God has bestowed us with this bread for eternity and everyday we are eating this daily bread by faith. The abundant grace that God has bestowed on us is not something that was given only in the past, but it is something that lasts forever into our future.

As we carry on with our lives of faith, we get discouraged from time to time. However, once we renew our faith that the grace of God is limitless, our discouragement soon turns into hope. I admonish you all to believe in this fact, that this grace of God is boundless and that God



still has enough grace left to fill seven baskets. If you believe in this, then God's grace will continue to be bestowed on you now and forever. If we believe that God's grace is still bestowed on us, then we can be freed from not only our own poverty, but also from our difficult circumstances.

In contrast, if we believe in ourselves and rely only on our own strength rather than believing in the boundless grace of God, then it will be inevitable for us to become hungry again, become weary, and go astray in the wilderness. You and I are such fragile beings. How about you? Even though you run toward the Lord with all your strength, don't you sometimes still go hungry, naked, and fall into weaknesses? It's times like this that you need the unbounding grace of our God. It's when we believe in this endless grace of God that's bestowed on us everyday, when we ask God for this grace, and

when we trust in this God, that we are filled day after day. In this way, you and I are able to live before the Lord amid God's blessings.

Why are you still discouraged when the Lord is with us and when He is bestowing us with His overflowing grace? The reason why we feel discouraged and fall into despair is all because we don't believe in the boundless love of God and His Truth and grace. Even though we are all insufficient and limited beings, God is boundless. Even though our strength is limited, the power of Jesus Christ is limitless. The love of God and His blessings for us are infinite. Although our own righteousness is like the passing fog that disappears in little time, God Himself is eternal, He is bestowing His everlasting grace on the entire human race, He has stored more than enough grace to last forever, and even at this very moment, He is giving us this grace.



My beloved saints, the Lord dwells in our hearts. The Apostle Paul once said to the Corinthian believers, *“O Corinthians! We have spoken openly to you, our heart is wide open. You are not restricted by us, but you are restricted by your own affections. Now in return for the same (I speak as to children), you also be open”* (2 Corinthians 6:11-13). Let us all engrave this passage in our hearts. It’s only when our hearts thirst and yearn for the grace of God before His presence that we can receive His infinite love, everlasting Truth, and unbound blessings. If we are unable to ask for God’s help, it’s only because our own hearts are restricted. As such, I admonish you all to believe that God Himself is boundless and that His heart is always open for you. When we face hardship, it’s only because we have restricted ourselves in our hearts. The boundless love, everlasting Truth, unbound salvation, and infinite blessings that

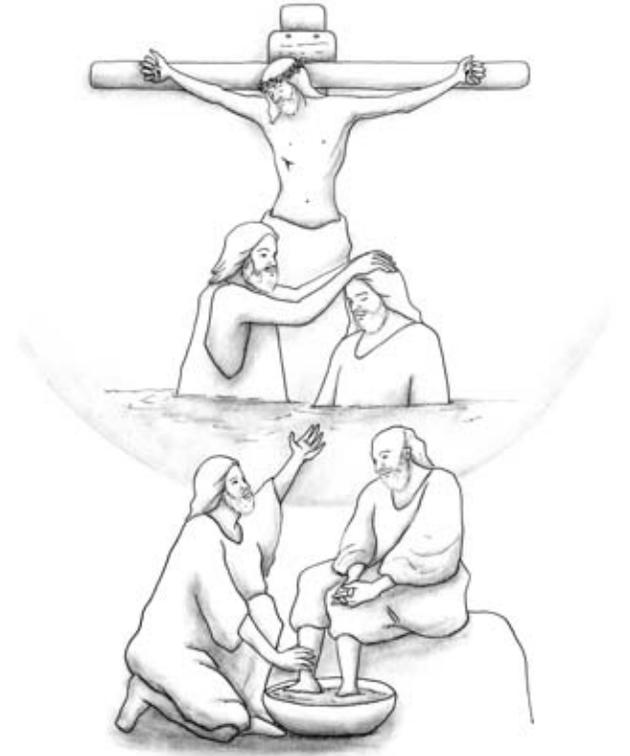
God has bestowed on us are never restricted. Do you believe in this, my fellow believers?

Let us all then ask incessantly for this grace of God by faith for the rest of our lives. I believe that God’s blessings will then be bestowed abundantly on all of us. ☒



CHAPTER

16



CONTENTS



We Must Be Mindful of God's Work First

< **Matthew 16:21-25** >

“From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day. Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, ‘Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!’ But He turned and said to Peter, ‘Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.’ Then Jesus said to His disciples, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his

life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.’”

There were many difficulties for me in the year 2000. You probably went through some hardship as well, right? Had Jesus not protected us, we would have passed away already, but we know that our Lord has kept us alive, for He is truly powerful. Even when all our ministers and saints at our Mission are added up, our number is only a few hundred, and so in some ways, it does seem to make little sense for such a small gathering to try to work with the whole world. However, even through this, we once again realize just how great God's power is. Even though we are insufficient, the Lord is never insufficient. That's why I believe that if it's the Lord's will, then it will be fulfilled for sure. Even though we are small in number and preach the



gospel to the whole world, it is very hard for us to work so incessantly. When I really think about it, we are indeed doing something truly amazing.

Exhausted from backbreaking labor, we really came close to death. When we think about it in carnal terms, our labor is so hard on us that we cringe at the mere prospect of the work that needs to be carried out in the days to come, but when we think with a spiritual mind, we are very grateful even for this. While I myself am struggling, I know that our ministry workers and all of you supporting the preaching of the gospel are also struggling. Yet despite this hardship, you did not perish away, but kept yourself alive to follow the Lord all the way to this point. I am very thankful for this.

Today, we read a passage from Matthew chapter 16. In today's Scripture passage, Jesus told the disciples that He had to go to Jerusalem, suffer many things from the elders, priests, and

scribes, be killed, and rise from the dead again in three days. Then Peter, to show his loyalty to Jesus, said to Him, "*Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!*" Peter had said this for the sake of the Lord, not realizing that it was actually his own carnal thought. So instead of being commended for his loyalty, Peter's words only brought Jesus to anger, and he was harshly rebuked as a result.

The Lord then said to Peter and to us as well, we could truly live spiritually: "*If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it*" (Matthew 16:24-25).

The Lord says here that whoever wants to follow Jesus must first deny himself, pick up his cross, and then follow Him. Now, some of you may think, "There he goes again; we already know all about this passage!" We may know all



about the Word, but far too often, we are unable to actually put our knowledge into practice. As well, there are certain passages that our minds can only fully grasp and understand after a few years, even after hearing several sermons on them. So even if we were to speak of all the passages in the 66 Books of the Bible hundreds of times, it cannot be too excessive to us. That's why we must listen to the Word of God time and again.

What Jesus said to Peter in today's Scripture passage is very beneficial for us. *"You are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."* The Lord rebuked Peter because of this. What, then, is the difference between the things of men and the things of God? How are they different? We must be mindful of the things of God. Whenever we want to do anything somehow, we must first think of the work of God. We must also be more mindful of greater

things than smaller things, and the whole picture than the partial picture. Above all, we must set our minds on the greater cause. If we are not careful, we are prone to be obsessed with petty things and then it's quite possible for us to think that our judgment is right in our own way. However, if we stay focused on the will of God, then we can realize that it's wrong for us to think based on petty things.

We Must Follow the Thoughts of the Spirit, Not the Thoughts of the Flesh

Just as Peter was rebuked by Jesus in today's Scripture for this reason, it is also what we must all infallibly remember in our lives of faith. In other words, it's imperative for us to first think of greater things than smaller things, and the greater cause than the will of the flesh. If this



principle is not clearly settled in our hearts, Jesus will also rebuke you and me just as He rebuked Peter. He will say the same things that He had said to Peter. Our thoughts must be upright. This means that we must first think of God's work. Of course, I'm sure that you are all mindful of God's work, but it cannot be emphasized enough just how imperative it is for us to think about how the work of God is different from the work of mankind and to know this difference clearly.

As we go through many different affairs in this world, we are all prone to think of the things of men first, just like Peter. "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!" This is what Peter said when the Lord told the disciples, "I will go to Jerusalem, be persecuted by the elders and scribes, and be crucified to death. I must die and be resurrected." Peter then tried hard to dissuade Him, saying, "This shall not happen to You!" Many Christians in this world, and

sometimes even you and me, who profess to be serving the Lord, think and say like Peter all too often. But you and I must never do so. It's not just Peter who expressed concern over his own prosperity, but this is something that everyone else, including you and me, should also be concerned about.

While serving the Lord, sometimes we compare one another based on our own human standards and argue over who is better than whom; in reality, however, we know that there is hardly any difference among us. We know that when looking from a spiritual viewpoint, the difference between any two human beings is only paper-thin. How much taller could one be even if he were tall, and even if one is learnt, how great is secular knowledge? The difference is insignificant. Those who are carnally minded, those who think from the perspective of mankind—that is, those who are concerned about



only their own welfare and honor, and think everything only for the prosperity of their flesh—think like Peter.

Recently, I've been watching a historical drama on TV, and I often see people conspiring against their political enemies and murdering them to grab power, and how such conniving and unrighteous people prevailed. It's no exaggeration to say that the history of mankind is one that is marked with endless bloodshed, instigated by those thirsting after power seeking to fulfill their lusts. In other words, mankind's history is the outcome of the activities of those seeking after power. In many aspects, it's by a few individuals that the history of the human race has unfolded as a field of contest to determine who would succeed, who would be higher, who would be greater, and who would be preeminent, rather than for any great cause.

Peter loved Jesus so much that when Jesus said, "I must die," he tried to dissuade Him, saying, "This shall never happen to You!" Peter said this because he loved Jesus too much. It's not because Peter hated Jesus that he said this. While we serve the Lord, however, our focus must be on whether or not the will of the Lord would be fulfilled. We have to be mindful of greater things. In other words, rather than arguing over individual merits, you and I must set our minds on the greater cause. "This is what the Lord is saying and this is what He wants. How should we then serve Him with the same heart and same purpose with the Lord on this issue?" It's with such thoughts that we must lead our life of faith.

However, even among our ministers serving the Lord and our brothers and sisters alike, far too many of them are delighted if they are good at something and their work is going well, but at



the very moment they get slightly disappointed at themselves, they fall deep into spiritual despair all of a sudden and end up spiritually dead. Of course, many of our ministry workers are not like this. There also are believers who are rejoiced together when the will of God is fulfilled and who are saddened together when the will of God is not fulfilled. In other words, there are those who set their minds on the Lord's work and unite their hearts to this endeavor regardless of themselves and whether what they are doing is going well or not. Their hearts are conditioned by the work of the Lord, rejoiced and saddened together with Him depending on how His work is unfolding.

There are two types of people among those leading a life of faith, those who seek the greater cause and those who seek only their own interests. In the Corinthian churches, there were some saints who had formed different factions,

saying, "I am of Apollo; I am of Peter; I am of Paul." Likewise, there are many Christians today who are mindful of only the things of men, not caring about the will of the Lord. These people all think like Peter. Yet God cannot work through such Christians. That's why the saints of such churches were the first to be corrupted once Rome allowed religious freedom to Christians. Intoxicated by the world, they all ended up abandoning the truth of salvation and renouncing the righteous work of God. As a result, these regions became the first places from where the work of the gospel disappeared.

During the 2001 Winter Jesus' New Life Discipleship Training Camp, I would like to ask the following question to everyone, including myself, all our coworkers, our saints, and even the unsaved who still do not believe in this gospel: "Are you mindful of the things of God or the things of men?" I would like to share the



Word to address this issue. If we are mindful of the things of men, everything must satisfy our wish in the end. Whatever we do with such a mindset, we are only happy if our wish is satisfied and unhappy if not.

But how is it when we are mindful of the things of God? If God says, "I have saved you like this," then regardless of whether this Word suits us or not, the proper thing for us to do is to say, "Amen! If You have done this, then You have done so." Depending on whether we are spiritually minded according to the greater cause or succumb to self-centered humanistic thoughts, the success and failure of our lives of faith are determined. When Jesus said that He had to die, Peter tried to dissuade Him, saying, "No, that must never happen!" Yet he was only rebuked by Jesus, who said to him, "Get behind Me, Satan!" This means that those who are mindful of only the things of men are a brood of the Devil.

Because you and I both have flesh, it is extremely hard to deny this flesh. To lead a life of faith, however, it is still absolutely imperative for us to deny ourselves. Just as Jesus said in today's Scripture passage, whoever desires to come after the Lord must deny himself, pick up his cross, and follow Him. That's why it's such a struggle for all of us the born-again to lead a life of faith. Yet even though it's hard, we must still examine ourselves to see what it is that we are actually mindful of in our lives of faith. We have to ask ourselves whether we are mindful of fleshly things or the will of the Lord, whether our thoughts are of mankind or the Spirit, and whether we are serving the Lord according to His desire or with the mindset of man. Those who desire God's work to succeed and whose hearts are devoted to the fulfillment of the will of God are clearly God's workers and His servants.



Even if the will of God is not fulfilled right away, such people set their goal on this will, they labor and sacrifice themselves for it, and they run toward this goal. If it's the will of God, then these people run toward it regardless of whether it succeeds or not and they are rejoiced when this work is achieved; in fact, they have few things that bring any joy to them except for the work of God. Clearly, such people must be God's workers and His servants. In contrast, if someone does not care about what happens to the will of God and His work, but is only interested in his own contentment and welfare—rejoiced when his own work goes well and saddened when it does not—then strictly speaking, he is not a true laborer of God. All those who are serving the Lord must examine themselves carefully to see whether they are indeed serving God or themselves and they must completely dedicate all their hearts to living for the Lord.

We are now preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit all over the world. In some ways, proclaiming the gospel throughout the whole world may seem like a tremendous challenge, but when looked at with faith, it's a challenge that we can rise up to meet. Because the Lord has told us to spread the gospel to every tribe all over the world, because this is the will of the Lord, His pleasure, and His commandment, because the Lord's commandment is infallibly fulfilled, and because we are instruments used for this work, all that we are doing is just obeying this commandment. There is no other reason.

Quite frankly, I think that throughout the entire history of Christianity, there has been no mission organization or denomination anywhere in the world that has labored so hard like us. Is there any mission group that is preaching the gospel to over 200 nations all over the world? There is no denomination in this world, no matter



how large, that is working with the whole world in mind like us. This is a remarkable achievement if we were to boast about it. But how is it when God sees us from His point of view? How is it if we look at ourselves from God's perspective or through the eyes of faith? We are just doing what God has told us to do as His servants—no more, no less.

When we, the born-again, carry out God's work, how will our hearts and faith be disposed? We must be mindful of God's work in everything we do. If we find ourselves saddened and struggling in our lives of faith, it's all because our hearts are set on our own flesh. God's work itself is not the cause of our sadness or hardship. Of course, in some cases, we feel as if our sadness and trials stem from serving the Lord. However, if we reconsider this, we can see that it's because we are mindful of the things of men that our hearts go astray and suffer. It's when we

think based on human standards and the things of men, that we are saddened and feel so overworked. If we think from God's perspective—that is, based on the will of God—then it is only a matter of fact for us to pay any price of sacrifice. And if we think about how much of God's work is achieved through our sacrifice, our hearts become rejoiced and happy.

I am not saying these things to rebuke you, as if some of you have done or said something wrong. Rather, I am only saying these things so that in this day and age when the day of the Lord's return is not that far away, we would all refine our faith properly and lead a life of faith that's truly free from any regret or failure.

You and I are God's people following the Lord. I know that you have labored hard and sacrificed much while following the Lord and that you have lost much and gained much as well. This is how we the righteous have led our



lives. At this present time, when there aren't that many days left for our lives of faith, I contemplate on what it is that we should do. Ultimately, we must become the kind of people who are always rejoiced when the work of God goes well and saddened when God's work progresses slowly. You and I must indeed be mindful of God's work always. We should never become such people who are mindful of only the things of men, saddened and rejoiced by them. Our beliefs, our thoughts, and our faith must be freed from the bondage of human desires and turned toward the things of God to be mindful of them.

We must have such faith and thoughts. Only then can we follow the Lord unwaveringly in this age, when the end is not far away. Regardless of our merits and demerits, we must become the kind of people who follow the Lord unchangingly, who are grateful for Him, and who

can stand up without any shame on the last day, at anytime the Lord returns. This is possible only if our faith is such that we are always mindful of God's work first. Without this kind of faith, nothing can ever be achieved.

You and I should never allow ourselves to succumb to the thoughts of the flesh like Peter, who had spoken from the Devil's side in today's Scripture passage. Even though it may have seemed right in Peter's eyes to obstruct the way of Jesus to fulfill the will of God, in God's eyes, he was clearly speaking words uttered only by Satan's servants. As such, setting aside our merits and demerits for now, we must learn and realize from today's Scripture passage what kind of faith we should all have. You and I must be mindful of God's work.



Deny Your Carnal Thoughts

The Lord said, *“If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.”* It would be a struggle for you to obey this Word. Nevertheless, I know very well that you have followed the Lord to this day precisely because you have denied yourself all this time. Isn't that the case? I am sure it is. However, the Lord commands us again, demanding the same requirement from us time after time, today and tomorrow: “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.” This Word is not something that was spoken just once, but it was spoken continuously. Today and tomorrow alike, and until the day the Lord returns, this Word is God's commandment for all of us.

For us to follow the Lord, denying ourselves is not enough. The Lord said, “Take up your cross and follow Me.” The cross here denotes hardship. There is no one among you who has no cross. That's why everyone struggles. There is an excellent gospel song in our hymnbook that goes, “♪Though I am weary and lonely, I believe that God is giving me new strength♪.” What is important, however, is that we shouldn't fall into self-pity even while singing the words of such a praise song, saying to ourselves, “Oh, it's so hard! I'm so miserable!”

When it comes to serving the Lord, everyone has his own cross. People realize this right away when they meet the Lord, as soon as they are saved. In some light, perhaps even before being saved, for anyone to meet the Lord and receive his salvation and eternal life from Him, there probably was a cross that he had to shoulder for this as well. Everyone who wants to be blessed



by the Lord inevitably comes across this Word first.

This is the Lord's commandment to us. *"If you want to follow Me, deny yourself, take up your cross, and then follow Me."* Sometimes, it's harder to deny yourself and pick up your cross than to die. If the cross were far away, then you could go around and avoid it, but is your cross really that far away? No, your cross is so close to you that there is no way for you to avoid it. Everything and anything can constitute your cross—you could be your cross, your stubbornness and your thoughts could be your cross, or your family, relatives, your closest friends, and even your most beloved parents could be your cross. All these things can be what make it hard for us to follow the Lord.

Is it then a curse for us to struggle so much to follow the Lord after being born again? No, that is not the case. Everyone has his own cross

though many people don't show it outwardly. What about you? Don't you have a cross to pick up? Of course you do. I am sure that you all agree. Because everyone has his own cross to bear, there is no one who does not struggle while serving the Lord. We have to recognize that each of us has his own cross to carry—if not mine, then you still have a different type of cross to carry; and if not seen by the eye, then you have an even larger spiritual cross to take up. Serving the gospel is inevitably accompanied to hardship. Since that is what the Lord Himself said, it's actually strange to come across anyone who doesn't struggle.

Yet even among such trials, the Lord still commands us to follow Him. We should therefore accept our cross and be all the more grateful for it. If we had no cross to bear, just how prideful would we be? There are many of us who, without a cross to carry, would turn so



conceited that it would be a completely unbearable sight. Such a person, convinced that he alone is worthy, would despise his own brothers and sisters of faith and turn himself into a stumbling block that leads them to spiritual death, saying to them, "Is that all you can do? That's not the right life of faith; this is that proper life of faith!" There would then be no one left here. He would then end up all alone in the Church and lead his life of faith as if he were greater than Jesus Himself. Such people would not be able to tolerate anyone who is even slightly weak.

This, however, can never happen to us, for you and I alike each have a cross to carry. If our cross were a wooden cross, we could just take it off, but we can't do this because this cross is always accompanying us. It's inevitable for those who have struggled a lot to have compassion on other struggling souls and endure their

weaknesses precisely because they themselves have gone through such trials. It's because both you and I are like this, because we have tolerance for each other, that we are now gathered here to worship and serve the gospel together.

Everyone who serves the Lord has a cross to carry. That's why the Lord commanded us to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Him. Faith is about following the Lord no matter what happens to us. In other words, it is all about denying ourselves and following the Lord. This Word is the Truth that we cannot help but admit even if we hear it thousands and tens of thousands of times. Regardless of our circumstances and situations, we must apply this Word to our faith, thoughts, and current circumstances. And if there is anything that compels us to deny ourselves, then we must indeed deny ourselves. Those who consider themselves too weak should deny such thoughts



of their own and tell themselves that they are strong in Christ, for they believe in the Lord. On the other hand, those who think they are strong and perfect enough should look toward the Lord and say to themselves that they are indeed nothing. You and I alike must all deny ourselves and pick up our cross even in our hardship and if this hardship has been permitted by the Lord, look toward the Lord and follow Him.

The Lord said to us, *“If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.”* We have no choice but to follow the Lord and accept this Word. Why? Because your predecessors of faith have been following the Lord even in their hardship. If you happen to think, “It seems to me that my predecessors of faith have no hardship at all. They seem to get around just fine by themselves and are always happy,” then you couldn't be more wrong. The predecessors of faith in God's

church have denied themselves for a long time to serve the gospel and to follow the will of God. It's because it's so hard and difficult that when your predecessors of faith get together, they play soccer once in a while. Rev. Kim, who is now ministering alone in the United States, once confided to me that there was no one to play soccer with. He remembers with fondness how he had so much fun playing indoor soccer with us with a ball made out of some pieces of sponge or socks when he was back in Korea. He also told me that when he is driving, he finds himself singing Korean songs all the time. I can understand this quite well. That's how hard it is for Rev. Kim to follow the Lord while denying himself to achieve the things of God.

Do you know how useful foul words are from time to time? Are foul words a part of language or not? They are a part of language. Can you live without language? Some people, when they hear



me swearing while preaching, say, "That pastor has such a foul mouth!" But I don't usually swear that much. When my heart is all fired up, however, I do swear quite a bit. I can't help this. Unless I swear, my blood pressure would shoot up and I would die from it. When I am stressed, my blood pressure skyrockets, so much so, that I can't see anything, even people standing right in front of me. So when there aren't people around me, I don't hesitate to utter some of the worst obscenities; if there is a can lying on the ground, I kick it; or I go into the bathroom, turn on the tap so that no one can hear me and swear like a pirate.

What happens after swearing so much like this? I ask myself, "Isn't this too much? Aren't you also like everyone else? So why are you complaining about others when you are no different?" I then answer to myself, "Well, that's

right. I am no better, but it's just so hard and difficult. I feel so ashamed."

What would have happened had the Lord not lived on this earth for 33 years? He experienced how hard it is to live with the flesh. So it is written, "*For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin*" (*Hebrews 4:15*). Had Jesus not experienced for Himself how life itself is a cross, then He would not answer our prayers. It's because the Lord Himself experienced everything we go through that He knows our prayer requests and wants to help us who are weak. That's why we are praying to the Lord.

Today, I would like to admonish you all to be mindful of the things of God rather than the things of men. We should quit clinging to the things of men. We need to be broadminded; if we are narrow-minded, we will only turn into



worldly scoundrels. If we forsake our greater cause and only think of ourselves, then in the end, everything will be done only for ourselves and for our own faction. We are supposed to live for the Lord, and so how ridiculous would it be if we cared only for ourselves instead of the Lord? For a country to prosper, there must be many patriots who are devoted to their country. If there are more people who are only mindful of themselves, their own factions, and their own interests than patriots who are devoted to their country, then the nation will fall.

Sometimes when we are actually involved in a large project, we see people preoccupied with petty things and we may wonder about them, thinking "What's wrong with them?" But if we put ourselves in their shoes, we can understand their mindset. What is important is that we shouldn't be mindful of the things of men, as Peter had been. When we are mindful of the

things of God, we can solve all the problems facing us and we can also overcome all our difficulties. In other words, thinking of God's work is the answer to every problem we face. It's when we believe in God and carry out His work that we can overcome our insufficiencies and take up our cross. While serving the Lord, do you ever say, "If this goes on, I'm going to die of overwork?" In times like this, we must have faith and stick together, telling ourselves "Let's finish everything that has to be done before we die. If we were to fail at this, we would be committing a great sin before God. We must complete everything that needs to be done. We should spread the gospel to the world now with all our strength."

Do you wonder in your mind what could possibly be accomplished by a group of people who are no more than a handful even when they are all gathered together? God fulfills His work



through whomever it takes. If God blesses our ministry, if His servants work, and if you labor with them, then even with our small number we are more than able to preach this gospel to everyone throughout the world for a thousand times and more. Isn't this more than possible? Of course it is.

The total membership at our Mission, including our children is about 300. If each of you would take up one country, there still would be no less than fifty of you left, since there are around 250 countries in the world. If you are more capable then you can take up 10 countries; if you are even more capable than this, then you take up 20 countries. If, on the other hand, you are not so capable, then you can take up just half a country, and if you are still even less capable, then five of you can get together and collectively take up a country. When we the righteous gather together, there is nothing that we cannot do, for

God is with us. Even though there are 5,000 tribes in the whole world, our 300 members can each take 17 tribes. Can we do this by our own strength? No. It is in Him who strengthens us that we can do all things. All that we have to do is just pray to God for His work to succeed and the rest is up to Him. Since God Himself has commanded us to carry out this work, wouldn't He then also give us the strength?

Starting this year and onto the next, I am planning to spread the gospel to most parts of the whole world within two years. And I believe that if we work hard, we will be able to accomplish this. If the Lord strengthens us, we will be more than able to achieve this goal; if He does not strengthen us, then we will not be able achieve it. Since the Lord Himself has told us to carry out this work, all that we have to do is just do it, trusting in the Lord. However, just in Korea alone, how few are those have accepted this



gospel even though we have preached it so diligently? And how many countless people have rejected it? The same goes for other countries.

Nevertheless, those looking for God anywhere in the whole world can now readily access and read our books. We are giving out our books for free and providing e-books, so that anyone who is looking for God can meet the Lord. Those who do not look for God and are not mindful of His work cannot meet the Lord, even if they live next to us in Korea. If people cannot meet the Lord, then they can't reach their salvation either. It's not because we have the power, but because the Lord has the power and because it is His will for the gospel to be spread all over the world, that the gospel will indeed be proclaimed throughout the whole world. All that we are doing is just carrying out this work by faith.

Can the work of serving the Lord fail? Will this work of preaching the gospel of God all over

the world end without accomplishing its goals? The business that absolutely cannot fail is God's business. Failure is impossible for the business of God. The reason why we are so confident that success is guaranteed for 100 percent and failure is impossible is because this is the very will of God. It is under such conditions that we are now serving the Lord. You and I have done a lot of work last year. This year also, the saints and God's servants are carrying out the work of the gospel, but the speed will accelerate many times faster than what we had done until now. If you take up your cross and follow the Lord, if you think of God's work and dedicate your body and mind to it, and if you serve the gospel by faith, then the gospel will be preached to the entire world so assuredly that I can say with every confidence that it has already been preached completely.



Those Who Want to Die for the Lord Will Live, But Those Who Want to Live for Themselves Will Die

Anyone who wants to preserve only his own life from hardship will suffer death, but anyone who is willing to lose his life for the Lord will be saved. That is the Word of Truth. It may seem as if we would die if we are mindful of the Lord and His work and believe in Him, but we will actually live. If, in contrast, we try to save just ourselves, then we will suffer death. It's precisely for this reason, because we want to live, that we take up our cross, deny ourselves, and follow the Lord. In other words, we follow the Lord because we want our souls to live no matter what happens to our flesh. If our souls were to perish and die even after living like this, then who among us would follow the Lord? If

this way of following the Lord were a way to our own destruction, who would really be willing to follow Him? It would be impossible to follow the Lord if it were to lead us to our own destruction. The only way of life that saves us is to be mindful of the work of God and devote ourselves faithfully to this work of serving the gospel even to the point of our death, and that is why we have denied ourselves by faith, taken up our cross, and are now following the Lord. Even though what we see at the present may seem failure-bound and impossible, we must still live such a life precisely because in the end that is the only way for us to be saved, attain eternal life, and receive blessings.

Incidentally, do some of you wonder by any chance, "Why are there so few people in Korea who has this gospel?" Do you know how many people the Apostle Paul had when he preached the gospel? He only had about a dozen people in



Ephesus, around ten in Rome, a few in Thessalonica, and about ten in Colosse as well. At every church planted by Paul, he preached to a congregation with less than 50 members.

Compared to this, our number is huge. Before today's worship service, I dropped by our Sunday school, and there I saw three teachers and about 30 students. Frankly, when compared to the Sunday school of a mega church in the world, our Sunday school is indeed a tiny gathering, even if all the children of our branch churches were gathered together. However, in God's eyes, our Sunday school is a tremendously great gathering. There is life and the Word here, the teachers are true teachers preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and the students listening to these teachers' words are also clearly born-again students. When our Sunday school students at God's Church hear the

Word, they believe in it right away and put it into practice as soon as they learn it.

Having attained our salvation, you and I are now gathered together like this in Korea, worshipping the Lord and serving Him. Although the brothers and sisters gathering together in Korea are not many, if we count all the born-again saints throughout the entire world, the number of our church members is very large. If there is any denomination in the world that is larger than us let it stand up. Should we gather together all our saints and God's servants all over the world and wage a spiritual battle with all the Christian sinners of the world? Even if they were to attack us in the thousands, we would not be defeated but win over them instead, even if we have just a dozen fellow righteous people on our side. Because the righteous have the Word, the sword of Truth, if we open the Bible and show



them a few passages, they will admit that their faith is false.

Long ago, there was a time when Elijah, a prophet of God, hid himself in a cave. God called him at that time. So Elijah said, "Lord, everyone who fears You is now dead, and all Your servants have been killed. I am the only one left alive." What did our Lord then say to him? He said, "*Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him*" (*1 King 19:18*). There are God's people left in each and every corner of the entire world. Even though they may not be seen in our eyes, in God's eyes His people are everywhere.

The servant of God who presided over the worship service before I began my sermon said that there are about 100 ministry workers in our churches in Korea, but in reality, there are far many more throughout the whole world. That's

what I believe. These people are uniting with us from every corner of the world. They are sharing our books and the gospel is being preached through their lips. So many people have received the remission of sin through them that in the end times our denomination will be the largest denomination in the world. Even at the present, their number is huge if we were to count them all, but I admonish you to see with your eyes of faith just how many more coworkers from every country will be added to us in the end times.

It's written in the Book of Revelation that a countless multitude clothed in white robes, innumerable by man, will come before the Lord on the last day (Revelation 7:9). So the Apostle John asked the Lord, "Lord, who are these people?" Then the Lord said that they were those who came out of the great tribulation (Revelation 7:14). Who are these people that the Book of Revelation speaks of here? They are those who



have been born again of water and the Spirit. In other words, those who triumphed by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit in the middle of the great tribulation and received salvation from God will come out all at the same time. I believe in this with my eyes of faith. Presently, the workers and saints at our Mission only total about 300, but even if we count just 300 coworkers in each of 150 countries a considerable number of people will be saved and come before the Lord. In the end times countless multitudes will receive the remission of sin. My fellow believers, do you believe in this Word of the Bible?

All these things are done by God. It's God Himself who brings everything to pass according to His will. We are just His instruments, but as His instruments we must be mindful of His work in our labor. That's all we are doing. We worked like this in 2000, 2001 and 2002 as well, and

until the day the Lord returns we will always carry out this work. There isn't that much time remaining for us to work overseas. Some brothers said, "If 2002 passes by and Jesus still hasn't returned, then let's just give up serving Him," but that's not when the world ends and Jesus returns. A farmer must sow the seed at an appropriate time. Only if he sows the seed exactly in due season do sprouts come out and flowers blossom. It is then that the farmer can harvest the crop when the time comes. We are now laboring to sow the seed. Although this work may seem very small for now, its end will be exceedingly great. It has already become exceedingly great and harvested many fruits. It will become even greater. When a single kernel of seed is sowed and sprouts, how many fruits are born? It bears many fruits. It's the same principle.



We are now sowing the seed of the gospel throughout the world, and if one person accepts the gospel he will bear even more fruits by 30, 60, and 100 fold. Imagine what will happen when not just one person, but 30 people from all over the world receive the remission of sin and bear fruits by 60 and 100 fold. If all these people would go out and spread the gospel, the fruits of their labor will increase exponentially. If we have preached the gospel to one person, this means that is not the end of everything; rather, from this alone, it's possible for millions and tens of millions of more people to come to receive the remission of their sins. In other words, because of this one person, the gospel is spread all over the world.

As we carry on with our lives in this age, we must cast aside our humanistic eyes and thoughts, and instead we must set our minds on the work of God and His Word of Truth. We

must think of God's work, deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow the Lord. Even though in our trials we may not be able to completely deny everything 100 percent, we must still deny ourselves as much as possible and follow the Lord. We have to deny ourselves everyday since there always remains something that we still must deny today and tomorrow alike. There is no one who has been completed. Until the day we stand before the presence of the Lord, there will be hardships for us and there will also be many things that we have to deny. It's our destiny to live like this until the day we go to the Lord.

By any chance, do you think that you are the only one struggling? In reality, however, all of us are struggling immensely. That's because each one of us has his own cross to take up and must deny himself. Yet even amidst all this, we still deny ourselves everyday and live for the Lord. Even in our hardship, we live everyday by the



strength and grace the Lord has given us. It is to trust in the grace of God that we are doing His work and it is also because we have found this grace of God that we are now carrying out the Lord's work. As such, following the Lord by His grace is leading the right life of faith.

Although it's easy to speak about leading such a life of faith in words, it's very hard to actually practice it in real life. It has been so hard for you and me to carry on with our duties while denying ourselves day after day. I am very glad to meet you again like this and I am so grateful to God that you did not perish away spiritually but lived by faith while serving the gospel separately in the past few months. My fellow believers, let us not perish away but live faithfully until the last day. Let us live by faith and put on the crown when the Lord returns. Let us all endure by faith until that day and let us be the kind of servants

who are commended by God rather than rebuked on the last day.

In the parable of the talent, a master left his servants with five talents, two talents, and one talent each. While the master commended the servants who yielded five talents and two talents in profit, the servant who had received one talent was rebuked by the master and driven away, as he had buried it in the ground instead of putting it to use. It is better for us to endure our trials and follow the Lord now by trusting in Him, so that we would not be rebuked by the Lord and driven out to darkness on that day, but instead put on His grace. To live and prosper more, I admonish you to deny yourself and follow the Lord faithfully.

It is my hope and prayer that you would all follow the Lord even in your hardship until the day you see the Lord face to face. ☒



The Faith of Self-denial

< Matthew 16:21-27 >

“From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day. Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, ‘Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!’ But He turned and said to Peter, ‘Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.’ Then Jesus said to His disciples, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for

My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.”

Based on today’s Scripture passage, let us reflect together on the issue of how the born-again righteous people must deny themselves. For some of you, it’s now been a long time since you first received the remission of sin; for others, it’s been a few years; and for some, it’s only recently that you received the remission of sin. As we, the righteous, follow the Lord after being remitted from all our sins and justified, there are many times when we must deny ourselves in our everyday lives. For those who were saved only



recently, denying oneself is still superficial, but for the saints who received the remission of sins a considerable time ago, they increasingly realize how much they must deny themselves in God's Church.

The Word says that one can never follow the Lord unless he denies himself. This Word is indeed engraved in the hearts of the righteous and they come to reflect on how they can deny themselves and follow the Lord. Although there is so much for the righteous to deny themselves, it's also hard at the same time since self-denial is something that every righteous person is grappling with. For the righteous who have received the remission of sin, the Word of the Lord commanding them to deny themselves is the Word of God that they must ruminate on most often.

Isn't it hard for you to deny yourself? Don't you come across this problem often? The Lord

said, *"If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."* Jesus didn't tell us to just follow the Lord without any requirement, but He told us to first deny ourselves. It's extremely hard for us to deny ourselves. In particular, we Christians must deny ourselves in everyday life because the Lord demands this from us.

As I follow the Lord, it's such a struggle even for me to deny myself. My brothers and sisters are also struggling a lot with this. Yet even so, I still deny myself and follow the Lord, for I cannot follow Him unless I deny myself. What the Lord said is not something that should end in just words, as if it were some sort of schoolbook lesson or wise words of admonition. Rather, it is the Word of God that we must actually apply to our everyday lives. The Lord said this Word because we cannot follow Him unless we actually deny ourselves. Even if one has received



the remission of sin, unless he denies himself he cannot follow the Lord. Therefore, anyone who wants to follow the Lord must deny himself. When the righteous deny themselves, they shouldn't just deny only in good times, but they must deny themselves equally in times of hardship as well. To deny oneself even in extremely difficult times and to deny oneself even when it's hard to follow the Lord—this is the real self-denial.

We need to consider a few things when it comes to denying ourselves. First of all, we must deny our weaknesses. The Lord of the righteous has blotted out all their sins. He has absolutely eradicated all the sins of the righteous and saved them all. However, even though the Lord has saved the righteous we often find ourselves falling into the flesh and disappointed at our inability to live according to the will of God. We are too weak. In spite of the fact that the Lord

has blotted out all our sins, when we see ourselves unable to live virtuously, we get bound by our weaknesses and end up losing the courage of the heart to follow the Lord. As we find ourselves too weak and stumbling too often and as our self-esteem is bruised, we realize that our shortcomings are not few, but that we are completely insufficient. We then fall into weaknesses, wondering, “How can someone like me follow the Lord? How can I ever serve Him?” So even after receiving the remission of our sins, if we are not careful it is still possible for us to feel as if we still remain sinful. When you see just how weak you are, you may feel on your own that the Lord has nothing to do with you. In other words, because you and I see in our everyday lives just how utterly weak we are, we may even doubt our salvation, questioning, “Have I really received the remission of my sins?”



Some Righteous People Stumble over Their Thoughts So Often That They End up Feeling Guilty

Everyone has certain points of weakness and yet despite this, some people stumble over their thoughts too often so that they end up feeling guilty. We all have certain vulnerabilities that make us surrender ourselves unconditionally as soon as we face them. Those who are vulnerable to money surrender to it at first encounter and those who are vulnerable to the opposite sex stumble all over as soon as they meet an attractive one—everyone has his own Achilles’ heel. That’s why whenever we face it we all stumble. Since this happens often, every time we come across our vulnerabilities, we fall into despair, wondering how we could ever follow the Lord when we are so weak.

That’s why we must deny our weaknesses, saying, “Even though I am weak, the Lord has saved me. He has blotted out all my sins.” Only when we deny our weaknesses can we follow the Lord trusting in Him. Even if we were to commit many sins because of our weaknesses, is it possible for us to have sin? No, that’s not possible since the Lord has blotted out all our countless sins. He has saved us perfectly from our sins.

Salvation is not something that’s been fulfilled by mankind, but it is something that the Lord Himself has completed for us. Since the Lord Himself has already fulfilled our salvation on His side, there is no reason why we the righteous should be staring at just our own weaknesses. On the contrary, the right thing for us to do is to deny ourselves and only look toward the Lord, who has blotted out all our sins and saved us. If we do not deny our weaknesses even as we



believe in the gospel, then we are bound to feel as if the Lord has drifted away from us. However, one thing that we must all realize is that our Lord, who takes care of even sparrows, would surely take care of us as well. Even a sparrow does not fall to the ground unless allowed by the Lord. Wouldn't He then take care of us, His righteous people, who are in the likeness of His own image? The Lord has not only blotted out our weaknesses, but He has also blotted out all our sins and transgressions.

Our salvation, attained through the remission of sins, was fulfilled by Jesus through His baptism and blood and therefore has come entirely by the grace of God. And it is when we believe in the baptism and blood of Jesus that we reach our salvation of the remission of sin. All the righteous people sitting here must grasp this clearly. Even though we are now sitting here at peace, many of you will end up leaving the Lord

when too many of your weaknesses are exposed, unable to deny yourself.

That's why I am saying these things. Unless we deny ourselves, we cannot follow the Lord until the end. As we the righteous carry on with our lives of faith, whenever too many of our weaknesses are revealed and whenever we discover too many of our insufficiencies, we must deny our weaknesses and follow the Lord. Trust in Him and believe, "Even though I am insufficient like this, the Lord has saved me out of His love." Only then can we avoid falling away from salvation until the end. That's why the Lord said, "No one can follow Me unless he denies himself." This applies to all those who want to follow the Lord, whether they are pastors or laypeople, and whether they hold church offices or not. In other words, all the born-again saints and even the entire human race throughout



the whole world must deny themselves if they want to follow our Lord.

When it comes to denying ourselves, we must also deny our own righteousness. Jesus is telling us to deny our righteousness and to deny our self-loving ego. Since we all have our own ego, we love ourselves, we think we are right, and we are self-defensive, but this ego is something that must be denied. We need to raise the level of our faith by another notch. It's not just a few times that you've been told to deny yourself. The Church has spoken this everyday until your ears are sore. Yet if you still can't deny yourself and you find yourself struggling so much that you are thinking about leaving the Church, then you must recognize that the level of your faith still has not reached anywhere beyond that of a baby that's not even been weaned yet. We can follow the Lord only if we deny ourselves and that's why

it's so imperative for us to deny ourselves at all costs.

Because I myself am too weak, I sometimes even pray the following: "Lord, it seems as though I can no longer follow You. I think I should give up my life of faith. My heart is too tormented and suffering too much, Lord." But it's because of myself that I struggle. If it were because of something else rather than my own work, then I am bold as a lion, saying to myself, "You want to take this on? Let's give it a try." When I have done something well or I am right, I am confident of myself, but when I fail at certain tasks and see my insufficient self, I think, "Oh, boy! I should quit following the Lord. I just don't think I can be of any benefit to the Church." It's such a torturing struggle for me. In times like this when I fail to deny myself, God says to me, "That's just who you are by nature. But even though you are so weak and insufficient, I have



saved you and it is I who is working through you. Do you think you are doing My work by yourself? Did you blot out people's sins? Is it you who is leading the Church? No, I am leading the Church. Don't be deluded."

The Lord says, "*If you want to come after Me, deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Me.*" The Lord told us to deny ourselves and follow Him. Even though I am insufficient, I admit my shortcomings to God saying, "Lord, You are right. I am insufficient. I admit this before I follow You." I then assure myself and say, "Yet the Lord has saved me perfectly. Because He has made me perfect, if I follow the Lord, then He will carry out His work through me, even though I am insufficient."

Our saints also can follow the Lord only if they deny themselves. Realizing this clearly, they must deny themselves as well. Do not say to yourself, "I am so insufficient that I just can't

follow the Lord." Instead, deny your weaknesses and look toward the Lord saying, "Lord, even though I am so insufficient, You have perfected me. All that I need to do is just follow You. You have taken care of all my needs. Even though I am insufficient, You have made me whole. Please hold me and guide me. Please take care of everything." Only then can you continue to follow the Lord.

Once You Are Saved, Your Greatest Problem Is Being Bound by Yourself

When we try to follow the Lord after being saved, the biggest obstacle is none other than ourselves. The greatest problem is yourself and myself. Do you agree that the biggest problem in your way to follow the Lord is not anything else but yourself? To deny not only your own



weaknesses and insufficiencies but also your own righteousness, is to deny your self-loving ego. For us to follow the Lord, first of all, we must not be bound by our weaknesses. Rather, we must follow the Lord with the following faith: “The Lord has raised me from the pit of my sins. He has made me perfect. Even though I am insufficient, the Lord works through me. It’s through me that He fulfills His will.” We must follow the Lord trusting that He has accepted us. If the Lord has taken away all our sins, then we are the ones who have been accepted by the Lord. No matter how insufficient we are, if God has accepted us then we are His beloved people who have been saved. Do you believe in this? Yet despite this, don’t you still feel like giving up your life of faith often, all because of your own weaknesses? Some people have given up their lives of faith by themselves, unable to deny

their weaknesses. It’s none other than such people who end up leaving the church.

Do you think that those who give up their lives of faith and leave the church even after being saved do so because they feel they are too good for the Church? No, that’s not the case. Ninety-nine percent of them leave precisely because they feel they are too insufficient. In my sermon yesterday on legalistic faith, I had told you that God already knows all about our insufficiencies. It’s because the Lord knows our insufficiencies that He said to us, “Deny yourself and follow Me,” lest we leave Him over our own shortcomings. We all must understand this clearly and live by faith.

The Bible says, “*Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path*” (Psalm 119:105). This passage must be our blood and flesh for us and actually be applied to our everyday life. The Word is not just to be memorized and



understood, but it is to be experienced in our everyday life. Only then can we come to truly realize what the Word means. Anyone can memorize Bible passages. We have children in our Sunday school who can easily memorize even the Word of the remission of sin. When the Sunday school children recite, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me,” teachers commend them for memorizing the passage and even reward them with a small gift. In reality, however, it’s completely useless to just memorize scriptural passages.

What is more important than memorizing Bible passages is for you to know how to deny yourself. You can follow the Lord only if you actually deny yourself, not just limiting this only as knowledge. Do you realize this? Do you deny yourself? Do our sisters deny themselves? All of us must deny ourselves. It’s because you have

denied yourself that you have been able to follow the Lord to this day. I know very well that you could have easily left the Lord, but every time you denied yourself and that is why you were able to follow the Lord. Now, in the days to come we must continue to deny ourselves and follow the Lord. Because we have been saved we must follow the Lord no matter what, whether we die or live. That’s why we must deny ourselves.

We Must Deny Our Carnal Thoughts, but This Entails Sacrifice

Leading a life of faith is not so easy. It requires self-denial, something that is very hard to practice. You have to grasp this properly. Do our ministry workers understand this? We can follow the Lord only if we deny ourselves. We can’t follow the Lord unless we deny ourselves.



Do you think that our ministry workers are somehow special just because of their being gifted with talents? No, that's not the case at all. For our ministers and leaders in the church, they can follow the Lord only if they deny themselves even more. No one can follow the Lord unless he denies himself. That's why the Lord said that anyone who wanted to follow Him had to deny himself first.

There is a song in Korea that goes, "Who said that love was beautiful?" Do you also think along this line, wondering to yourself, "Who says that it is beautiful to follow the Lord? What's so wonderful about following the Lord when this requires me to sacrifice and deny myself?" Far more difficult than gaining the world and even overcoming the world, is to fight against oneself and deny oneself and those who can achieve this are truly great warriors. Self-denial is true beauty.

Self-denial is absolutely indispensable to follow the Lord. While you don't have to deny yourself when it comes to other human affairs, self-denial is absolutely necessary when it comes to following the Lord. As far as the affairs of the world are concerned, you can fight to the end and overcome your challenges if you have a diehard will, but following the Lord is not something that you can achieve by your own strong will alone. No matter how strong our determination is, it's all useless. Only when we deny ourselves are we able to follow the Lord.

Take a look at Peter. Just how strong was his will? Peter had such a strong will that when Jesus said, "I must go to Jerusalem, suffer many things from the elders and chief priests, be killed, and be raised on the third day," he said to Jesus, "Far be it from You, Lord!" Although Peter said, "Lord, I will follow You to my death. And please don't do this," when the Lord was actually seized



by the men sent by the elders and chief priests, he fled from the scene. Peter even denied Jesus three times that night. In reality, those who are strong-willed cannot follow the Lord. It's not the people with a strong will who follow the Lord, but is those who know how to deny themselves. And these people are actually the strongest.

It Is Not So Easy to Follow the Lord

Once we realize how to deny ourselves, it's so easy to follow the Lord. However, for those who do not know how to deny themselves, it's a living hell to follow the Lord. You must all grasp this. When a sinner is saved from his sins, he must first learn to deny himself as soon as possible. Only then can he lead a happy life of faith, walk on the pasture holding the Lord's hand, and carry out His work together with Him.

For some of you, it wasn't that long ago when you were first saved. But you are not exempted from denying yourself. Everyone must deny himself. Isn't it true that we have so much of our own thoughts, our own righteousness, and our own weaknesses arising in us? All these things must be denied. We must hold onto the Lord and follow Him, saying, "If this is the will of the Lord, then even though I think differently, I am wrong and the Lord is right. My weaknesses are nothing. Even though I am weak, the Lord has saved me. I believe in You, Lord!" To achieve this, you must know how to deny yourself.

The Righteous Must Always Deny the Righteousness of Their Flesh

The righteous must deny their righteousness. While leading our lives of faith in the church,



serving this gospel, serving the Lord, serving our brothers and sisters, and serving other souls, we have seen many born-again people leaving the Lord because of their own righteousness. They say to us, “What I am thinking and saying is right so why don’t you accept what I’m saying? Why do you work like this? How can you do this?” But this is nothing more than their own righteousness. So they end up leaving the church saying, “That is not my way of doing things; I just can’t understand why they are doing this. How come the so-called leaders are so pathetic? I can’t work with such people.” One’s own righteousness must all be denied. The righteous who have too much of their own righteousness must deny themselves.

How right could we be even if we were right and how much merit could we have if we had any merit at all? Could we ourselves be more right than God who has saved us out of His love

by bearing and blotting out all the sins of the people of this world? No matter how right we may be, there is nothing more right than the fact that God has saved mankind from sin. Quarrelling over who is better among fellow human beings is like the pot calling the kettle black. At most, one may be slightly better than someone else in a certain area, but even this is nothing when compared to God.

Yet despite this, some righteous people mistakenly think that they are better than their fellow brothers and sisters of faith even while carrying their lives of faith together. They sometimes can’t tolerate others saying, “I am just not compatible with them.” It’s because they are too self-righteous, taking on a holier-than-thou attitude that they can’t tolerate others. Since they are too self-righteous, they end up tormenting others, and since they cannot tolerate others, they themselves are also tormented—how shameful



and wrong is this before God? Self-righteousness must also be denied.

Some Righteous People Have Too Much Righteousness of Their Own Flesh That They End Up Leaving the Lord

Some people leave the church thinking that they are better than everyone else, saying, “I can’t be with such people. I’d rather be alone. Since I’ve already received the remission of all my sins, I will just lead my life of faith all by myself.” To repeat, there is nothing more foolish than quarreling among ourselves over who is better than whom when we are all righteous. Of course, if we had to compare ourselves against each other, it’s true that some of us are better or

worse at certain things, but that is plausible only when the comparison is based on human standard or a relative concept and not the absolute standard. Besides, no matter how meritorious we may be, can we really be more right than the Lord? No, of course not; the Lord is the most right. The fact that the Lord shouldered all the sins of everyone in this world, was punished for everyone, and has saved everyone from all sins—that alone is the most righteous. Therefore, it’s foolish for you to be conceited and look down on others over anything else.

That is why the righteous must cast aside their righteousness and serve the gospel. That is the right thing to do. It’s only proper for the righteous to deny themselves and work together to serve the Lord. What is truly right for you to do is to deny yourself, deny your own righteousness, and follow the Lord instead.



Can Any of Your Carnal Thoughts Ever Be Right?

Do you have any righteousness? When you look at yourself based on a human standard, there is so much that's right. However, for the righteous, whatever they do or whether they eat or drink, they must do all for the glory of God. That's why each righteous person, no matter how much righteousness he may have, must know how to boldly cast it aside when it's not beneficial to the gospel and refrain from any action that's not beneficial to the gospel.

We, the righteous, must deny our own righteousness. Even the righteous make mistakes and everyone has certain weaknesses. Yet in spite of this, some people still say "I am different from everyone else. I can serve the Lord better than anyone else." But even if we were to serve the Lord more properly, could we really serve

Him to complete perfection? No, that's not humanly possible. We must realize that we also make the same mistakes that have been made by our fellow righteous people and judged by us. The wise are those who realize that another person's mistakes are their mistakes. In short, those who deny themselves are the wise.

By any chance, is there anyone among you who is so conceited that he is thinking about going on his own separate way from the Church, saying to himself, "Since I love the Lord far more than these people, I will separate myself from the church and serve Him by myself"? I have never had such thoughts, not even once. Because I know very well that I am insufficient by nature and because I admit this, it's rather preposterous for me to be conceited. However, when I look at our workers, there are quite a few righteous people who are too conceited, as if they were serving the gospel by themselves. Do the



self-conceited workers then truly serve the gospel? No, they don't even serve the gospel. Even though they may seem to serve the gospel in God's church, they actually trust in their own righteousness and don't really care about the gospel.

The righteous must cast aside their righteousness. They must also deny themselves. And they must be united with the gospel. To serve the gospel faithfully, we must be united together. Rather than preaching the gospel all by oneself, we must pool our strength together. That's why it's so imperative for us to deny ourselves and front our own righteousness. You, too, have your own righteousness, right? Don't you also want to go on your separate way to establish your own righteousness sometimes? I'm sure that you all have such a desire from time to time. But you must deny this. You must deny yourself. We must deny ourselves if this is

beneficial to the spreading of the gospel. If it's for the spreading of the gospel, what is there that we can't do? If it's beneficial to the gospel, then we must be willing to give up anything from our own wishes to our own thoughts. If you really are a righteous person, then whatever you do you must first think about what would be beneficial to the spreading of the gospel and take the course of action that would serve the gospel. If we have indeed become the saved saints and God's servants, then we must all think about what it is that we should do to benefit the gospel more.

Regardless of any circumstances, the righteous must deny themselves and their own righteousness. When it comes to the church serving the gospel, whether or not this fits your personality or particular quarks is completely irrelevant. We must deny ourselves. And it's because we have denied ourselves to this day that we are now standing here at this place. If you had



not denied yourself, then you would all have left the church long ago and there would be no one left here. However, because you have denied your thoughts until now, you are here with me in this place. Only if you continue to deny your thoughts in the days to come will you find yourself still sitting here. If you had not denied yourselves, you could not be seated here now. It's because all the righteous who are sitting here in the church have denied themselves that they can faithfully carry out their tasks from each of their assigned places. Just as the Lord said, "*If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself,*" anyone who wants to follow the Lord must deny himself first and then follow Him.

We Must Deny Our Love of the Self

Everyone loves himself the most. Above everything else in this entire world one loves himself the most. So when we come across hardships while we are following the Lord, we sometimes are tempted to think about only ensuring our own welfare. This concern over only our own well-being arises in us from time to time, leading us to think, "I should first save my own neck." This, too, must be denied since we cannot follow the Lord if we love ourselves too much and take care of only our own bodies.

Those who have done very little to serve the Lord even think about giving up their lives of faith to spare themselves, thinking, "I was told how great it would be if I were saved, but now that I've done a little calculation, I see that this is not true." Of course, they, too, love the Lord and cherish the gospel, but the problem is that they



love themselves even more. Since they think that they themselves would be ruined if they were to serve and follow this gospel, they are tempted to give up their lives of faith in order to ensure their own welfare.

The greatest enemy that obstructs the righteous from following God is their love for self. This applies to everyone equally. That's why the Lord demanded us to hate ourselves, saying that we can follow Him only if we deny even our self-love. Those who have not been born again, on the other hand, say that we should love ourselves, right? Of course, it's true that we should love ourselves. But if we really want to love ourselves, then we should deny our flesh so that our souls would go to Heaven. The problem for many people, however, is that they love their flesh more than their souls, and so they don't hesitate to forsake their own spirits for their flesh.

Once we are born again, we do need to hate our flesh when it comes to something that's related with the Lord's work. In other words, when we want to follow God, we ourselves must deny our self-love. Only when we deny the love that we have for ourselves can we follow the Lord. Because our carnal thoughts are constantly changing, unless we deny these thoughts of the flesh, we cannot follow the Lord. After all, how could we ever follow the Lord without even denying ourselves?

In return for saving us, the Lord has demanded from us something that's tremendously difficult, for nothing could be harder than self-denial. Given how the righteous must deny their thoughts, deny what they like, and even deny their love for the self, we can see just how hard it is to live as righteous people. The Lord has remitted away our sins and promised to send us to Heaven in the future. Before we are welcomed



to Heaven, while carrying on with our lives of faith on this earth, we still have to deny ourselves and suffer many things. If I were to preach the gospel in the beginners' class at this discipleship training camp and also teach right away that one has to deny himself, then many of the participants there would probably return home without even being saved. That's why the beginners' class is taught separately from the advanced class.

To those who have come to meet the Lord for the first time, I try to stay away from food that's too hard or fatty and instead I lead them to salvation by feeding them with bland food that they can digest. If they knew from the very beginning just how hard it was to live for the Lord once they were saved, who would want to be saved? You and I, on the other hand, have already become righteous and received the remission of our sins, so what can we do? Would

you return your salvation? No, there is now no other way for us but to follow the Lord.

When we deny ourselves for the gospel, there is a reward for this making it more than worthwhile to deny ourselves. When the righteous deny themselves and follow the Lord, many worthwhile achievements are made. In other words, countless souls that are more precious than everything under the heavens are saved and grow in faith. The Kingdom of God is expanded and we ourselves come to live by trusting in God. God Himself takes care of and solves all our problems, helps us, blesses us, and leads us all. So just how many amazing blessings has God given us then? That's why it's all worthwhile for us to deny ourselves. If we would just deny ourselves, God would surely bestow us with commensurate rewards, therefore, it is more than worthwhile for us to deny ourselves.



We the righteous must be mindful of the following three requirements of denial: we must deny our weaknesses, our own righteousness, and our own love for the self. Once this is achieved, we will be more than able to follow the Lord. If, however, you try to deny your self-love without keeping God in your mind then you will have little success and you will only follow the religious way of life that fits your tastes. We can deny ourselves only if we are mindful of the work of the Lord. In fact, if we were not mindful of the work of the Lord, then there wouldn't be anything that we have to deny either. It would be okay for us to just live in our own way, saying, "Well, that's just who I am, and so I'll just live in my own style."

In contrast, when we are mindful of the Lord's work, we are compelled to think, "I shouldn't do this, otherwise the will of the Lord will not be fulfilled. God will be disappointed in me if I do

this." In other words, when we are mindful of the things of God and the work of the Lord, we come to deny ourselves, telling ourselves, "I shouldn't be like this. Even though this is how I was born from the very beginning and who I am by nature, when I think about the gospel, I shouldn't be like this." It's by thinking about the work of the Lord that we are able to deny ourselves.

Our Lord loves us all. We, too, love one another. However, to ensure that the will of the Lord is fulfilled, sometimes we are unable to express our love for each other and have to forsake our sympathy. That's because the will of the Lord is fulfilled only if we do this. If we were to let our sympathy overtake us and end up tolerating what must clearly be dealt strictly, then often this will obstruct the will of the Lord from being fulfilled. Like this, because the will of our Lord must be fulfilled, sometimes we must deny our sympathy as well.



In other words, we must deny even our carnal love. This is very painful for the righteous. After all, how can any righteous person not like another righteous person? We have many unmarried brothers and sisters here with us; let's assume that a certain brother really likes one of our sisters and is in love with her. Since this brother loves the sister, he would want to do many things for her. However, if this is not beneficial to the gospel, then he must even forsake his love. That is denying oneself. None other than this is denying one's love when it does not accord with the will of the Lord.

The Lord spoke about actual occurrences that arose in everyday life. If the Word of God were not providing actual guidelines for our lives, but only hypothetical notions then there would be nothing more to be learned once we are saved. Just as denying ourselves is essential to reach our salvation, denying ourselves is also necessary to

lead our lives of faith properly. A life of faith is all about following the Lord. Because faith is all about following the Lord, we must forsake our love for self and do whatever is necessary for one another in order to fulfill the will of the Lord in the Church. We need not deny ourselves if our individual work is concerned; but if the work of the Lord is concerned then we must deny ourselves for His will. It's not because you don't love yourself that you do so, but it's to ensure the fulfillment of the will of the Lord that you do this. Even as your heart is in pain and you know this, it's imperative that we realize this and understand it.

"Whoa, that man is so heartless! How can he be so mean? He is so self-absorbed and egotistical!" I know that this is how many of you think about the other saints or the ministry workers in the church. There also are certain troubling issues in your relationship with your



fellow saints that make you disappointed and angry at each other, unable to understand one another. In times like this, you have to realize why God's servants did what they did to you.

I am not different from anyone else as I serve the gospel; there are times when I am mindful of God's work and there are also times when I am mindful of the work of man. My primary purpose in serving the Lord is spreading the gospel. However, when our work is focused exclusively on the spreading of the gospel, some individuals get very tired and weary. I know very well that as we continue to push our work in this way, some people would inevitably suffer in pain. But I believe that they, too, will be rejoiced in the end to see the work of the Lord fulfilled, for He dwells in their hearts as well. If it pleases the Lord, the Holy Spirit inside them is rejoiced even if they themselves are in pain.

For example, there are times when the Church makes pledge-offerings for world mission. Whom does the church then ask for pledge-offerings? It's none other than the saints whom the church asks to pledge their contribution. So when the plan of the pledge offering is announced, some saints don't like this since they have to offer to God what they had stashed away for themselves. To make pledge-offerings, we have to give up our prior plan to spend the money on something else. What hurts right away then? It's our flesh that's in pain.

If You Are More Mindful of Man Than God, You Can Never Serve Him

Because Peter loved Jesus too humanly, he came very close to making a disastrous blunder.



Jesus is a spiriting being. It would be a great mistake to think of what He does only as a human affair. Like this, when we consider the work of God, we must think spiritually rather than in carnal terms. Whatever we do, we have to do everything for the work of God. This requirement is underscored by the passage that says, “*All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful*” (1 Corinthians 10:23). This means that even though everything is allowed for us, sometimes we have to deny our self-love for the sake of the gospel.

How, then, can we seek the interest of the gospel? I believe with all my heart that if you all care for the gospel, then God will use each and every one of you as His precious instrument and bless you all. Yet despite this, many righteous people do not have this faith in their hearts and cannot deny themselves and that’s precisely why they are suffering.

It’s because we love ourselves that we are unable to serve the Lord and follow Him. It’s because we love ourselves that we stumble so often. If, however, we really offer our entire lives to God, asking Him, “Lord, I want to live for You all my life. I want You to be responsible for my everything,” then the Lord cannot help but be responsible for our lives. Once we follow only the will of God entirely, saying to Him, “Lord, I want You to take care of my family and everything else,” then from that point on our work turns into God’s work.

You’ve probably seen some people who lunge themselves completely to the work of God, right? Such brothers and sisters, and such servants of God, are the most fearless people. That’s because the Lord then has to be responsible for them. On His part, He just can’t refuse to help them. When the Lord sees such people, He says, “Since they are following Me and trusting in Me, if they are



ruined then I will be accused of not having helped them. I feel responsible for them. I must help them.” My fellow believers, I admonish you to let the Lord be responsible for you. It’s wise for you to make Him feel responsible for your life.

The Righteous Must Deny Their Carnal Thoughts First before Desiring to Receive God’s Precious Blessings in Their Lives

Once the righteous free themselves from their hearts’ desire to love themselves, and instead look toward God and learn to deny themselves by faith, from then on it’s quite easy for them to lead their lives of faith. They can walk with the Lord and live with Him anywhere, in good times

and bad times, in blessings and hardships alike. We can all live like this if only we would deny ourselves. That is why it’s such a precious blessing to be able to deny ourselves. At the same it’s why it’s so hard to do this because when we deny ourselves God’s precious blessings are bestowed on us. It’s priceless precisely because it’s so hard to achieve.

Nevertheless, those who have received the remission of their sins and desire to follow the Lord must all deny themselves. Only someone who denies himself can follow the Lord. Anyone who does not deny himself will see his life of faith over. Do you grasp this? If you want to end your life of faith, then by all means don’t deny yourself.

If our hearts indeed have the desire to follow the Lord, then the Holy Spirit dwelling in our hearts will lead us to such desires even more. My fellow believers, listen and obey the voice of the



Holy Spirit. And deny your heart's desire to love yourself. Deny your weaknesses and your own righteousness. Deny your love for self. The Lord will then lead you. If we follow the Lord, He will surely solve all our problems and take care of them.

If we are together in the same boat with the Lord, then He will solve all our problems, for our problems will become the Lord's problems, and His problems will become our problems. We will come to live in a blessed place with the Lord, serve Him in His arms happily forever, be blessed by Him, receive glory from Him, and attain precious blessings from Him, not suffering. In other words, our lives will be made precious by God. It's not through our own strength that we find prosperity, but our prosperity comes from God's blessings. Even though sometimes we face hardships because of the grace of God, it is because of His love that

we have put on this love and it is because of God that all our lives are completed.

We must deny ourselves. Do you, our sisters, understand this? Since you all understand this so well, there is nothing more that I need to teach. Yet because you are prone to forget your lessons in little time, I still have to teach you again and again.

In this year, let us all love ourselves a little less and deny our ego and our own righteousness a bit more. Also in this year, let us deny our weaknesses as well and believe that God has saved us despite our weaknesses. Let us bring joy to the Lord's heart embraced in His arms. It is my sincerest hope and prayer that we would all indeed please the Lord by denying ourselves. There is one reason why I have been able to follow the Lord in my life so far, last year and this year alike, and it is all because I have denied myself. It's because of this single factor that I



have been able to follow the Lord. And my self-denial did not come about through my own effort, but I could not help but deny myself for the work of God. Because the work of God is so precious, He loves people's souls so much, has given them such amazing salvation, and because He has made them so happy, I could not help but deny myself since this work was so precious. I had no choice but to deny myself, and so I denied myself half by my own volition and half by force; that is how I have barely managed to live out my faith until now. God has helped me to reach where I am now. And I want the Lord to continue to help me in the days to come also.

Jesus said, *“If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself.”* What did He say next? He said, *“Take up his cross, and follow Me.”* That's right. We each must take up our own cross—not just anyone else's cross, but each of our cross. Following the Lord even in your

trials is to take up your cross. How wonderful would it be if only good things were to happen to us once we were saved? How wonderful would it be if nothing bad ever happened to us but only good things or if we only had easy tasks to do with the Lord taking away all other difficult tasks? Wouldn't it be great if we had no problem whatsoever?

Yet we have both our problems and our hardships. Because the Word of the Lord is the Truth, it is fulfilled exactly as it is. The Lord said to us, “I will remember your sins no more; I will blot them out as white as snow,” and He has indeed eradicated all our sins according to this promise. So we have become sinless by believing in the Word with our hearts, and since the Lord has commanded us to take up our cross and follow Him, we must each have a cross and bear it. The Lord's Word is fulfilled exactly as it is, for it is the Truth. He has permitted all of us who



are following Him to face individual problems. All of us must therefore take up each of our own cross.

I believe without any doubt that our Lord has saved me for sure. So it's only a matter of fact for me to follow the Lord. But because I am still facing difficult problems for both myself and my family, these things can sometimes make me struggle. If I were to just follow the Lord without any trials, then I would have dashed in full sprint. While following the Lord, however, I have faced hardship not just for the sake of the Lord, but also because of my own private problems and I detested this so much. So I sometimes think to myself, "If it weren't for this problem, I would be serving the Lord so well!"

Why then, do I face such problems? I wish I could ask the Lord why I must endure such trials and why there must be so much hardship in my family, at my work, and everything that's related

to me, when in fact I myself yearn so much to serve Him and follow Him faithfully. Yet despite this, the Lord says firmly, "Follow Me even in such trials." This, my fellow believers, is the Lord's commandment.

When the righteous follow the Lord not everything that happens is always good. Even when we find ourselves in trials, it is the will of God for us to still follow the Lord. If this is what God has set for us, then we have no choice but to follow the Lord even in our trials. It's impossible to follow the Lord completely free from all of our difficulties without any hardship. Trying to do so only means that we don't want to deny ourselves and would rather disobey the Word of the Lord. Even though it's hard, if it's the will of God for us to take up our cross and follow the Lord and if this is what the Lord has said to us, then we must deny our thoughts. Although it would be nice if there were no hardships for us,



we must be determined to deny ourselves and follow the Lord even amid our difficult trials. Following the Lord like this is to live according to the will of God. Even when we are facing hardships, we must still deny ourselves, deny our thoughts, and follow the Lord. That is how we can live out our faith properly.

All the born-again people are facing many difficulties. It's not the case that hardships are confined only to a few certain people. When looked at individually, each and every one of us is facing one type of hardship or another. We all have a cross for each to bear, do we not? Of course we do. Do the unmarried people have no cross, just because they are single now? No, everyone has a cross to bear.

If there is anyone who doesn't have a cross now, he too, will soon have his own cross to bear. That's because this is what the Word has said, and therefore those without a cross will

inevitably come to have it. Even in such trials, however, we the righteous must never betray the Lord, nor reject the gospel, far less drift away from the Church, but follow the Lord always. If we really want to follow the Lord, we must deny ourselves.

Some of our fellow saints purchase expensive flowers and arrange them beside the pulpit every week. If floral arrangements are created just because someone like this activity, then it's a hobby for them. In contrast, if floral arrangements are done to serve the Lord, even though they don't know how to do this well and have no interest in it at all, then it's not just a hobby, but it's something that they are doing to serve the Lord and follow Him. Whatever is done for the Lord even when it does not fit one's preference, none other than this is to follow the Lord.



I got married after I met the Lord. In my private thoughts, I sometimes feel that there are many things that I can't do because I am a married man, but I still feel very strongly that marriage is beneficial to the spreading of the gospel. Since our sisters have many issues that they find uncomfortable to discuss with me, they ask for my wife's fellowship. Whatever they can't discuss with me, they are able to discuss it with my wife. So I thought to myself, "Oh, so God has given me my wife so that I would work together, rather than serving Him by myself. I'm so glad that I got married." As the Bible says that all things work together for the good of those who love God, that is exactly what has happened to me.

Following the Lord even amid hardships is what it really means to follow the Lord. If you are leading your life of faith in too much comfort only according to your own desires, without any

need to break your own thoughts nor any need to deny yourself, then you should know that you are not living out your faith properly now. The right thing for you to do is to deny yourself, deny your self-love, deny your weaknesses, deny your righteousness, and follow the Lord by faith, believing that it is only proper for you to do so even in your difficult trials. We must focus our energy on denying ourselves. So let us deny ourselves. Let us keep training ourselves to deny ourselves even better. Exercise is indispensable for us. Even self-denial must also be exercised regularly. Starting from small things to big things, we have to train ourselves, otherwise if we all of a sudden find it necessary to deny ourselves one day, it will be very hard for us to do this.

If you find it impossible to deny yourself, then remain quiet in the church. You will then come to deny yourself. If you can't submit yourself to



this Word on your own individual strength, then stay still in the church. I feel somewhat sorry for saying this, but that is still true. If you stay quiet in the church, saying, “Do whatever you want to do to me,” then the Lord will speak to you, teach you, untie whatever knots that are in your heart, give you the ability to deny yourself, strengthen you, help you, and bless you. Our Lord will enable you to do everything.

Above all else, you must remember that the born-again must always deny themselves. I admonish you to follow the Lord by faith, remembering that self-denial is an indispensable part of your life of faith, and that it is only by denying yourself that you can follow the Lord. The Lord will then take care of everything else that remains. Even if we are unable, the Lord is capable of doing everything. Are you happy, my fellow believers? Are you happy even though you have so much to deny yourself? It’s my

sincerest hope and prayer that you are all indeed happy to follow the Lord even in your trials. Let us then end our morning service with the praise, “I Am Truly Happy.”

Let us always deny ourselves for the rest of our lives. ☒



Peter's Love for Jesus

< Matthew 16:21-27 >

“From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day. Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, ‘Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!’ But He turned and said to Peter, ‘Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.’ Then Jesus said to His disciples, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for

My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.”

In my previous sermon, I explained how the born-again righteous people must deny themselves, take up their respective cross, and follow the Lord. Through the example of Peter, let us give some more thought to this issue.

Jesus told His disciples that He would go to Jerusalem, suffer many things from the elders, chief priests, and scribes, be killed, and rise from the dead on the third day. Peter then took the Lord aside and tried to dissuade Him earnestly and desperately, saying, *“Far be it from You,*



Lord; this shall not happen to You!” My fellow believers, can you understand what was in Peter’s heart? He had followed Jesus as his teacher. Even though Peter had followed the Lord staking his entire life on Him, all of a sudden Jesus said one day, “I must now go to Jerusalem, suffer many things from the elders, chief priests, and scribes, and be killed. And I must rise from the dead in three days.” Peter was so shocked to hear his teacher saying that the time was nearing for Him to die. So Peter took the Lord aside and asked Him earnestly, saying, “Please don’t do that! Don’t go to Jerusalem! And You don’t need to suffer from them and be killed by them. Don’t allow this!”

We can probably understand what must have gone through Peter’s mind to say this. After all, who would be pleased to hear that someone whom he respects would suffer and be despised?

I can indeed appreciate Peter’s wholehearted love for the Lord.

However, Jesus Rebuked Peter’s Love

However, Jesus rebuked Peter harshly, saying, “*Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.*” Of course, Peter was not Satan. He was clearly a disciple of Jesus. Why did Jesus then say to Peter, “Get behind Me, Satan!” That’s because Satan had gone into Peter’s heart and was working there.

When we consider Peter’s words from our human perspective, we can fully understand his sentiment because it reflects the fundamental nature of mankind. Isn’t it our basic human nature to seek the comfort and prosperity of our



flesh? Most people just seek their own comfort. If we pay closer attention to church names, in just one city alone we would probably see several churches named “Church of Peace” or something close to it. How much do people desire to be at peace? It’s because people want peace that churches are named after it. That’s why Peter was so appalled when his teacher, to whom he had devoted his entire life and respected so much, said He would suffer persecution and why he tried to block the Lord’s way. Would your heart be unperturbed if your teacher were to bear physical suffering and die? As a disciple, it’s only natural for you to be distressed if your teacher were to suffer such things.

We can therefore appreciate what was in Peter’s heart. We can understand why Peter said such things to Jesus. And we can also understand how such thoughts may arise from the hearts of

our brothers and sisters and God’s servants. Like everyone else, Peter did not like physical pain either and was mindful of his own things rather than the things of God and that is why he said such things.

When we look closely, we see how people are so obsessed with their own affairs just like Peter. At each and every moment, people think of only their own affairs. Since it’s a basic instinct for them to love themselves, living according to basic instincts is to live for oneself. And people think that it’s only natural for them to live instinctively just for themselves. Do they ever think about God’s work? No, countless people live without any interest in God’s work. Now, rather than just living instinctively, it’s imperative for us to pause and give some serious consideration here, ruminating on the difference between the things of men and the work of God.



Jesus Christ Is Asking Us If We Are Mindful of His Work

Jesus said to Peter, *“You are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.”* From Peter's perspective, it was only a matter of fact for Him to be concerned about his teacher's well-being, but he was actually rebuked for this. After all, Peter was only too human, and so how could he have been pleased to hear that his own teacher was to suffer physical persecution? If there was any disciple who accepted Jesus' death as a given and was unperturbed by it, then it's he who would be a bad disciple. In other words, Peter's heart was the same as ordinary people's hearts. This, in other words, is the very nature of mankind. Likewise, you and I also have such a heart. So even though we say that we love God and cherish Him, when we examine ourselves more closely, we see that in many cases we are

actually mindful of our own affairs rather than the work of God. As a result, some people often say different things from their own perspective and sometimes they also find themselves leading their lives of faith for their own sake. Such people do whatever they like in the church, and some of them even give up their lives of faith at the slightest hint of any harm or suffering that's on their way. What's the reason for this? That's because they are mindful of the things of men rather than the things of God. It's because we are not mindful of God's work that we instinctively end up thinking only of our own affairs.

For our brothers and sisters, and myself as well, we sometimes waver back and forth, dithering between the work of God and the things of men. When I speak of God's work to someone whose mind is set on the things of mankind, he gets angry. What's the reason for this? It's because this person does not like God's



work. Such people think like this: “Now that I believe in Jesus, shouldn't my life be comfortable? It's great to go to Heaven, but I believed in Jesus to live comfortably on this earth as well, to prosper. Why else would I have become a Christian? Why would I believe in Jesus if I have to forsake myself and my circumstances won't improve? It's all for my own happiness that I go to school, make money, and believe in Jesus as well. So what kind of nonsense is this? One moment, I am told that Jesus has blotted out all my sins, but the next moment, all of a sudden I am told to live for the work of God. Isn't this work of God all about asking for my money?”

Those who cherish only their own flesh, not realizing just how precious God's work is, cannot deny themselves even after they receive the remission of sin. Their hearts are set on money first. So we need to contemplate on what

the work of God is and what the things of men are. Young people are often thoughtless and act very immaturely. They only know themselves. But what happens when they mature? They become reflective. Now is the time for us to also be reflective.

What is God's work? God's work is the work of God, plain and simple. To be more concrete, God's work on this earth is the work of saving people from sin. We are planning on holding some revival meetings in the first half of this year. These revival meetings are God's work. It's also God's work for us to gather together in the church to worship God, listen to His Word, offer our time, our material possessions, and our everything to serve the Lord. Planting churches is God's work as well. Spreading the gospel throughout the whole wide world is also God's work. That's why we are preaching the gospel through both our literature and our lips. We also



offer our material possessions for the spreading of the gospel and we pray for this gospel and praise God. All these things are God's work. All these things that are used by the Lord as His precious instruments are God's work. If we were seeking only our own comfort, all that we have to do is just not preach the gospel all over the world. If we were to give up our world mission, there wouldn't be any need for any offerings marked for this ministry either. Wouldn't your flesh then be more comfortable? Your flesh would then be at peace. But we will have nothing to do with God then.

The Work of Men Stands against the Work of God

I recently purchased a copy machine for my church. Did I buy it on my own whim? No. I had

many conflicting thoughts before I actually bought the copier. The reason why I wanted to buy it was to make a gospel newspaper in tabloid size, so that the Truth may be spread to even those who are too foolish to understand and believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit no matter how much it is preached to them. However, even the best machine is completely useless if it's used inappropriately. Likewise, without a technician who can run the copy machine to make the gospel newspaper, it would have been of no use even if it were purchased. So I was vexed at this, unable to make up my mind. I was told that a copy machine would cost around \$1,200, so I carefully considered what could be gained from investing this money. When I told the salesman that we were planning to print 48,000 copies in a week, he was shocked and told me that the particular machine I was looking at could not handle that much. I was then told



that to handle such a load, I would have to buy a copy machine priced at \$3,000 to \$3,650.

So I grappled with conflicting thoughts, but the copier had to be purchased. We needed to print the hymnals of our church as well as the gospel newspapers. So I couldn't just put off the purchase because of its high cost. Although we were using computers in our ministry, there was a limit to what could be printed by using computer printers. That's why we bought the copier. Our minds are torn while carrying out such a work of God, but if we weren't doing such works, would we have anything to worry about and be quite comfortable? If we didn't need to make our hymnbooks and the gospel newspapers, then we wouldn't have had to purchase a copy machine. While we might have been comfortable in our flesh, our hearts would have been rather uncomfortable.

However, once I bought the copier that cost \$3,000 for our ministry, I felt an acute financial burden and thought to myself, "What should I do now?" Back then, our finances were so fragile that we couldn't even make that payment all at once. So all kinds of thoughts came to my mind and I wondered, "Why did I buy it? I shouldn't have purchased this copier." But what would happen to us if we were to give up everything and stop working? We would inevitably turn into jobless people. If we don't carry out the work of the gospel, there would be no burden for us, but our hearts would be even more indebted to the gospel, since we wouldn't be doing what we must do only as a matter of fact. If we don't do the work of the gospel, we could probably lead our lives of faith amicably in pleasure just by ourselves, being kind to each other.

There are many things that we must pay close attention to serve the gospel: we have to prepare



financial resources with pledge offerings; we have to invite God's servants and hold revival meetings; we have to invite souls and make them receive the remission of their sins; and we have to pray to God and ask Him, "Lord, we need money," because we are also planning to go to Yanbian, a northeastern region in China to preach the gospel. Like this, there are so many things that we have to take care of.

Should we then give up the work of serving the gospel just because our flesh is struggling too much? No, unless the righteous are engaged in God's work, they will fall into the flesh. Will you do the work of the flesh according to your own thoughts like Peter, saying, "Far be it from You, Lord. Why should You die? You haven't done anything wrong, and so why should You be persecuted and killed? This shall never happen to You!" Peter had himself in mind when he said to Jesus, "Far be it from You, Lord," because his

own heart was uneasy at the prospect of his teacher suffering. My fellow believers, you and I both have a heart like Peter. I, too, desire to live comfortably, saying to myself, "Carry out God's work, but take care of yourself a little bit." In times like this, we have to think about what is gained from doing God's work and what is lost from not doing it. Of course, it's true that carrying out God's work entails financial burdens and requires us to be diligent, busy, and even put up with suffering. That's why our bodies get weary when we do God's work. Nevertheless, there is so much that is gained from this.

We are prone to be mindful of the things of men rather than the things of God. My fellow believers, this is none other than our own minds. You and I also have Peter's mindset, thinking, "Pastor, why are you doing such a thing? Don't do it. It wouldn't be beneficial to you nor to any



of us. We would be comfortable if you don't do this, and so why are you doing such a thing?" But do you think that you would prosper if you don't do God's work? No, far from prospering, you will end up dying. Unless the leader of God's Church pushes the flock to serve the Lord, they will fall into their own affairs and be swept away along with the world to their spiritual death.

Do you like what's comfortable for you? Of course you do. We all like to be comfortable after being saved by believing in Jesus. But what can we gain from living comfortably? Unless a merchant is engaged in his business, what can he possibly gain? Regardless of the particular type of business that the merchant might be running, there are many complicated issues that demand close attention from him. On the other hand, if the merchant is not engaged in his business, then his life would be a whole lot more comfortable.

But could the merchant stop running his business when this is his livelihood? Even though running the business may be cumbersome and tiring, there is much to be gained from it.

Standing Water Is Bound to Be Polluted

I am saying these things because there is no one here who just received the remission of sin. If those who have just recently received the remission of sins were to hear me now, they would probably think, "What's so good about receiving the remission of sins? What's ahead is so bleak!" If the recently redeemed come to the church and do not leave even for just one year, then this by itself is fortunate enough. So those who regularly come to the church gatherings led by their family members are blessed. If you go



out into the world, your heart will drift toward it, you will lose all your faith, and you will be trampled by Satan. This is what happens unless we do God's work.

What is God's work and what are the things of men? The things of men seek the comfort of the flesh. God's work, on the other hand, is something that saves souls. All too often we are mindful of the things of men rather than the work of God. In our family and in our individual heart, our minds are often set on the affairs of man. Our faith must begin from the work of God. Just as God divided the light from the darkness and the waters which were under the firmament, from the waters which were above the firmament, at the very beginning of His Creation (Genesis 1:4-7), so must you be separated from the world after being saved. What would happen if you were not separated from the world? Even though you have been saved, you would only seek your own

comfort and what's good for your flesh. In the end, your faith will be corrupted and all mixed up in the world, and you will be destroyed. That's all that will happen to you.

Jesus said to Peter, "*Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.*" Therefore, anyone who has been saved must clearly separate the work of God from the things of men. We have to know what is God's work and what is man's work, and we must make up our minds as to whether we would carry out the work of God or the things of men. We need to ask ourselves, "Will I do the things of men or the work of God?" and our hearts must be set to answer this question clearly. For those who lead their lives of faith without setting their hearts on the work of God, even though they may carry on when their circumstances are ideal, when something that's disadvantageous or damaging to



them comes along, their spirits end up dying and they renounce their life of faith.

My fellow believers, what is it that we must do after receiving the remission of sin? Think about what kind of work we should do and what it is that we must do. How should we live the rest of our lives, now that we have been born again of the water and the Spirit? What should we do in our lives? You must decide whether you would live your life carrying out the work of God or the things of men.

What is it that you want to do? Do you want to do God's work or man's work? I am sure that you all want to carry out God's work. If this is true, then you must set your mind on God's work. You must change your entire mindset like this. If you are mindful of the things of men, then you are bound to fall into the affairs of men and turn into a hypocrite before God. If, on the other hand, you are mindful of the things of God, then

you will carry out God's work, for your heart will be immersed in His work. Therefore, where our minds are focused is critically important and everything comes to pass according to this mindset. If we are mindful of God's work and ponder, "What should I do to fulfill God's work?" then we will eventually accomplish God's work and harvest abundant fruits before the Lord. We would be able to say to Him, "Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them" (Matthew 25:22).

In contrast, if we are mindful of the things of men, then we will say, "What has God ever given me? All that He has given me is this salvation, and yet He is so demanding!" We will then hide the talents of His salvation in the ground—that is, in our hearts—and seek only our own comfort to perish away in the end. Such people come to live recklessly in the world, thinking to



themselves, “I like being comfortable. It’s a headache to carry out God’s work, since I would have to serve so much. I won’t do this. At least I have been saved, so I won’t end up in hell anyways.” If this happens, then they will be cast out into darkness, just like the servant with one talent. Even after receiving the remission of sins, some people may still think that it’s important to keep their human relationships at all costs. They neither wage the war of the gospel nor show any interest in God’s work thinking that people would be offended if they say to their acquaintances, “You will be cast into hell if you have sin. So receive the remission of your sins.” If this is how you lead your life, you will surely perish away.

We Must Be Mindful of Spiritual Work in Our Labor

One must be properly minded. In particular, it’s even more imperative for the born-again to be properly minded. The Holy Spirit dwelling in our hearts wants to do the work of God. If this is the case, then we ought to be mindful of God’s work and the leaders of God’s church should provide the congregation with opportunities to carry out God’s work. No matter how much you may desire to do God’s work, unless your leader guides you to carry out God’s work, you cannot do the work of God at all throughout your entire lifetime. If this happens, then when the Lord demands you to submit what you have done for Him in the future, you won’t have anything to show Him.

As such, no one can carry out God’s work all by himself. You can do it only when your leaders



in your church guide you and entrust you with His works. The leaders must be mindful of God's work, propel the congregation to carry out the work of God, and enable the saints to participate in this work. It's when the saints share their leaders' mindset that they can finally do God's work. Even for the righteous, God's work can never be carried out all alone. Can you understand what I am trying to say here?

Peter spoke to Jesus being mindful of the things of men and the Lord rebuked him, "You are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men." Peter made a serious mistake. That's because he was motivated out of his human desire. Later on, Peter came to realize that was wrong. We, too, must reach this realization like Peter, and we must be mindful of the things of God rather than the things of men. Initially, when Peter first began to follow the Lord, he was too mindful of the things of men. But eventually,

he came to realize what God's work was and turned his heart around.

It is written, "*Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.'*" Those who are mindful of God's work must deny themselves. Anyone who wants to follow God must do so. The Lord Himself said, "*If you want to come after Me, take up your cross and follow Me.*"

You and I must deny ourselves. You can take up your cross, and follow the Lord only when you deny yourself. If you and I want to carry out God's work, then it's absolutely imperative for us to deny ourselves. We must deny ourselves to follow God. Anyone who cannot deny himself cannot follow God. Do you understand this, my fellow believers? Why must we deny ourselves?



It's to carry out God's work, and to follow Him, that we must deny ourselves. It's not to deny ourselves that we are laboring, but it is to carry out God's work that we must deny ourselves.

When you want to buy something from a store, you have to pay its price. To carry out God's work, you also have to give up your own affairs and bear your hardship in your life. How then, can we, the born-again saints, deny ourselves? It's because we are mindful of God's work that we can deny ourselves. How can you control your fiery personality? How can you overcome your own stubbornness? It's not we who have changed ourselves, but it's the Lord who has transformed us. Therefore, if you and I desire to carry out God's work, then we should overcome our stubbornness and cast aside our own thoughts as well. It's because we are mindful of God's work that we can do all things. If you weren't mindful of God's work, why

would you need to bend yourself? If this were the case, there would be no need for us to bend ourselves, nor deny ourselves, nor do anything that we don't want to do. Isn't this true? Of course it is.

That is indeed the case. You and I must think about God's work. This year also, we must continue to be mindful of God's work. This year and the next year alike, all our brothers and sisters and God's servants throughout the churches in Korea must set their minds on the work of God, rather than thinking of only themselves or being mindful of the things of men. It is only right for us to think of God's work first. When we carry out God's work, our minds must prioritize it first. Whatever it is, we must participate in any work if it is God's work.

If the church doesn't make you carry out the work of the gospel, you will be completely lethargic. The same goes for the servants of God



as well; anyone who does not carry out God's work is bound to turn into a completely useless person. It's because people are mindful of the affairs of men rather than the work of God that they are so worried and wonder, "My future is so worrisome. I need something. How should I make a living? What I should eat? What should I drink?"

However, if we are mindful of God's work, then we can rise up to the challenge by faith. Those who are mindful of God's work can grow their faith and carry on with their lives in society by faith. And they can do everything and anything by faith. This faith is not only necessary to serve the Lord, but it's also necessary to live in society. There is so much that's gained by having faith. The faithless, on the other hand, cannot gain anything at all.

My fellow believers, we must be mindful of God's work this year. Do you understand? You

and I each must think of God's work. I ask you to also teach others who have only recently been saved to be mindful of God's work. What will you accomplish this year no matter how hard you try on your own? What will you accomplish in your entire lifetime? Won't you manage to just get by? We don't just get by, but we carry out God's work in our lives and then we meet the Lord. What do you prefer? Would you like to live like us or would you like to live the rest of your lifetime doing nothing else but committing sin? Is the prosperity of your flesh all that you care about? You should say these things to those who have just recently been born again. They, too, desire to do what is right in their lives, but because they don't know how they can do it, you have to teach them what the proper life of the born-again is and provide them with an opportunity to also follow the greater cause of the Lord. That's because in many cases people



end up living a worthless life simply because they do not know what is right. My brothers and sisters, do you now realize that each and every one of us must be mindful of God's work?

When I put my mind on God's work, I cannot help but pray. When my mind is set on the work of God, my mind is broadened, faith springs forth, and I am strengthened. Although our flesh would be comfortable if we were not to do God's work, there will be no progress of faith. Everything that we are now doing in God's church is His blessed work. If you carry out God's work, faith will spring forth in your heart, you will be strengthened, and many souls will also be saved.

This discipleship training camp itself is God's work also. So when we participate in this camp realizing that this is God's work, it brings great blessings to our hearts. For us to come to the gathering of the church is also God's work. To

spread the gospel your own faith must grow, so if you attend every church gathering and you do this realizing that this is God's work, your heart will be tremendously blessed. Whatever we do, if we labor knowing that it is God's work, then anything can be a blessing for us. For revival meetings also, if we participate in them knowing that it's God's work, then the Word will be engraved in our hearts, we will come to desire to serve the gospel willingly, we will be strengthened, and we will also be blessed by God. However, if we are mindful of the things of mankind, you will likely think, "Why do we need to hold revival meetings? There were many souls who received the remission of sin even without holding a revival meeting." But in reality, such thoughts come to our minds because we think, first of all, that we would save money if we were not to hold revival meetings, and secondly, we wouldn't be persecuted.



However, when we hold revival meetings, Satan goes berserk, but faith springs forth in the hearts of our brothers and sisters. In other words, through the Word preached at these revival meetings, dross is once again removed from the minds of the saints and their hearts are strengthened. With God's work in mind, revival meetings are indispensable, but if only the affairs of men are what's on our minds, then there is no need to hold any revival meetings, nor any discipleship training camps, nor any other church gatherings, much less to go all the way to Yanbian, China to spread the gospel. We would think that there is no need for us to go some foreign country only to toil away, but we must realize that all these are carnal thoughts and we must turn from them. If we become carnally minded, we won't want to do anything at all. Are we completely free from such carnal thoughts? On the contrary, such desires are only too

prevalent. We have to admit that we, too, are not entirely free from the thoughts of the flesh and we have to recognize that we are mindful of both the things of men and the things of God. And we must realize that we can live only if we do God's work. If we didn't serve God, then while we would be comfortable in our flesh, our spirits would end up dead.

When we are mindful of God's work, we are compelled to carry out His work and once we begin serving God, there is much to be gained for our flesh due to His blessings. There is so much that we can gain from listening to the gospel of the water and the Spirit. I have experienced on many occasions how the things of God were accomplished easily even when I didn't pay much attention to them. If God is willing, everything is possible. When we are mindful of God's work and unite ourselves with the church for the sake of the gospel, God will surely bless



us. When we set our minds on the things of God and carry them out by faith, from the smallest to the largest, then God will actually help us in our everyday life and work on us. As you carry on with your life of faith, you will also experience this for yourself.

Do you know why Korea is so prosperous? Korea has developed so rapidly to join the rest of the developed countries, people around the world praise it as the “miracle of the Han River.” Yet when it comes to the national traits of the Korean people, they are rather infamous for empty bravado, fighting, and the lack of unity. If we focus only on the people and the natural resources of Korea alone, then there is no cause that explains how the Korean economy has grown so much. Does Korea have any natural resources or did it have any accumulated technological know-how? What does it have? It has nothing. Yet despite this, Korea is quite

prosperous. What's the reason for this? That's because it has people who are preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit. That is why God has blessed Korea and permitted it to succeed and that's why Korea is prosperous now.

It's been only about 40 years since Korea first devised and implemented economic development plans. Why is such a country then so prosperous? By some measures, Korea is a better place to live than Japan or some other advanced countries in Europe. That's because the cost of living is much lower. While Korea's GNP is lower than these countries, the actual standard of living that average Koreans enjoy is not any worse than them. Most Japanese like to visit Korea because Korea is a great place to travel with just a little amount of money.

Nations, states, families, and businesses alike can prosper only if God blesses them. If you set your mind on the work of God and serve Him



then you will prosper in everything you do, for God will actually help you in all things. Korea has no natural resources at all. Yet Koreans are still prosperous despite this, and the reason for this is because there are God's servants and people who preach the gospel in our country. We have to remember that it's because of those righteous people here who are mindful of the work of God that He is also mindful of this country and blesses it.

You and I must be mindful of God's work. Make sure to keep the work of God in your heart and head, reflect on it, and examine yourself to see whether or not you are really mindful of God's work. Some people have no consideration for God at all, and their minds are completely set on their own human affairs. Those who have not received the remission of their sins are mindful of only the things of mankind 100 percent of the time. In contrast, the born-again have to focus

their minds on the work of God. It's when we are mindful of God's work that there can be joy and happiness for us, a sense of fulfillment in anything we do, and fruits in everything we do.

If we weren't mindful of God's work, what kind of work would we be doing at most? Unless our minds are set on the work of God, we can't help but be like a pig, obsessed with what to eat and what to drink. A pig is only too happy to oink with its head stuck in the sewage, drinking filthy water and rubbing itself against all kinds of filth. Without our minds set on the work of God, we can't help but live exactly like this pig. That is the inevitable result when we are only mindful of the affairs of mankind.

There is nothing to be gained if we think about only the things of men. When we think about God's work, even though it's burdensome and tiring for us, on the other hand, our minds are awake and we are strengthened. Even though we



are prone to be mindful of the things of men, the work of God is worthwhile to us. Some people consume so much when it comes to committing sin and spending freely for themselves, and yet when it comes to spending for the Lord, they are so stingy. When the born-again righteous people are mindful of the affairs of mankind, there is nothing to be gained in the world, no hope, only darkness. Try to be mindful of God's work and see what happens. If you carry out God's work, you will surely find hope.

Let us all be mindful of God's work. Mankind is made beautiful only if it thinks of God's work. For men in particular, if they live for the gospel of God, then even a useless drunk can break free from his rut and do what is right and live a worthwhile life that pleases the Lord. Yet this is impossible if we are mindful of the things of men and that is why we must be mindful of the things

of God. All of us must be mindful of the work of God.

The same requirement applies to pastors as well. They, too, must examine themselves carefully. They must ask themselves whether they are now indeed mindful of God's work or the things of men. Those who have not been born again must also examine themselves carefully to see whether they are mindful of God's work or their own work. Yet those who have not been born again cannot be mindful of God's work. Even if they were to give up their lives for the Lord, they are not even qualified to carry out God's work, for they have not met His requirement. So when the Bible says, "You have to be mindful of the things of God," it is spoken to the born-again servants of God.

The Lord often says to us, "Will you be mindful of the things of God or your own affairs? Which is right?" To our brothers and sisters as



well, our Lord asks, “Will you think of God’s work or your own work?” And the Lord says again, “You must do God’s work. If anyone wants to carry out My work, he must deny himself. And he must take up his cross and follow Me even in hardship. Only then can he come after Me.” Our Lord is saying this to all of us, you and me alike.

We must never allow ourselves to turn into those who are afraid of the persecution that comes from preaching the gospel, shutting our mouths tight and not even uniting with the church. Any born-again person must be someone who is harvesting the souls with the Lord. God is saying to us, “If you can’t wage the battle of the gospel by yourself, then unite with the church and do what it asks you to do, being faithful to the work that the church has entrusted to you. That is My work. Do not stand against My work, but ask for My help and pray to Me if you are

insufficient. Think about what you could do for Me and begin from the smallest work with the right mindset and proper heart. Do not be so calculating, mindful of the things of men. Be mindful of My work? Are you struggling to serve the gospel? That’s not a problem as long as you are persecuted for My sake. I will surely reward you for your suffering.” God told us to be mindful of His work, to serve Him, to deny ourselves, and to never deny the Lord even in hardship, but take up our cross and follow Him. We will then become the Lord’s disciples. Those who deny themselves for the sake of the Lord and follow Him bearing their cross are God’s workers and He will take care of all the lives of His workers.

Does this then mean that only the ministry workers such as pastors and evangelists are supposed to serve the Lord? No, all of us who have received the remission of sin have the duty



to carry out God's work before His presence, and we all have the privilege to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow the Lord. Do not forsake such a precious privilege. Do not bury it in the ground. Do not sell your privilege to someone for a bowl of lentil stew like Esau. If you do so, you will surely regret it later on. We have to ponder on God's work and we have to live the rest of our lives carrying out this work of God. And we must dedicate our hearts to the work of God. We have to ask ourselves, "What is God's work? What is in my mind? Am I mindful of man or am I mindful of God? What kind of a person am I?"

Carrying out God's work does not mean that we would live in poverty in this world. We can make a good living even while doing God's work. I, myself have nothing to be ashamed of in my life, even though I am carrying out God's work. On the contrary, I am full of confidence. I often ask myself, "Am I too self-absorbed?"

Although there are many pastors ministering who have had the same education as mine, they are so servile to their elders and deacons that they try to flatter them all the time. Unlike them, I am not intimidated in my ministry at all. I can say to the members of my congregation, "The Master for both of us is Jesus. You and I are nothing more than His servants. Even if you were a prime minister that means nothing in God's church." Isn't this true? How ludicrous is it for a pastor, who is supposed to minister to the congregation, to be so subservient to the elders or deacons? To all such pastors, I would like to say, "Why don't you just quit? Rather than ministering like this, you would be better off to just clean some septic tanks to make a living. If one is appointed as a general, he should act like one. How can a general be a general if he is so helpless before his own soldiers?"



In God's church, we should become fools for the things of God. It is written in the Bible, *“Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you seems to be wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God”* (1 Corinthians 3:18-19).

Long ago, there was a kingdom of the foolish and another kingdom of the wise, and it so happened that these two countries went into war against each other. The people of the wise kingdom were all wise, and the people of the foolish were all foolish. The kingdom of the wise attacked first. However, since all the people in the kingdom of the wise were smart, they all thought, “If I were to advance at the frontline, won't I end up dead first? Sure I will. Instead of fighting at the front of this battlefield, I'll just hole up myself and hide somewhere, and come out after the other soldiers have passed by. That's

the only way I can ensure my survival.” Since the soldiers of the wise kingdom were all smart, they holed up themselves and didn't advance at all to ensure their own survival.

In contrast, when the soldiers of the foolish kingdom were commanded to charge forward, they all attacked. When commanded, “Pick up your long lance and charge ahead unconditionally,” they kept advancing. While the soldiers of the wise kingdom were trying to figure out how they could save their own necks, the soldiers of the foolish kingdom kept charging ahead relentlessly and so they killed them all and won the war.

All of us are servants of God carrying out His work. Only when you and I both serve God does everything succeed. If your leaders in God's church shout out, “Charge!” you must then march forward bravely, just as the army of the foolish kingdom had done. When you give your



offerings and serve this church, whom are you serving? Are you serving me? No, that's not the case. If you served me out of your desire to serve the gospel, then your service was for the Lord and if I serve you out of my desire to serve you, then my service is also for the Lord. For you and I alike, if we were to serve just another man, we would be too disgruntled to do this. It's because all of us are God's people that we pray for each other, care for one another, and intervene in each other's life to admonish one another. As you belong to God's people, you have to be made into honorable people on this earth also, and that's why your church leaders intervene when you go astray; if you were just a worldly person, why would your church leaders interfere with your life? Let us then all embark on the same boat and carry out God's work together until we reach the same destination. This is the gist of my admonition.

Let us be mindful of the things of God. And let us carry out His work. Just how much carnal thoughts did we have this year? If we do not set our minds on the work of God, the worries of the things of men will haunt us all the time. Now, it's not just pastors or evangelists who are supposed to do God's work. You and I alike, each one of us must be mindful of God's work. You must each reflect on what it is that you can do to carry out God's work, participate in it willingly, and do this work. That is what our Lord has spoken to us.

This year, we have set several goals for the work of God that we must carry out. First of these is preaching the gospel in Yanbian, China. I get all excited just to think about it. Even though I would have dreaded this if it were a thing of men and I wouldn't even want to go there if it were my own affair, because it is the Lord's work I am very excited. A visitor from



Yanbian once told me that it's so cold there that when you urinate, it freezes right away. When I heard this, I thought to myself, "I can't go there! I can't even stand it when it's only -10 degrees, and so how could I put up with -40 degree temperatures? I just can't go." If it were my own work, I wouldn't be able to go, but because it is God's work, I have to go if God asks. And if it's God's work, then I want to be the first to go there. You also want to go there because it's God's work, right? I will go there first and pave the way so that anyone can go there to do God's work.

Just as we are holding revival meetings because that is God's work, we are also preaching the gospel to college students and people all over the world because this is all God's work. When it comes to giving our offerings, bearing witness of the gospel, and running the Mission School alike, we are doing

these things all because they are God's work. It's also because it's God's work that we are serving the Lord. Isn't this the case, to be honest? It's indeed true. Sometimes we need something to carry out God's work. Whatever it is, if it's indispensable to God's work then we buy it. If it's God's work, we do it right away.

Whatever we do, we have to base our decision on whether it is God's work or not. After all, we are of those whose minds are set on God's work, and we are the saved people who are serving Him. Even though we the born-again are few in number, you and I still must carry out God's work. It is my sincerest hope and prayer that you and I would all keep the work of God in our minds for this coming year and the rest of our lives as well, and to also carry out His work before we stand in His presence.

Let us all serve the work of God before we go to see our Lord face to face. Let us all pray to



God. Let us pray to God to make us mindful of His work and to be able to carry out all His work that must be done this year. My fellow believers, let us pray, “Lord, please help us and work on us, so that we may faithfully fulfill Your work.” ☒



If Anyone Wants to Follow Me, Let Him Deny Himself!

< Matthew 16:21-28 >

“From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day. Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, ‘Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!’ But He turned and said to Peter, ‘Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.’ Then Jesus said to His disciples, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross,

and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works. Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.’”

Today’s Scripture passage records a conversation that took place between the Lord and Peter. The Lord said here, “*If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.*” Let’s examine why Jesus Christ said these words.



As we carry on with our lives of faith, there are times when we find it very hard to continue on. Haven't you also had times like this, when you found yourself struggling to carry on with your life of faith even though you wanted to follow the Lord faithfully? In general, this happens often because of the fact that you love yourself too much. If we love ourselves more than the Lord, then it's very hard for us to follow Him. This is the issue that the Lord is addressing for us in today's Scripture passage.

After Peter made his confession of faith, the Lord said, "I will go to Jerusalem, be sold to the chief priests in three days, and be crucified to death." Peter then objected to this and trying to stop the Lord, he said the following: "*Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!*" Jesus then turned around and said to Peter, "*Get behind Me, Satan!*" You can imagine just how embarrassed Peter must have been then. He

probably hung onto the Lord's garments and held Him back, insisting adamantly, "Lord, You must not be crucified to death! You can't let this happen!" But the Lord just said to Peter, "*Get behind Me, Satan!*"

On his part, Peter undoubtedly cared deeply for the Lord with all his heart, but the Lord only told him to stay away from Him. Just a while before, the Lord had praised Peter for his good faith, saying that it was the Father who had made him realize Jesus' divinity, but now Peter was rebuked for his acting like Satan all of a sudden. The Lord said to him, "*Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men,*" and then He said to His disciples, "*If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.*"

What we must remember clearly when we are following the Lord is the fact that Jesus told us to



deny ourselves. If we sometimes feel feeble, weak, and desperate while following the Lord and our hearts are not directed toward the Lord, then it's all because we love ourselves too much. When we are reluctant to be led by the Lord, we lose sight of the Lord and instead we only see ourselves. When this happens, we don't care about the Lord at all. So we end up completely clueless as to what it really means to follow the Lord, to be led by Him, and to love Him.

Do You Know Why You Must Deny Yourself?

As we carry on with our lives of faith, sometimes we find out that we love ourselves more than the Lord. In times like this, darkness envelops our hearts and our ship of faith flounders and sinks. We end up shipwrecked,

crashing into the reef. Among those trying to lead a life of faith, there are some people whose ship of faith, hope, and love have withered away, because they have loved themselves more than the Lord. It's because people love themselves too much that each of their ships of faith end up sinking. When we analyze the cause as to why so many Christians' faith have floundered while following the Lord and are no longer able to follow Him, we see that it's because they were mindful of the things of men, just as the Lord had said to Peter, "You are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men." It's also because they failed to deny themselves, even though the Lord had said, "*If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.*"

Who among us does not love himself? Robert H. Schuller, an American pastor famous for his Crystal Cathedral, argued in his book titled *Self-*



Esteem: The New Reformation that Christians must love themselves first. This book made a tremendous impact on not only Christians, but also non-Christians. His main point was that countless Christian believers had been abusing themselves all this time for being sinners with sinful hearts. Yet in this book, Schuller argued that even though human beings are sinful like this by nature, because Jesus has blotted out their sins, they must love themselves. That's why his book was so acclaimed by many Christians.

However, Schuller's assertion was something actually standing against the Word of the Lord. Because this book's teachings had come out of a man, although it was immensely popular for a while, it soon withered away. In contrast, the Lord's Word is the everlasting Truth. Just as the Lord had told Peter, unless we deny our heart's love for ourselves, we cannot follow Him. All of us must grasp this clearly. This Word is

indispensable for all of us to understand clearly in order to follow the Lord.

If we love ourselves, we will fall into self-pity without even realizing it and lose sight of the Lord to see only ourselves. We will then end up losing the Lord and our ship of faith will flounder and sink. Therefore, it's critical that we ruminate and reflect on this issue in depth. You may find yourself wondering, "I have run toward the Lord in full sprint out of my love for Him. Why then have I fallen into a slump all of a sudden, with my love for the Lord disappearing and my desire to run toward the gospel fading away as well? What explains this? I wasn't like this before." In times like this, if you turn around and examine yourself, you will surely discover that it's all because you have too much love for yourself.

I am not saying that your self-love is wrong in and of itself. On the contrary, it is only too



normal for one to love oneself. That's because we all live in our flesh. However, even if we love ourselves, we must still deny this. All Christians ought to do this. We must deny our self-love, realize and admit that this is not a heart that loves the Lord; it's a heart that loves oneself. We must turn our hearts around, saying, "Even though I love myself, isn't it more proper for me to love the Lord? Isn't it more fitting for me to love the Lord rather than myself?" Is it only proper for you and me to love the Lord? Of course it is. Yet even though this is only too proper, we sometimes forget all about it in our lives of faith without even realizing ourselves. In times like this, we have to reestablish our faith asking ourselves, "Why am I like this?" and look toward our Lord and follow Him.

The Lord said to His disciples, "*If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.*" This

passage also applies to us living in this present age. If we really want to follow the Lord, then even though we all want to love ourselves, we must deny this desire and love the Lord first. And we must follow the Lord. If we deny ourselves and follow the Lord, He will take care of us. That is the way of life for us Christians. It's absolutely necessary for us to deny ourselves if we are to follow the Lord. You must remember this clearly. I admonish you to deny yourself.

Just how much love do you have for yourself? And just how many wonderful dreams do you have for yourself? It's not as if I don't know this, nor do I want to bind you with the Law to dissuade you from pursuing your dreams. Nevertheless, it is in the Lord that you should desire your hopes and dreams to be fulfilled. And you must deny yourself. The purpose and reason as to why you and I must do this is all in order to follow the Lord. Even though everyone loves



himself, to love the Lord more than oneself is the very way to follow the Lord. In other words, although I know very well that you love and cherish yourself, because this is an obstacle that prevents you from following the Lord and serving the gospel, it's only when you deny this self-love that you can follow the Lord.

That is what the Lord had said to the Apostle Peter. This Word was also spoken to us today. How much do we love ourselves? All of us clearly love ourselves. We must admit this and obey the Word of the Lord commanding us to deny ourselves to follow Him. Even though we all have too much love for ourselves, the right thing for us to do is to deny ourselves and follow the Lord. Denying ourselves, following the Lord, loving Him, dedicating our hearts to the lost souls, serving the Lord, and seeking His will first—these are what are right for us to do.

We Must Set Our Hearts on the Lord

As we carry on with our lives of faith, we often find ourselves wavering back and forth between the love that we have for the Lord and the love that we have for ourselves. However, as Christians, our hearts must love the Lord without fail. Because the born-again Christians have the Holy Spirit dwelling in their hearts, they are bound to love the Lord even without trying hard, saying to themselves, “I should love the Lord.” Since the Holy Spirit, who is one with the Lord, dwells in our hearts, we do love the Lord fundamentally. At the same time, this love for the Lord is inevitably accompanied by our self-love as well. We ourselves want to be treated the same as the Lord. The ego wants to receive the same treatment as the Lord. If we want ourselves to be treated at the same level as the Lord, then we must quickly choose between the Lord and



us. Whom should we choose then? We should choose the Lord, realizing that it is more blessed to think of Him first. It's when we consider rationally what is right and we go forth by faith, that we can deny ourselves and follow the Lord first, rather than being seized by our own lust. It is then that we put on the love of the Lord and are treated well by other saints in the Lord.

As we carry on with our lives of faith, such conflicts are inevitable for us, the born-again. Just as we love the Lord, so do we love ourselves. And sometimes our self-love is at the same level as our love for the Lord. What should we do in times like this? We should lower one side a little. Whom should we lower then? As John the Baptist said, "He must increase, but I must decrease." We ourselves must decrease. This is what is meant for a heart to follow the Lord and put on His love. However, Peter had not done this, and instead he had placed himself

at the same level as the Lord. So he held back the Lord and insisted that He should never die. That's why Jesus rebuked Peter, saying, "You are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men," and went as far as calling him Satan. Peter was rebuked by Jesus like this, precisely because he had not denied himself. You and I, who have been born again, must break down and deny ourselves. It's only then that we can follow the Lord unwaveringly. It's none other than Satan who makes us follow our lust.

However, no matter how hard we try not to, our self-love continues to arise. Even though we love ourselves, we must still follow virtue and that is why mankind suffers from so much agony. Referring to this, Buddhism calls it 108 Defilements. Self-love is aroused in us endlessly. Yet despite this, even though self-love keeps on arising endlessly, we must never allow ourselves to be completely drawn to it or continue to run



toward it. That's because it's the path to destruction to love oneself and to love the world. Of course, we do admit that we all have self-love, but even so, the proper thing for us to do is to follow the Lord first. It's when we have such a proper disposition of the heart that the Lord is exalted in us, and our souls, our lives, and our everything are made beautiful. That's why it's so imperative for you and me to know how to deny ourselves. This must be put into practice everyday and every moment in our lives of faith.

Let me provide an illustration here. Imagine that a dog is walking with his owner, and while walking he smells something. So this dog leaves the owner for a while and follows the trace of the smell. Even though the owner continues to walk straight ahead, the dog keeps on sniffing around, going off to the side and busying with himself for a while. But after some delay, the dog eventually

turns his head around and once again resumes following his owner.

We are like this dog. Because each of us has a body, it's our basic instinct to love ourselves, just as it is a dog's instinct to follow the trace of smell. However, what we must be mindful of first is the work of the Lord. When we think about the Lord's love first and follow Him, not only are we blessed, but the Lord is also pleased. That's because it's in times like this that the Lord can take care of everything and lead us.

Such battles must be fought continuously, particularly for those who want to follow the Lord in their lives of faith. What, then, should we do in these battles? We can defeat our carnal thoughts and overcome them only if we have a clear understanding of our basic nature. Can we really overcome ourselves, no matter how hard we fight against ourselves? No, we are incapable of defeating ourselves. Let's say that you



resolved yourself not to touch any food in your fasting, saying to yourself, “I’m hungry, but I won’t eat for the sake of the Lord.” What would be the result then? You will in the end give into your hunger. No matter how hard we struggle against ourselves like this, we simply cannot win. Even if we prevail over ourselves, nothing is really gained; on the other hand, if we lose, then we feel completely wretched, falling into self-hatred and turning into slaves to ourselves in the end.

In our battle against self, we have no winning chance. As such, the right thing for us to do is to say to ourselves, “You, my flesh, may want to do that. But I will first do the work of the Lord, the work of saving the soul, of serving the Lord and following Him.” We should leave our flesh alone and just follow the Spirit. The reason why we are able to say to ourselves, “Even though my flesh is like this, I will still follow the Lord,” is

because it’s not just we who are in us, but the Holy Spirit who dwells in us also. In other words, it is by the power of the Holy Spirit that we are able to follow the Lord. Because we have the Holy Spirit in our hearts when we follow the Lord, we are able to surrender ourselves to Him and follow His footsteps.

Everyday, the desire to seek the Lord’s interest and the desire to seek our own interest are in constant conflict and friction in our hearts, just like David and Saul did. Just as David had followed the Lord rather than killing Saul with his own hands, all that we have to do is just leave our own desires unfulfilled and seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness first instead, rather than trying to seek our own interest. None other than this is self-denial. We must realize just how imperative and indispensable it is in this present age to deny ourselves and put our priority on the Lord.



We cannot help but wage this battle constantly. Just as a dog sometimes goes off to the side and other times follows his owner closely, so do we sometimes go off to a side road while following the Lord. Even though we admit that we always love ourselves and try to ensure our own interest first, still we must not lose the Lord. There are times when we waver back and forth between the Lord and ourselves. Let's admit this. I'm not saying here that you should not waver like this. I know very well that if I ask this from you, you will probably waver even more. Rather, what I am saying here is that we should admit honestly that this is who we really are and even though we are such people, we should never forget the Lord, never forget to follow Him, but look toward Him, discern what His will is, be mindful of the things of God first rather than the things of men, and follow His work. That is the right thing for us to do.

There are various organizations in our church, ranging from the Sunday school to youth gatherings and adult gatherings, as well as various departments responsible for different tasks such as literature ministry, Internet ministry, publication, translation, and so forth. We work through these different organizations and departments and this is all to think of the Lord first and follow Him. As we are mindful of the work of God first, it sometimes brings physical hardships, but even so we must still think of God's work first, push this work ahead, and set our hearts on these tasks.

Jesus said, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself." You and I must remember this clearly, think of the Lord first, be trained to follow Him first, and wage our battle against self endlessly in following the Lord's footsteps. It is then that we can truly follow the Lord, put on His grace, and serve Him. For our



ship of faith not to flounder and sink, we must think of the work of God first, deny ourselves, and carry out the Lord's work to follow Him. ☒



Deny Yourself and Follow the Lord

< **Matthew 16:24-27** >

“Then Jesus said to His disciples, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.’”

Before I begin, I would like to first give my thanks to the Lord for saving many brothers and sisters during this Discipleship Training Camp (DTC). As the hour is already getting late, I will try to finish my sermon as quickly as possible. Through this DTC, our God has saved all the souls of the Gospel Class. I am sure that more people would have given their testimony of salvation if there were more time for this. But as we were pressed for time, not everyone was able to testify today. To those who were not able to give their testimony here, I ask you to each return to your respective churches and give your testimony of salvation there. If you have any questions, I encourage you to not hesitate to ask, and I also admonish you to lead your life of faith diligently. It’s the weak and insufficient children of God whom our Lord wants to hold and bless.

By nature, the last day of any DTC is when I am least popular. That’s because today is the day



when our children at the camp sing special praises. They are undoubtedly the most popular. When the cute children sing and dance, all the adults are so rejoiced in their hearts that they don't know what to do. The second most popular group next to the children at the camp is our adult brothers, and it's probably because they can't sing that well, and so all the other saints encourage them even more. Even so, they have been preparing their praise since lunchtime. Even from my room, I could hear the sound of someone playing the guitar and everyone singing praise together. After praising and hearing themselves singing, the adult brothers were inspired, congratulating each other, "Wow! We sing so well!" The fact that our adult brothers can even sing at this level is something that we can all be proud of. Encouraging each other to find enough confidence in themselves, they came out here and gave praise and thanks to God.

Next to them, the third most popular group is the Gospel Class. In today's evening hours we shared some time with the souls from the Gospel Class, who gave their testimony of salvation and glorified God. When they testified how the Lord has saved them, it was so heartwarming for both those testifying and those listening alike and we all felt so grateful to God. It's my heart's desire that the Lord would protect them all. Regardless of how the attendees at our Gospel Class came here, whether they came here by force, deception, or out of their own volition, I believe that the very fact that they all came to this place together and heard the Word of God is the greatest gift of their entire lifetime.

This afternoon we also performed the baptismal rite and it was so blessed and wonderful. Sitting on the bank, I saw our saints being baptized. Before the evening service I had a chance to view some video footage of this



baptism with our ministers and it was so much fun to watch. Some ministers gave a benediction for quite a while after baptizing, but other ministers kept the ceremony simple, baptizing the saints, raising them from the water, and then praying tersely, “Thank You, Lord. Please bless this brother.” As I saw how some ministers prayed for blessings simply like this while others prayed for a while, it came to my mind that even when one is baptized, he should be careful with the line that he chooses. Since God’s servants are asking for His blessings, it would be better to pick the right line and be baptized by a minister who would pray for you a lot. After all, this is not an everyday opportunity. Given how the real baptism that we receive by faith after being born again comes only once in a lifetime, it’s such an inspirational experience. That’s because at that moment we have to truthfully confess our faith to God and God’s servants will pray for us. Just a

while ago, as our ministers watched the video footage of the baptismal ceremony, they even joked to each other, saying, “Look! That lazy pastor is slacking off even while performing baptism!” But by no means am I suggesting here that it’s right to pray for long or wrong to pray short. It was a truly beautiful sight to see how baptism was given and received by faith.

For the duration of this Discipleship Training Camp God provided us with good weather. He has given us His Word and His grace, not to mention good food to enjoy; as well as enabling His servants and His people to meet together, God has clothed us in great blessings beyond words. Back at home it was so hot that I couldn’t do anything but sweat, but here in In-je Discipleship Training Center, its cool, clear weather was so refreshing that even my heart was refreshed and I am very thankful for that. Before I came to this DTC, I was completely



exhausted, barely able to breathe. But now that I've come here and met my coworkers and my brothers and sisters and have cooled myself in the refreshing creek water, I feel very much alive. It had seemed as if I had done all my duties to God with a great deal of suffering, but now that I've come to this center and shared the Word with you over the last few days, I can appreciate once again what a great blessing it is that I came to be born again by believing in the Lord and to serve Him.

For those who came to the Gospel Class this week, you have my thanks for patiently listening to the Word for so long. I believe that our ministers' wives have labored particularly hard. The kitchen was nice and warm during the winter, but it was way too hot this summer. I got to see how their faces were all swollen. So I thought to myself, "It must have been really hard for them. We didn't prepare for this. I didn't

realize that the kitchen would get so hot." I hadn't considered this yet, as it was the first time that we held summer DTC in this building after its construction. I promise that the kitchen will be cool next summer. As the Apostle Paul said, "*I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me,*" if God strengthens us, then everything that we desire will indeed be accomplished. To all our ministers' wives, you have worked very hard in the kitchen and you have our sincerest thanks for your labor.

I would also like to thank each and every one of our ministers for laboring in various forms and ways. One of them came down with a cold in the summer and lost quite a bit of weight. This pastor was happy that his face looked less chubby, but he was less happy to hear another pastor jokingly saying to him, "It looks as though the weight you lost from the face all went to your belly." Our ministers just can't tolerate to see any



of them happy—I am, of course, just joking here myself. Thanks to God’s grace, we all had a wonderful time at this DTC. There were some hardships while preparing this camp, but I am still thankful to God. I will try to keep today’s sermon short, speaking in clear and simple terms.

From Now On, You Must Learn to Deny Yourself

Today, we just read Matthew 16:24. This passage says, *“Then Jesus said to His disciples, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.’”* If we, the righteous, want to become Jesus Christ’s disciples, then we must follow the Lord. And anyone who wants to follow the Lord must cast aside his carnal thoughts and mind. But is it easy to forsake one’s carnal thoughts? No, it’s

not easy at all. Yet despite this, you and I, the born-again saints, must still deny ourselves, deny our thoughts that desire to live for our own flesh, and follow Jesus. Only those who follow Jesus even in their most difficult trials can become the Lord’s disciples. That’s because the Lord Himself said in today’s Scripture passage, *“If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.”*

Everyone who wants to follow the Lord has his own cross to bear. Whatever makes it so hard and difficult for you to follow the Lord is your cross. But we must never give up following the Lord just because of some hardships. That’s because this way of following the Lord is the way of life. And it’s also because it is the way of blessings to deny oneself, take up one’s cross, and follow Jesus. Even though it’s hard and difficult for us to follow the Lord, we must still deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow



Him. Precisely because it is the way of the Lord to follow Him no matter what kind of hardships we face, we must endure any and all trials and continue to follow the Lord. Since following the Lord is the way to assure our own lives, it is even more imperative that we follow Him.

In verses 25-27 in today's Scripture passage, the Lord said, *“For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.”* Here, the words “his life” or the equivalent is mentioned four times.

Following the Lord means denying oneself and taking up one's cross and this, in turn, means that following the Lord is the same as forsaking

one's own life. Considering how to follow the Lord is the same as forsaking one's life, if we were to find it too hard to deny ourselves and resign ourselves from following the Lord, then we would end up dead. On the other hand, if we were to follow the Lord after being born again and receiving the remission of sins, then we would attain God's blessings. This salvation that we once received—that is, the remission of our sins—is to receive new life. When Jesus Christ died on the Cross instead of us, who were doomed to hell for our sins, we, too, died with Him once and when He rose from the dead again, we also rose with Him. By believing in this, we have received new life from God. Before we were born again, the life that we had was that of a sinner, but now after we were born again, we have attained new life as righteous people.

Given how we have received the remission of our sins and attained new life as the righteous,



it's an extremely important question whether or not we would follow the Lord as His redeemed people after receiving this new life as the righteous. It's when the born-again righteous people follow the Lord that they can maintain this life, be blessed more to prosper more and grow more, and give birth to many children to receive even more blessings. Those who follow the Lord will forever enjoy all the blessings and splendor given by God and they will never lose the eternal life that they attained. In contrast, those who do not deny themselves and give up following the Lord over their own hardships will lose their lives. This is the very message that today's Scripture passage is teaching us.

You Cannot Follow the Lord Unless You Deny Your Own Thoughts

You and I have received the remission of our sins by hearing the gospel. It's priceless that we have heard the gospel and received the remission of sins. One of our brothers testified that it had taken him 37 long years to finally hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit. For some of you, it may have taken 20 years, and for others it may have taken 40 or even 50 years. Like this, the very fact that you have received the remission of your sins is a tremendous blessing. There are countless people in this world who die without hearing this gospel of life even once. Yet you have heard this Word and have attained something truly priceless. After all, what could be more important than for someone who was doomed to hell to receive new life? This is a marvelous gift of life.



Whoever receives the remission of sin attains new life from God. We all have thus attained new life through the remission of sin by grace. However, if we cast aside our cross and do not follow the Lord, then we will not be able to maintain this new life. There is nothing more foolish than to receive new life and then fail to keep it and grow it. We, the righteous, can live the most blessed life when we cherish this precious new life. Once we have attained this new life, we have to grow it and spread it to others, so that they may also become God's children. However, even though we all try to follow the Lord like this, there is one thing that prevents us from denying ourselves and makes us give up our effort to follow the Lord even at the slightest hardship, and that is none other than our flesh. This flesh and its carnal thoughts that you and I have, hamper us from our spiritual thoughts desiring to always follow the Lord.

Our carnal thoughts that care only about the welfare of the flesh have no desire to follow the Lord. Just as the Apostle Paul said, "to be carnally minded is death," our flesh can never fulfill the will of the Lord, no matter how our spirits yearn to follow the Lord. That is why the Lord said to His disciples, "If any of you wants to follow Me, then receive the remission of sin first. And abide with Me in the Church, be taught with My Word, eat the Word with the heart and be filled, receive unwavering faith into the heart, and find help by praying." In other words, if we, the born-again want to follow the Lord blessed in both body and spirit, then we must deny ourselves.

We must deny ourselves. Whether we like this or not, we must still deny our flesh. Self-denial is extremely difficult. If you were told to just sit and do nothing but deny yourself, you would probably die of frustration. Nonetheless, if we



want to follow the Lord, then we must first of all deny ourselves, and if we want to deny ourselves, then we must accept and take the Word of God enthusiastically. As well, if the Lord said that this gospel is indeed right and that it is proper for the church to orient itself to the spreading of the gospel, then we must think proactively and look for the proper life of faith, asking ourselves, “What can I do to fulfill the will of the Lord?” Our flesh is bound to do something anyways if it has any time to spare, and so we should use this flesh for the Lord. After all, God gave us our hands to work, our legs to walk, our eyes to see, our lips to speak, and our noses to breathe.

For you and me to follow the Lord, we must know how to deny ourselves. No matter how our thoughts and our standards may seem to be right, we must forsake our thoughts and our own standards and instead follow the Word of the

Lord. And no matter what kind of hardships we may face, we must hold onto what Jesus said to us, that we must deny ourselves to follow Him. Like the flock following the guidance of the shepherd, we must follow our Lord in complete obedience. Yet despite this, some people still refuse to follow the Lord just because it’s too hard for them to deny themselves, they cannot break down their own stubbornness because they are just too pigheaded, and claim that their personalities and characters are simply not cut out to lead a life of faith. Such people have not denied themselves.

It’s true that many people are not cut out for the life of faith. There also are some people who say, “I will teach, but I hate being taught by someone else,” but they must deny this as well. And then there are those who are quick-tempered; these people must deny their rash personality also. No matter what, we must deny



ourselves. Only when we deny ourselves can we follow the Lord. No matter how hard and difficult it is to deny ourselves, we must still deny ourselves and follow the Lord, for this is the very way of life. If you want to follow the Lord, then self-denial is something that's inevitable for you. Since this is the right answer, it's far more profitable for us to focus on what it is that we must do in order to deny ourselves and follow the Lord faithfully. When we think about what tasks God has entrusted to us, it's a whole lot easier for us to deny ourselves and follow the Lord.

I am sure that you are quite familiar with today's Scripture passage, but let's once again turn to the previous passage. Jesus asked His disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" The disciples then answered, saying, "Some say that You are John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others say that You are one of the prophets." Jesus then

asked the disciples again, "What about you then? Who do you think I am?" To this, Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Peter gave the right answer. Jesus was very happy with him.

So Peter was all pumped up with confidence before the other disciples. Given how Jesus said to Peter, "You are right; it is the Father who has revealed this to you," the other disciples must have said, "Wow, Peter, you are so amazing!" So Peter was very happy to have been commended by Jesus. However, Jesus went on to say, "Soon, I will go to Jerusalem, and I will be seized by the Jewish elders, slapped and stripped by Roman soldiers, and crucified. I will die like this, but I will be raised the third day." Peter was shocked to hear this, as Jesus Christ, his teacher, his King, his Prophet, his High Priest, the Son of the Almighty God, and the Savior who saved his life and had praised him just a short while ago,



suddenly said that He would die. So Peter held onto Jesus and tried hard to dissuade Him, saying, *“Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!”*

Then Jesus changed His composure all of a sudden and rebuked Peter, saying, “You are a demon! Get behind Me, Satan!” Peter must have been quite baffled to see how Jesus changed so abruptly like this, when just a short while ago, He had commended Peter effusively, saying to him, “Your faith is indeed right; you are truly amazing.”

Peter was so dedicated to Jesus that he was willing to say, “Lord, I will follow You until the day I die,” and he did try really hard to follow the Lord with an unwavering heart. Yet despite this, he was told all of a sudden that the Lord, the teacher whom he had decided to follow, would die. Would any of you ever be happy to hear that one of your beloved ones would die? No, of

course not. That’s why Peter had tried to hold back Jesus, saying, “You shall never do this,” all because he was overflowing with his love for Jesus. Yet Jesus actually got angry at Peter and rebuked him very harshly, saying to him, “You wretched man! You are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men. Get behind Me, Satan! Get out of My sight and go away! You are an offense to Me!”

So Peter didn’t know which tune he should follow and figured that it would be better for him to just remain quiet. The other disciples were no different. Given how Peter was the first among all the disciples and how Jesus had rebuked him all of a sudden after commending him only a short while ago, all the other disciples were also on their toes, thinking, “Phew! Good thing that I kept myself quiet, or otherwise I would have been scolded!” So the rest of the disciples calmed down and stayed still.



Had Peter not denied his thoughts, saying to himself, “Jesus is so fickle! One minute He is praising me and the next minute He is scolding me,” then from this moment on, he would not have been able to follow Jesus. However, Jesus said at that moment, “If you want to follow Me, you must deny yourself, pick up your cross, and then follow Me.” As the Lord said, “Deny yourself if you want to follow Me,” it was then that Peter and the rest of the disciples were really educated in this respect. This is the lesson that they learned: “Oh, so we must deny ourselves. Whatever the Lord says is right and commends us for is right, and we should proceed by faith trusting in His Word; and whatever He says is wrong and rebukes us for, we should realize that it is wrong, deny ourselves, and follow Him by faith.”

Everyone who wants to follow the Lord must deny himself like this and follow Him with his

cross on his back. To this, Jesus added some further explanation, saying, “Whoever desires to save his life will lose it.” Jesus’ Word is very difficult to understand. So some people think, “Jesus says one thing here, but He says something else different later on. I just can’t understand what He means. One minute He seems to speak to sinners, but the next minute He seems to speak to the righteous. So there is no way I can understand all this.” Actually, this also happens to me when I preach. Although there are many righteous people here, sometimes there are also sinners present. I also go back and forth in my sermons, sometimes speaking to sinners and other times to the righteous. So you need to grasp what’s on my mind when you listen to me. The same goes when you listen to the Word of Jesus. Although many people say that it’s too hard to understand His Word, this Word of Jesus is surprisingly simple.



Where it says here, “Whoever desires to save his life will lose it,” this means that if one tries to keep his life, he will lose it. And where it says, “Whoever loses his life for My sake will find it,” this is made possible because the Lord is the One who can give us eternal life. Some people may think, “Wow, Jesus is so completely arbitrary! Doesn’t this all boil down to asking me to lay down my life for Him?” However, this passage means that Jesus will give new life to all those who hold onto the Word of Truth, deny themselves, and follow the will of the Lord. He has dominion over life and death and is able to give and take away life at His will. Our Lord then went on to say, *“What profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?”* This passage means that following the Lord is as important as one’s life.

My fellow believers, what Jesus said to His disciples in today’s Scripture passage applies to you and me equally. We have been born again. If we have been born again, then we are now God’s children. And if we are God’s children, then we should live in His Kingdom. The Kingdom of God now on this earth is His Church. Once we are born again, our lives of faith should be led with our sight set on God, feeding on His spoken Word, believing in this Word of God, and following Him faithfully. That is the way of life in the Kingdom of God. Just as it is a matter of fact for any good citizen to follow the laws of his country and obey all its legal statues and requirements, if we have indeed received the remission of our sins from God and become His born-again people on this earth, then so is it a matter of fact for our laws to change and our thoughts to be transformed. For us, the born-



again, the way of life and the way of thinking have all changed now.

Our faith in the Lord has been transformed. Our acts have changed as well. Everything has changed. Just as there is a hymn that sings, “♪All my life has changed; A new life of being born again♪” our everything has indeed changed. From the moment we received the remission of our sins, the standard of our values has changed. The standard of our acts has changed and so has the standard of faith been transformed. Life itself has changed. Our blessings have changed in their essence. We have been transformed into new creatures to live not just for 60 or 70 years, but forever. Since our everything has changed, we should live our lives as changed people now that we have received the remission of our sins. That is why once remitted from our sins, we must cast aside our own thoughts. Now it is no longer our own minds and thoughts that are important for

us, but what God is saying is what’s most important for us.

You and I must follow the Lord. The way of following the Lord is the very way of life, the way to maintain life, and the way to be blessed, and that is why it’s so indispensable for all of us to follow the Lord. It is my heart-felt admonition to all of you that now that every law has changed for you, if you really want to follow the Lord, then you must cast aside your thoughts and your stubbornness, and believe in and follow what the Lord is saying in this written Word. Once born again, you must abide in God’s Church and unite yourself with its work of spreading the gospel together—it is then that you can keep the salvation and new life that you have received and continue to receive blessings from God in your life according to His time. When you hear the Word and learn it through God’s church, believe in it, carry out God’s work with the church, pray



together, serve the Lord from whatever position that you've been assigned to by the church, support the gospel ministry, and follow the Lord, you will be able to keep your life. And let me make it clear to you that when you carry out God's work in your life, even though you may sometimes struggle so much that you feel completely exhausted, you will actually live more energetically. And even though it may seem as if you will lose much, in fact you will be blessed and gain much.

Do you understand what I am saying? Perhaps I have spoken too quickly up until now that some of you may have had a hard time trying to understand me. Do you understand what I am saying? I, too, am insufficient, but I still follow the will of the Lord at His command. Even though I am insufficient, when I denied myself and followed the Lord, I was led by Him to follow His footsteps even more energetically and

strengthened by the Lord. If I had not denied myself and refused to follow the Lord's Word, I would have lost my salvation and perished away.

Now that you and I have received the remission of our sins, let us all follow the Lord no matter what. Let us truly participate in the works that the Lord wants to fulfill through us, let us receive and enjoy in time everything that the Lord wants to give to us, let us serve God, and having thus lived the rest of our lives in this way, let us all stand before the Lord fearlessly. Let us all go to Him at that time. It is written, *"For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works."* Our Lord will surely reward us for all the tears that we shed and all the hardships that we endure for the sake of the gospel as His redeemed people. He promised that on this earth also, He would reward by a hundred-fold all those who deny



themselves and follow Him even in their trials. For those who truly deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow the Lord, it's inevitable for there to be much persecution and suffering at the beginning. One day, however, those who ask the Lord for His help and continue to follow Him even amid such trials will come to experience for themselves how the Lord would reward them for all their hardships and pain. Such people will be rewarded by a hundred-fold on this earth also, and there is no one among them who would not receive eternal life in the next world to come.

That is what God Himself promised us. And that is why we the born-again must follow the Lord, for none other than this is the very way of blessings and happiness. ☒



Only Faith Saves Us from Sin

< **Matthew 16:24-27** >

“Then Jesus said to His disciples, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.’”

Today I removed the wood-burning heater used in our church and put in a new wood-burning heater. So I tried the new heater as a test run and it turned out to be excellent in thermal efficiency without producing a lot of smoke. Is it warm and cozy in here now? Should I turn the heater up? Isn't it nice to be so warm in the middle of winter? As far as the winter times are concerned, the best deal is to find warmth at as little cost as possible. As the Korean saying goes, “What else could be nicer than to have a full stomach and a warm back?” It is best to be warm in this winter. We took out the large heater and put in a smaller one, but its thermal efficiency is so good that I am confident to say that we've met one of our long-cherished desires for this winter.

Whenever the winter is upon us, we tend to feel cold both in body and mind. Lately I've noticed that many of you are spiritually stagnant. Nonetheless, we are still laboring with one heart



to spread the gospel all over the world and we also know that the gospel will indeed be preached to every corner of the world. Many souls throughout the whole world continue to request us to send our books to them and the work of God continues to be carried out.

Today, I delivered the file containing the original manuscript of one of my books to an electronic publishing house. I was told that if the people at the publishing house stay up late to work, they would be able to finish the job in a few days. We should then be able to upload e-books on our web site shortly. The first volume of our gospel series is also being translated into the major languages of the world, and once this work is finished, we would be completing our ministry for 2000. Next year, we plan to publish three more titles in English and continue to preach the gospel energetically all over the world. I hope to do even more work next year

than this year. I pray to God to strengthen us and bless us, so that we may be able to preach the gospel to every major nation in the world within the next couple of years.

In two year's time, Korea will host the FIFA World Cup 2002. We will co-host the World Cup with Japan, and by then the eyes of the whole world would be focused on Korea. I believe that we will be able to preach the gospel to many nations throughout the entire world until the end of 2002, even though it won't be 100 percent complete. Many people from all over the world will visit Korea for the World Cup. If we share our books with these visitors at that time, the gospel will be preached to a considerable extent. And soon, we will preach the gospel to our families and souls in Korea. We will prepare our faith for the last days and until the Lord returns, we will live united together no matter what, warming ourselves, breaking bread together, and



preaching the gospel to the end. If God permits, we will do whatever needs to be done. The Lord will then return meanwhile, won't He? When the Lord comes, all that we have to do is just go with Him.

This year is now passing. How does your heart feel now that this year is passing? Are you happy? Do you feel sentimental? Do you have mixed feelings? I am sure that you are all happy. I, too, am happy. Perhaps it's because we have carried out many burdensome tasks this year, but I am also glad that this year is now passing. In the English-speaking world, we have distributed many copies of our books to those who wanted them, from pastors to theologians to Christians at different organizations. Through the Internet, we are now advertising our books to Christians all over the world, and we are sending our free books to whoever wants them.

As I look back this year, I feel that we've accomplished many things. The gospel was preached considerably through the first two volumes of our English books and the third English volume was also translated. Since its initial translation is now complete, and the rest will be taken care of with some more revision, the third English volume is nearing its completion and its electronic version has already been published. In the days to come, everyone in the entire world will be able to access the gospel through our e-books. We should send out emails to people and let them know that we've uploaded our e-books on our web site. We will send mail informing them that we've put up such e-books on our Internet homepage and recommend them to take a look. If these people want to read our books, they can just download those e-books and read them. The gospel will then be planted in them. We can then preach this gospel of the



water and the Spirit to every soul all over the world even more quickly.

Nowadays, we are preaching the gospel not only to the English-speaking world, but also to Christians in Japan. My desire is to preach this gospel to everyone all over the world before I go to the Lord. I will carry out God's work together with you, not by myself. You and I are those who have received the calling of God for the spreading of this gospel. Although our number is small, I am sure that we will, like Gideon's 300 warriors, raise this gospel torch high to fight our battle and we will indeed preach the gospel completely so that it will prevail all over the world in the end.

Today, I would like to share the Word with you drawn from Matthew 16:24-27. In this passage, Jesus said to His disciples, *"If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."* This is a

passage that we all know quite well. Of course, it's also important to know the Word. However, unless the Word of God is actually applied in your life, this passage has nothing to do with you, as it is said in John, *"The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth"* (John 1:14). We have to really understand what this passage is saying and what kind of faith we should have.

To everyone alike, from His disciples to every born-again saint and all those who have not been born again, the Lord said that if anyone wants to come after Him, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Him. The first step that we need to take in order to follow the Lord is to deny ourselves and the second step is to take up our cross and follow Him.



What Does It Then Mean to Deny Oneself?

Is the need for self-denial applicable only to certain, special conditions? Is it only when we have wrong thoughts, make mistakes, or are improperly minded that we must deny ourselves? Or is this passage a truth that must be applied to every aspect of our lives? This passage should be applied to every aspect of our lives. The Lord made it absolutely clear that if we want to follow Him, we must deny ourselves always. That we must deny ourselves anytime and anywhere is the irrefutable truth.

My fellow believers, everyone has his own merits, unique characteristics, and flaws as well. It's said that one man has a thousand faces. One person can change himself into various personalities. Let me illustrate with a short story. Long ago, there was a certain artist that wanted

to draw Jesus, and so he set out looking for the most gentle and kind-looking man in the world. He eventually found someone who looked like this and painted a portrait of Jesus based on this man. Later on, the artist wanted to draw another painting, but this time he wanted to draw a portrait of someone utterly evil. So he looked around for his model, and after much search he came across an extremely violent and vicious man in prison. He could see that this man was horribly vicious just by looking at him. After finishing his painting based on the man, the artist discovered an amazing and shocking fact. The gentle and kind man who had looked like Jesus and the one who now looked like the vilest and most vicious man were the same person. This man, who had modeled for Jesus, had now become a model of the vilest of all. That is the nature of mankind. Human beings have a thousand images. They change easily according



to their circumstances, and for various reasons, they keep changing themselves.

Jesus said that anyone who wants to follow the Lord must deny himself. We have too much pride in ourselves. So we tend to boast and brag about our merits even after being born again, and as a result we are told by our predecessors of faith to deny our merits and humble our hearts. We then struggle greatly to break ourselves down and lower our hearts. In reality, human beings have at most one or two things that deserve any merit or pride and the rest is just filled with shortcomings. Yet we are told to give up even these small merits and that's why we get so upset. We think, "If I have to forsake even this little thing, then there will be nothing left to me, except for this completely worthless body of mine, worse than everyone in the world!"

People are prone to think they are better and more righteous than even Jesus Himself, and so

they judge Him, judge His followers, and criticize the Truth. How can they ever follow Jesus like this? It's impossible! If this is the case, then these things must be denied. By the way, overblown merits are actually quite easy to deny. What's far more difficult is to deny one's weaknesses. Everyone has weaknesses and so they must all be denied. If anyone does not abide in this truth and does not stand firmly in the dominion of faith, then his heart, thoughts, and sense of values are all bound to be corrupted. Mankind is full of shortcomings and weaknesses. When we are told to deny our merits, it's relatively easy to do so; but when we are told to admit our flaws, it's a tremendous struggle for us. Admitting our flaws is the first step to denying oneself by faith. That's because we think to ourselves, "I am already flawed enough, and so I was trying to turn my weaknesses into my shield and at least get some pity, but I am



now told to deny even this. What am I supposed to do?” Nevertheless, if we want to follow the Lord, then it’s a precondition for us to deny ourselves no matter what. Unless we deny ourselves, we cannot follow the Lord.

When it’s too hard to deny yourself, people may think, “What’s the difference between denying myself and following the Lord, and not denying myself and not following Him? Since it’s so hard to deny myself, I might as well not follow the Lord.” But it does make a huge difference. Our lives are at stake here, as we will lose life if we do not follow the Lord, but gain life if we do. It is, therefore, very important for us to follow the Lord, and we must put a great deal of emphasis on this since our lives are at stake here.

To follow the Lord, we must deny two things. We must deny both our insufficiencies and our merits. Although self-denial may seem as hard as

death itself at first, it’s actually quite easy once you let go of and deny yourself and break down your will and thoughts for the first time. We have to deny our shortcomings as well.

Don’t you often feel that you are too insufficient and as a result fall into despair in your life of faith sometimes? As we carry on with our lives of faith, there are many times when we feel that we ourselves are insufficient. So we sometimes think, “Someone like me can’t carry on with a life of faith anymore,” and we feel that it’s better for us to stop leading this kind of life of faith. There are times when we think, “Others are not the problem, but I am the problem. I don’t think I can carry on anymore.” Jesus said that we must deny this if we want to follow the Lord. No matter how hard it is, only when we deny ourselves can we follow the Lord.

Can we then really follow the Lord if we deny ourselves? If we deny both our merits and



shortcomings, then it is indeed possible for us to follow the Lord by faith without being bound by such things. Because the Lord is the Truth, just as He said, *“The Just shall live by faith” (Romans 1:17)*, there is nothing but faith that enables us the born-again to follow the Lord. When it comes to living by faith, our own merits and demerits mean nothing. Whether we are virtuous or flawed does not matter, such things are only to be denied.

We also have to admit our shortcomings and flaws to God, deny them as well, and have faith to tell ourselves, “The Lord is still my Lord. He has surely blotted out all the sins of the world. It’s through me that He works.” Just like the saying in Korea that goes, “Even though all dogs in a town may bark against the sound of a train, but the train still runs,” the Truth is immutable. No matter how insufficient, flawed, and weak we may be, the Lord still loves us. He has saved

such people like us and He also works through such people like us. Moreover, the Lord has absolutely no regret for having made us God’s people. Because the Lord always loves us unchangingly and has made us forever sinless by saving us, when we believe in this Lord, we can both deny our weaknesses and follow Him as well.

However, denying oneself like this is never so easy. So only those who have actually applied the Word in their lives when following the Lord can deny themselves more easily. Whereas it’s easy for us to just deny our merits, it’s hard to deny our flaws and shortcomings, as we are afraid that doing so would make us feel like idiots. That’s how our minds think until we admit our shortcomings. Although in reality, once we admit to God just how flawed and insufficient we are, we can actually move further by faith and we will also discover that it is not so difficult after



all. While we have both merits and demerits, we tend to fall into despair more easily when our insufficient selves are exposed while following the Lord. However, the way of life for the righteous does not depend on our own virtues or flaws.

The Righteous Live Solely by Trusting in the Lord

There is no other way for us to live but by faith. Only faith saves us. Only faith enables us to follow the Lord and stand upright before God. Faith also shapes us into upright workers before God, makes saints out of people who were doomed to hell, and perfects us as well. We must all have the belief that the Lord has blotted out all our sins and that He loves us all. Because we have the faith that the Lord is the Truth, we can

hold onto this Truth, serve the Truth, and follow the Truth. It's because the Lord Himself is the Truth that it's possible for us to follow Him. Since the Lord Himself is the Truth, even if we are insufficient and conceited, the Lord Himself does not change. For the Lord Himself is the Truth, He does not change. Having immutably blotted out all the sins of the world, He still wants to spread the gospel all over the world and He still works with us and leads us unchangingly.

Our Lord said, "I will be with you until the end of the world," and since everything the Lord said is true, we are able to follow Him by faith. And by believing in the Lord, we can deny ourselves. As we carry on with our lives of faith, we do not remain the same all the time. Sometimes our hearts are so rejoiced and delighted that it lifts us off the ground, sometimes we are so happy that we feel like we are walking on the clouds, and sometimes we



struggle so much that we feel we are mired in a swamp up to our necks. Yet even in times like this, we can still follow the Lord by believing in the Truth, by believing in the Lord. That is why Jesus told us in today's Scripture passage to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Him.

Are we then unable to follow the Lord when times are rough? We often think that we can't follow the Lord when our circumstances are too difficult. When faced with trials, we are prone to think that it's impossible to follow the Lord. We think to ourselves, "How can I follow the Lord when I am having such a tough time? It's complete nonsense! Anyone who says otherwise hasn't gone through such hardships. How is it possible to follow the Lord under this much difficulty?" However, contrary to such carnal thoughts, it is still possible for us to follow the Lord by believing in His Truth. Because the Lord has come by the Truth of the water and the Spirit,

we are able to follow Him by faith. No matter what kind of hardship may come our way, we can still deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow the Lord.

The cross here actually refers to pain and hardship. When you and I face hardship, we sometimes feel as if we would die from it. Some of us may indeed die from this hardship. But in reality, no one actually dies from hardship per se. In other words, people stumble when faced by trials only because they do not wholly believe in the Lord, who is the Truth himself. By not relying on Him entirely or following Him, no one really gives up his life of faith because of the trials. One gives up his life of faith because he does not believe in the Truth. We are not the Truth, but the Lord Himself is the Truth. Yet because people do not believe that everything the Lord has spoken is true, they cannot follow Him when faced with hardship. For us to deny



ourselves, pick up our cross, and follow the Lord, we must believe in the Word spoken by the Lord, who is the Truth. We must believe that it is only by faith that we can live and it is only by faith that we can follow the Lord.

The Lord made it clear that anyone who wants to follow Him must deny himself, take up his cross, and then follow Him. Whenever we struggle with hardships, instead of just staring at these hardships, we should look toward the living Lord of Truth who has become our true life. And it is when we entrust these trials to the Lord, ask for His help, and taste His power that we can overcome our difficulties. It's because we are unable to deny ourselves and we keep staring at only our difficult circumstances and situations that our faith may go astray. However, the way to follow the Lord by faith is not actually that difficult. That's why the Lord said, *"If anyone*

desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."

Since the Lord is far superior to anything in this world, our success is far more certain if we trust in and rely on the Lord rather than just trying on our own. Even at this very moment, the Lord is working in our lives. I, too, sometimes have faithless thoughts creeping on me. There is so much work to do, but our abilities are limited, and so I get irritated, frustrated, and even worrisome, telling myself, "Oh my gosh! There is so much to do! I have to work with the entire world in mind, but I am just a man!" Of course, it is by the Lord's strength that we are carrying out His work, but our own abilities and financial resources are nowhere near sufficient to meet the needs of the work of the Lord. On top of this, my health has deteriorated lately and when things get too complicated and frustrating I find myself sighing.



When a pheasant detects danger with a hunter after him, it tries to hide itself by sticking only its head into a bush, while leaving its body fully exposed. Likewise, there are times when I also climb into the bed and bury my head under the pillow, trying to turn off the whole world and refusing to see anything. However, I cannot flee from God's presence, for it is written,

*“If I take the wings of the morning,
And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
Even there Your hand shall lead me,
And Your right hand shall hold me”*
(Psalm 139:9-10).

Whoever believes in the Lord will live spiritually and whoever trusts in the Lord will be able to follow Him. But those who do not look toward the Lord and do not trust in Him, but instead look toward their own merits and demerits will never be able to deny themselves

nor overcome their struggle and will ultimately end up perishing away.

Why would anyone lean on himself? What could anyone find anywhere in himself to lean on, when he himself is not the Truth nor is he so perfect? Yet even so, people still look toward themselves and that is why they are bound to perish. We must never look toward ourselves. Instead, we must look toward the Lord who abides in us, and whose presence fills the whole universe. It's because we believe that the Lord is the Truth itself that we can do all things by believing in this Lord and follow Him as well. Therefore, we shouldn't place too many expectations on ourselves, nor should we be too disappointed in ourselves, but instead we must deny all these things. “Are you so virtuous?” “No, I'm not.” “Are you so flawed then?” “No, I'm not.” “Are you so hopelessly incapable of



following the Lord?” “No, that’s not true.” We have to deny like this.

And we must follow the Lord by faith. Those who believe that the Lord is the Truth, that He is alive, that this Lord is perfect, that He has blotted out all their sins, and that He is with them, can receive new life for their bodies, follow the Lord, and accept everything that He has given them. The Lord said: *“If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?”*

This means that a life of faith is contingent on following the Lord. What will happen to us if we are unable to follow the Lord even after being born again? If we can’t follow the Lord even

after being born again, then we are as good as dead. There is nothing else. If we can’t follow the Lord, then we will come to leave the church and end up destroying ourselves. We will die on our own, renouncing ourselves, “Someone like me does not deserve to abide in the church.” That is how one ends up leaving the Lord on his own to embark on the way of destruction. Is this what you want for yourself?

The way of life for the born-again is only possible, first and foremost, by faith. And the object of this faith is the Lord. It is by believing in the Lord that we live; it is by believing in the Lord that we enjoy blessings; it is by believing in the Lord that we overcome the world; it is by believing in the Lord that we receive new life; and it is by believing in the Lord that we attain eternal life. The object of our faith is not ourselves, but it is the Lord. Do you realize this? Don’t you find this to be true when you apply it



to your everyday life? Although our total number is less than 300, our strength is incredibly powerful. Right now students are being trained at our Mission School. All the saints of our church will be made staff workers of His mission. The Mission School is where our saints are trained to devote their entire lives to the Lord and here, students read the Bible, listen to the Word, bear witness, and carry out the Lord's work. Of course, some of our saints serve the Lord diligently, support the gospel ministry, and follow the Lord diligently even though they have not been trained in the Mission School. The reason why we are trained despite this is to apply faith to every aspect of our actual lives and experience it for real.

We are now living through the last chapter of the history of mankind. So I often have mixed feelings. The entire world is going through abnormal climatic changes due to global

warming. Some countries have suffered devastating floods, inflicting many casualties and property damages, while other countries have had to declare national emergency over massive, out-of-season snowfalls. It's so gloomy when I hear this kind of news and see how the world is turning out. There is hardly any good news. All the news that we hear in this age and time is depressing. Our educational system is marked by corruption, our political system is plagued with politicians bickering in partisan politics over their own selfish interests, and our economic system is buckling under the weight of the massive layoffs triggered by the structural adjustment program implemented under the IMF. Throughout the whole world, we see no sign of peace, but only of war, and many economists are predicting a global depression. Everything looks so pessimistic. Living under such circumstances, even you and I can't help but feel depressed also.



However, we still have hope that the Lord will return one day.

One of these days, the Lord will return and lift us up in rapture. But there is something that we must face before the Lord returns and that is the Great Tribulation. The Great Tribulation will come not only to us, but it will come to everyone living on planet Earth, whereas those who have not been born again will be faced with tribulation after tribulation. For us, the born-again, we will be transformed into eternally, incorruptible bodies amid the tribulation and live in the everlasting Kingdom of Heaven. That day is now not that far away. My fellow believers, the day when you will be demanded to receive the mark of the Beast is not so distant. The whole world is now falling into chaos. In Korea alone, recently there have been so many crimes committed with credit card counterfeiting and forgery. So to prevent the potential damage that may result

from the loss of credit cards, plans are being made to implant electronic chips in people's bodies. In fact, this technology has already been applied to livestock and shipping, but now conditions are turning quite conducive to apply it to human beings as well. When we consider these things, we can see that the end times will indeed arrive sooner than later. Soon there will be many disasters on their way, but even so, the born-again still look ahead with optimism. We the born-again are optimistic because amid this Great Tribulation plaguing everyone, our Lord will come and take us away.

At that time, however, God will stomp on everyone living on this earth who has not been born again. Imagine huge hailstones about a hundred pounds each falling upon men from the sky. Think about billions of these ice chunks falling, fire raining down, people suffering from boils all over the body, and strange diseases



breaking out. I heard that lately mad cow disease has spread to elks in Canada, and that many of them are now dying. Such strange diseases that are beyond our comprehension will be endemic in the end times.

Even if these things were to happen on this earth right now, there is still hope for us. That's because the Lord, who created this universe and everything in it and who has saved us from sin, will come and lift us up from this tribulation. And the Lord will transform our bodies into the same spiritual bodies as His and make us reign in the Millennial Kingdom for a thousand years. After this, He will then allow us to live in the Everlasting Kingdom. Indeed, we have many hopes. If we look toward the Lord, then we will see that we actually do have many hopes. However, if we look toward this world and ourselves rather than the Lord, then we will only see too many depressing things. As we are now

living in these end times, we must look toward the Lord.

People look at things from their own points of view, and so they usually consider their thoughts to be correct. In reality, however, one's own thoughts are all invalid, as they are filled with useless clutters, with more thoughts that are false than true. Your own thoughts are nothing more than completely useless thoughts of the flesh. Whether pessimistic or optimistic, all the thoughts of the flesh are nothing. Believing in the Lord truthfully—that is, believing that everything the Lord said will be fulfilled—is to have spiritual faith and it is those who have this kind of faith that are followers of the Lord. And it is such people who serve the Lord in their lives to meet Him face to face in the end. Only those who have such faith can meet the Lord. In contrast, those who lack this kind of faith cannot deny themselves, will stumble in the end, and be



unable to meet the Lord in joy. The problem for the virtuous is that they are too meritorious for their own good, boiling over with their own merits, while the problem for the flawed is that they fall too deep into a slump. But we must remember that in reality our salvation has nothing to do with our own virtues or flaws.

Our merits and demerits are also irrelevant for us to lead our lives of faith. The belief that only the Lord is the Truth, that He alone is perfect, and that He alone will fulfill everything He said—this belief forms the core of our lives of faith. Therefore, whoever believes in the Lord can live every aspect of his life by faith. If we do not want to lose our lives, then we must deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow the Lord. All that we have to do is just follow the Lord by faith. He will then bear your burden and mine on our behalf.

In contrast, those who do not believe in the Lord will perish away under the weight of their burdens. Anyone who cannot deny himself is bound to die. If you want to live, then you must deny yourself and trust in the Lord. Even in your difficult trials, you must still follow the Lord by faith. Although we complain about how tough life is, it's in fact difficult only when we look at ourselves. If you deny yourself, look toward the Lord, and trust in Him, then there is nothing hard. The Word of God is very simple, but even a passage with only a few phrases is still relevant to our lives, and therefore we must believe in this Word. If we believe in the Lord, we will gain life, but if we do not believe, then we will lose life. In other words, if we trust in the Lord then we can deny ourselves and follow Him, but if we do not trust in the Lord then we cannot deny ourselves and cannot follow the Lord either. Isn't the Word of the Lord marvelous then?



The Lord asks us to deny ourselves because whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for His sake will find it. We should not allow ourselves to lose our own lives by foolishly refusing to believe in this Truth that is so critical to our lives. Instead, we should believe in the Truth and thus save our lives. Peter was rebuked by Jesus for thinking of Him too carnally, and was told, “Get behind Me, Satan!” As you know very well, we have to believe in no one else but the Lord. If we believe in the Lord, we will surely live. But if we do not believe in the Lord, we will die. Furthermore, if we believe in the Lord, then our own merits and demerits do not present any problems at all, but if we do not believe in the Lord, then our virtues are problematic just as our flaws are also problematic. As well, if we do not believe in the Lord then our difficulties and our comforts all constitute problems for us. That is why we must

believe in the Lord and follow Him. Just as our first priority is faith, so is our second priority faith, as our third priority is also faith.

It is written, “*The just shall live by faith.*” Only the righteous can live by believing in all the Word spoken by the Lord, who is the Truth. No unrighteous man can ever live by faith. But a righteous man, someone who has been remitted from all his sins, someone who has received his redemption from sin, believes that God is his God and his Shepherd. And such people live by believing in the Word spoken by the Lord: “*Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all things take place*” (Luke 21:32). Those who believe will live, but those who do not believe will perish.

Just as there are four seasons in nature, people have joy, anger, sorrow, and pleasure, and they also have more negative attributes than positive attributes. However, if we believe in the Lord,



then no matter how a storm may rage on in our lives and tidal waves may hit us, all will be calmed under the Lord's command to stay still. When your heart is stirred up by a storm of the mind, I ask you to also subdue your thoughts by placing your faith in the Lord. Dispel your worries, put down both your virtues and flaws alike, believe only in what the Lord will do for you, and by this faith wait in hope.

We must live by faith. There is no one else whom we can believe but Jesus Christ. Every word that Jesus Christ spoke is all true. All the things that He promised to fulfill for us will indeed be completed exactly as promised. Do you believe in this? We must live by faith. That's why I am telling you this. You and I must live the rest of our lives by faith. I admonish you not to allow your life to be dictated by your circumstances and not to remain incapable of denying yourself, but instead follow the Lord

with self-denial, saying to yourself, "You are not right, but the Lord is always right."

Jesus said, "*If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.*" Do you now understand this Word? And are you now actually following the Lord with self-denial? Have you really denied yourself? Do you deny yourself from the bottom of your heart? Do you deny yourself both when you are virtuous and when you are flawed? Or do you know this passage only as a matter of theory? Is self-denial something that you've never done before? When you were first saved, it's because you had denied your thoughts that you were saved. "I had thought like this, but I was wrong. Oh! So that is what the truth is all about. Why not accept it then?" Just as you were saved by denying your thoughts like this, now that you've received your salvation, you are to live out your faith by denying everything that is



untrue, and believing in everything that is true. From now on, we will deny ourselves in every aspect, serve the Lord by faith, and follow Him by faith in our lives. That is how we will live. Just as we will go through many hardships, those of us who have not experienced self-denial will also come to experience it many times. The Lord will make sure to bring this about.

My fellow believers, I beseech you all to deny yourself. Do you have many things to deny or nothing to deny? Don't you have many things to deny? What did the Bible say will happen to you if you don't deny yourself? It said that you will be unable to follow the Lord. And this is critically relevant to your life. That's why you have no choice but to deny yourself. I, too, go through such experiences in my life all the time. Sometimes my thoughts seem to be right but they are different from the Word. Because of this, often a battle wages inside me. But in the end,

because only the Lord is right and worthy of following, all that I can do is just trust in Him and follow Him. In our everyday lives also, we must do whatever the Lord wants us to do. The soldiers of the Lord must please Him who enlisted them as His soldiers, not pursue the works that please themselves (2 Timothy 2:4).

Right now it seems as though I've been working on one thing for over a month. Even when I come to our church, instead of meeting with you, the first thing I do is go up to the third floor and continue on with my previous research on an energy-saving heating and cooling system. After spending the whole day on this work, my nostrils and clothes would be blackened. So I would think to myself, "My wife will give me a scolding again when I get back home. I should go home when it's dark. How can I set a footstep into the house under the broad daylight when my whole body is so black?" Yet this makes no



difference, since my wife already knows all about me.

It's actually to save money and for the benefit of our saints that I've been working on this so devotedly. So I am now trying out all kinds of different things just to save even a little bit of money and to ensure that our saints would be warm in the winter and cool in the summer. Yet even while doing so, when things don't go too well and I fall into weaknesses, I say to myself, "Jesus once said to His disciples to just catch fish and pay their tax with the money that came from the fish. So why am I going through all this trouble, when I should just preach the Word and ask the saints to contribute their offerings? I am so stupid!" Sometimes I go through all kinds of antics by myself, judging myself one minute, calling myself stupid the next minute, and then forgiving myself on my own. In times like this, I,

too, admit my insufficiencies, deny myself by faith, and once again resume following the Lord.

Our books still have not made their way into Russia. Even though we've printed 10,000 copies of our books in Russian, not a single copy has yet made its way into Russia. We did send 2,000 copies to Russia, but the government refused to allow entry. While our books did get there for sure, we were told that to recover them from the customs office, we had to pay upwards of \$4,000 just for duties alone. So we told the officials there that we would rather forfeit our books. You are probably wondering what will happen to all these books. I was told that the customs office would store our books for a while and then auction them off cheaply later on. So we just left our books at the customs office, so that they would be sold to Christian bookstores. After all, we were going to distribute these books in Russia for free anyways.



It's easy to just say in words that we are carrying out a world mission, but to be quite frank, it makes little sense for such a small gathering like ours to attempt evangelizing the whole world. Don't you also think the whole project is quite ridiculous? Standing here behind my pulpit, I keep calling for the spreading of the gospel throughout the entire world, but you may think that this is all rather preposterous. If you really think about it, our endeavor does seem outlandishly out of place. Can we speak every language of the various nations in the world? Can we even go to where they are? Are we even close to them? It doesn't take just an hour or two to reach some of these places, but it takes ten, sixteen, and even eighteen hours to fly there, so how could we go and even if we went, what could we really do? Can we speak even one simple sentence in their language such as "Please accept this book?" Just thinking about it is

enough to make me frustrated. When I think about it, it seems like such a suffocating, difficult task.

So after agonizing over what should be done, I gathered all our ministers around and we prayed together and consulted each other. I then reached a decision and told them, "There are many missionaries from advanced Christian countries working throughout the whole world. Why don't we send them letters and ask them if they would like to receive our books? If they agree, then we can send them our books. And if they like them, we can ship out more books and ask them to distribute those books to others as well." So lately we've begun working on this and have now sent out about 300 official mission letters so far. Since we've sent 300 letters to missionaries alone, soon we will hear some news. We should get their answer by the middle of January, whether be it yes or no. If even just a half of



them would agree to our proposal, we will preach the gospel to them.

Although these missionaries would ordinarily have their own doctrines, if they know how to deny themselves, then once they know the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the Bible says is the Truth, they will accept this gospel. I am sure of this. Even though we are preaching the gospel all over the world, this work is not something that can be done by our own strength of the flesh. As the Lord said, “*Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit*” (Zechariah 4:6), that is indeed the case. The spreading of the gospel is achieved by God Himself, not by the strength or the strategy of man. Even though there is so much work to do, we do not have the strength to carry it out all on our own, and that is precisely why we only trust in the Lord.

That is what faith is all about. It is about believing only in the Lord. Believing in another

human being is not what faith is about, but it is about believing in the Lord. Do you believe so? Human beings are so insufficient. Mankind is so weak that we have no one else to trust but only the Lord. For the Word spoken by the Lord is the Truth, the Lord Himself is the Truth, and we must believe only in the Lord. Those who believe in the Lord will live, but those who do not believe will die; those who believe in the Lord can follow the Lord, but those who do not believe cannot follow Him.

Whether we are smart or not, has nothing to do with our faith. That’s right. Do you also believe so? I hope and pray that none of us would ever lose faith in these end times no matter what. You have now come into God’s church, but if you fall away from the church, then you will lose your life. There should be no one among us who ends up losing his life.



For me also, all that I can do is just trust in the Lord. So, you have to likewise believe only in the Lord. It is by believing in the Lord that you and I can live out our faith. Do you agree? Do you believe in this? Although I am sure that you are all facing many problems, I ask you to look toward only the Lord.

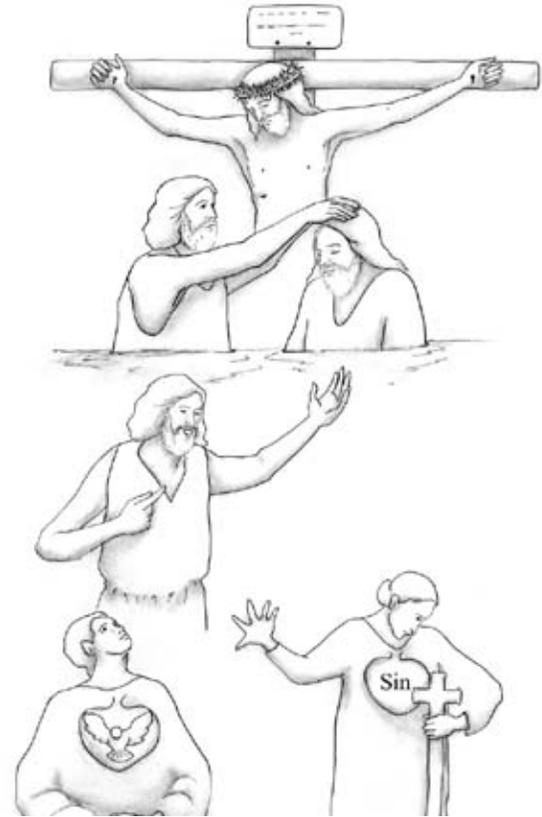
And I ask you to deny yourself. Then take up your cross, trust in the Lord, and follow Him alone. You will then enter into the dominion of the Lord and He will protect you and guide you; you will realize that you are now abiding in the Lord by faith and you will witness His work with your own eyes.

Live in the Lord. As the days of this present age are numbered, let us all live by faith, trusting in the Lord, and then see Him face-to-face and live with Him forever. ☒



CHAPTER

17



CONTENTS



How to Receive The Holy Spirit

< Matthew 17:1-13 >

“Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, ‘Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.’ While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, ‘This is My

beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!’ And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid. But Jesus came and touched them and said, ‘Arise, and do not be afraid.’ When they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only. Now as they came down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, ‘Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man is risen from the dead.’ And His disciples asked Him, saying, ‘Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?’ Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Indeed, Elijah is coming first and will restore all things. But I say to you that Elijah has come already, and they did not know him but did to him whatever they wished. Likewise the Son of Man is also about to suffer at their hands.’ Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist.”



In these end times, God has given us members of His church, made us preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit all over the world, and enabled us to spread this gospel to souls in Korea as well. I thank God for blessing us like this with faith. Today in this last age, both laymen and every pastor in the mainstream Christianity, including Evangelicals, are devoting all their attention only to building bigger church buildings. It takes a tremendous amount of financial resources to construct a church building. So pastors are now mobilizing all kinds of schemes to wring money out of their congregation. I heard that a certain pastor was collecting money almost by force, by nagging his congregation to death, constantly telling them how his colleague was building a church that costs \$3 million, and how he had to match this. Although they have built a huge church building with marble walls, there actually aren't that

many people inside this church. It's said that by the time the construction was over, almost every church member had fled.

I even heard of a man who, even though he made only about \$700 a month working as a street cleaner, took out a bank loan to offer it for the construction of his church, and now he has to pay \$750 every month just for the interest payment alone. All his hard-earned money isn't enough to make even the interest payment, much less the principal. He is so broke that his pastor has to assist him a little every month now. So it's said that the members of this church have to offer all their salaries to the church and survive on whatever little allowances that they may get from their pastor.

Such things are very common nowadays. Would such people continue to attend church? No, of course not. When this man can't even make interest payments, much less pay off the



principal, what joy would he find to attend church? Since he took out a bank loan and offered it all to his church, when he thinks about how his money has gone into those red bricks, he probably can't stand seeing the church.

My fellow believer, our church was never such a church. Yet in this world there are many churches like this. The Lord said that as lawlessness would abound in these end times, many people's love would turn cold (Matthew 24:12). Just how completely have the religionists of the world departed from the Word of God in their ministry? Even as they say that the world is a dark place and that its end is near, are they not exploiting their congregation for money? If Jesus were to come in a few days, all such ministers' need is just some money to lead the kind of life they want. But what's the use of all this money when the end of the world is impending?

My fellow believers, let me make the following point clear here: The Word of the Bible says that no one knows the day and the hour when Jesus will return to this earth. There is no record in the Bible that specifies exactly what day and time the Lord will return, and it only writes about the signs that indicate the imminent return of the Lord. You should realize that Jesus will come when the Great Tribulation descends on this world, when the righteous are martyred, and when the world is completely destroyed by the plagues of seven trumpets. Jesus will pour the plagues of seven trumpets on this earth, and it is in the middle of the seven-year Tribulation, when the authority of the saints are all broken that Jesus will come. It's not an exaggeration to say that He will come when the Great Tribulation is almost over.

You must therefore never allow yourself to be deceived by false prophets. There are many



people who say, “Jesus will return before the Great Tribulation. He will lift us up before the Great Tribulation descends on this world. So why do we need all these material things of the world when Jesus will return before the Great Tribulation? What’s the use for them? Offer them all to God. Donate them all to your church to build it with marble and then let us together go to the Kingdom of Heaven when the Lord returns. Let’s throw away all our earthly possessions and go to the Kingdom of Heaven.” Such people are all thieves and frauds.

Almost all pastors who have not been born again, including Evangelicals, espouse the theory of pre-tribulation rapture to wiring money out of their congregation. They say to the congregation, “Why are you trying to store treasures on this earth, when our Lord will return before the Great Tribulation?” Such a claim is most likely to be a stepping stone to fraud. You probably remember

how a while ago Pastor Jang-lim Lee from the Dami Mission misled people by claiming that Jesus would return and his followers would be lifted up on December 28, 1992, all the while hiding checks under his bed. Didn’t he also try to flee abroad and was caught red-handed in the airport with his checks hidden in his shoes? That man was a complete fraud. My fellow believers, do you know just how many swindlers there are among today’s pastors? There are way too many. Out of a thousand ministers, only about 50 are decent at most and the remaining 950 are all swindlers.

How can we then discern that these pastors are frauds? A tree is known by its fruit. Even though their own followers still have sin in their hearts, these false pastors are not interested in this issue. They are only interested in money, so when their church members donate money, they are happy to appoint them to church offices



indiscriminately. But if these church members go bankrupt and can no longer make any donations to the church, then from then on they give them cold shoulder and ignore them completely. That is their fruit. It is written, “A tree is known by its fruit.” So no matter what any pastor says, you and I should all live diligently, knowing that we have to live in this world until we go through the Great Tribulation as much as we have to before our Lord returns. Whatever you do, whether you have a job or run a business, I ask you to work diligently and lead your life of faith united with the church. When you unite your heart with the church, let your troubles be known and ask the church to pray for you, and seek help from your minister to get you through your hardship. Your minister and your fellow saints will all pray for you. I admonish you to live your life faithfully until the day this world ends, until the day your life is over. Do not delude yourself into thinking

that even if you have sin, Jesus would somehow lift you up if you just believe in Him. As a magnet lifts up only metals, sinners cannot be lifted up when the Lord Himself descends from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God (1 Thessalonians 4:16).

Rapture means to be lifted up to the air (1 Thessalonians 4:17). Of course, Jesus will lift us up. However, the Bible does not say that rapture will come before the Great Tribulation. It says that this event will happen well into the Great Tribulation. The Bible says that Jesus will come with the sound of the last trumpet (1 Corinthians 15:52). When will the last trumpet sound? It will sound at the end of this world. Why will God bring the Great Tribulation to this world? He will bring the Great Tribulation during the last harvest to save the people of Israel. And He will bring it to stomp on those on this earth who stand



against God and challenge Him impudently. Through the Great Tribulation, God will give people one more chance. By allowing the Great Tribulation, He will harvest the souls once more for the last time out of those who had hesitated and dithered to believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Also, God wants to discern His wheat from the chaff through the Great Tribulation, as it is written, *“His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire”* (Matthew 3:12). When His winnowing fan blows the wind of the Great Tribulation, the chaff will be blown out and only the wheat will remain to be gathered into the barn.

This world is now going through the end times. However, we do not know exactly on what day, month, and year the Lord would come. So

no matter how anyone may claim that Jesus has appeared on some mountain in a village or a certain church, you shouldn't go there. No matter what anyone may say that Jesus has appeared to some pastor and is speaking through him, you must not be stirred up by such liars. Once the Catholic Church of Korea bragged that there appeared a cross in the sky over their gathering while they held a big outdoor mass. But what use is it for Christian sinners to see the cross appearing in the sky with their naked eyes? Just as the Bible says, *“For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation”* (Romans 10:10), our salvation is reached by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit with the heart. Until the day the Lord returns, we must lead our lives of faith diligently.



Look at the Swindlers Deceiving People under the Pretext of the Coming Tribulation of the Last Days

To wring money out of the congregation, false prophets argue for the theory of pre-tribulation rapture and make ridiculous claims, saying, “When I am lifted up, feel free to use my camera on my desk.” Are they then saying that they will be raptured but not their congregation? These people are nothing more than swindlers. Let me make it clear for you, you must never allow yourself to be deceived by such people. God’s true church keeps superficial adornments for its chapel minimal, and spends all its resources on spreading the gospel and saving all the people of the world. Do you think that it’s because we have no money that we put in a small pulpit like this one here and keep the flower arrangements

small? No, we are also wealthy. However, we live frugally only for the gospel’s sake.

There are many charlatans in this present age. Whether it is a born-again church or not, or a church that preaches the true gospel, if any church asks you to take a loan out and offer it to build a church building, then you should realize that its pastor is a swindler, spit at him, and leave the church. Are we living in such an easy and prosperous age? No, everyone is having a tough time to make ends meet, and this includes believers as well. Why on earth does any church need to build a mammoth building when its members are struggling to make a living? A 3,000 square foot building can be rented for \$1,000US a month with a \$10,000 deposit, and a two or three-story building for about \$1,500 a month with a \$20,000 deposit. So why spend so much money to build a church building? Will the price of the building go up when it’s completed?



No, it will go down. Why do some pastors then rake in tens of millions of dollars to construct church buildings? This kind of money is enough to spread the gospel all over the world for more than ten times.

Do you think that any pastor with a holy voice is a true pastor? Do you think that anyone who has graduated from seminary is a servant of God? No, God must approve this servant. False prophets make only their voices holy and preach to the congregation, “live virtuously,” but such sermons are given often enough in ethics classes in schools. It’s because of sin that people are tormented now and it’s because of sin that they are suffering. Yet these false prophets are incapable of preaching to such people about how their sins have disappeared. They cannot solve people’s spiritual problems, but only speak of superficial things. The people of the world know such things better. They know better than anyone

else how to live in this world. When people come to church, they do so to listen to the Word of God and be saved from their sins. So how can anyone who can’t even meet this purpose call himself a pastor?

My fellow believers, it is when we ourselves are denied and humbled that Jesus is exalted. Is Jesus exalted when a pastor pretends to be holy, blusters out bravados, and speaks smoothly only in words? No, it’s when our insufficiencies are exposed that the holiness of Jesus and His righteousness are revealed. If one is too holy and perfect, then all that shines is just his own righteousness, while the perfection of Jesus is not manifested. In reality, everyone is insufficient before God. Isn’t this true? Of course it is. Yet despite this, there are many pastors who choose their words carefully only to pretend to be holy, just like the Pharisees. Did you see any swindler who is not a sweet talker? When a swindler is



about to commit a fraud, he has every word figured out, ready to tempt his victim with his smooth talking. If a charlatan looks like a charlatan, then he is a failure.

How are today's pastors any different from swindlers? They get paid tens of thousands of dollars just for giving a few sermons a week. Whenever they visit their church members' homes, they also get a thick envelope filled with cash. But despite all these rewards, is there anything that these pastors really do for their congregation? When a pastor visits you, don't give him a white enveloped stuffed with money. It is only a matter of fact for any pastor to visit the saints' homes, pray for them, and share the Word in fellowship. If you keep offering such envelopes to your pastor, soon he will be hooked on them in no time and try to visit you time after time.

Let's be honest here. When pastors at worldly churches visit church members' homes, don't they offer them envelopes stuffed with money? Of course they do. But to do so is to turn both the giver and the receiver into thieves. Both are wicked. Why should any church member offer such things when a fair salary is already paid to the pastor by the church? Why should anyone prepare such an elaborate feast for his pastor's visit? Pastors already eat well enough; there is no need for you to go through all that trouble. If your pastor visits you, then ask him whether he had dinner, and if he says that he hasn't had one, then treat him to the usual dinner that you have, not a fancy feast. Don't fill the table with all kinds of dishes even when the pastor tells you that he already had dinner and don't put an envelope stuffed with money on the table.

If you have any donations to offer, then just drop them in the collection box. I will then take



them out and spend them all for the gospel. In the churches of this world, however, it's a common practice for members to offer envelopes stuffed with money when their pastors visit them. Also, instead of putting offerings in a collection box, people put them in an envelope, write down their names and the amount on its front, and pile them up on the pulpit. This has become virtually official. That, however, is a very wrong practice.

No matter what others may do, as far as you and I are concerned, let us all serve the Lord until the end of the world and lead our lives to save other souls. Rather than looking at our own country, let us look toward the whole world, and spread the gospel everywhere. I also ask you not to try to front your own righteousness in the church. If it's beneficial to God, to the saints, to the servants of God, and to other souls, then you should swallow your pride, give up your stubbornness, and stop being so conceited.

Whenever any insufficiencies are exposed while following the Lord, you should admit them right away, saying, "I am a man of so many shortcomings. This is who I am." Such people are able to lead their lives of faith comfortably in the church. It's such people who can find grace from God.

In contrast, those who can't bring themselves to do this and can't admit when their insufficiencies are exposed, saying, "I am actually quite virtuous. This is not really who I am," are bound to suffer. As we carry on with our lives, we may sometimes do good things and we may sometimes make mistakes. Whenever we make a mistake, all that we have to do is just admit our wrong-doings as soon as possible and say, "I was trying my best, but I failed," and believe that Jesus took away all these sins. I admonish you all to never be deceived by the spiritual thieves. For you and me alike, it's a



blessing that we have found God’s church and are leading our lives of faith inside it.

What Is Jesus Trying to Say by the Account of His Transfiguration?

The passage that we read today describes an event that took place when Jesus took three disciples, Peter, James, and John, to a mountain. On the mountain, Jesus was transfigured before them and His face shone like the sun and His clothes turned as white as the light. And then Moses and Elijah came down from Heaven and talked with Jesus. His three disciples saw this. Suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!” The disciples then became very afraid and fell on their faces trembling in fear.

Peter had at first said to Jesus boldly, “*Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.*” But Jesus was not about to permit this. When the disciples heard the voice from Heaven, they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid.

Jesus then touched them and said, “*Arise, and do not be afraid.*” The three disciples were all trembling in fear, but when they looked up at the voice of Jesus calling them, they saw that He had returned to His previous image. That Jesus did not give any response to Peter’s request to build three tabernacles means that He had ignored it. Though Peter had requested earnestly, in His dignity, Jesus did not say anything in return. Then on His way down from the mountain, Jesus said to the disciples, “Tell the vision of My encounter with Elijah and Moses to no one until the Son of Man is risen from the dead.” The



disciples then asked Him, “Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?” So Jesus said to them, “Indeed, Elijah is coming first and will restore all things.”

The disciples asked this question because Jesus had met with Elijah on the mountain of transfiguration. We may then also wonder here, “Jesus said that Elijah has to come first to restore all things, but what exactly will be restored?” Elijah is actually very important to our salvation. Why did Moses and Elijah talk with the shining Jesus there? Why did Jesus show this to the disciples, and what is He trying to say to you and me today? Why did the scribes and biblical scholars say that Elijah would come first and restore everything? We may raise such questions here. Moses is also extremely important to the ministry of our salvation. That’s because it was through Moses that God gave the Law. The Lord says, *“For the law was given through Moses, but*

grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.” It is Jesus Christ who has saved us and it is through Moses that God gave the Law to mankind. That is what God is saying.

Moses received two stone tablets of the Ten Commandments from God. And he also received 613 commandments outlining the “dos and don’ts” of life. Moses then delivered this Law to his people. The sacrificial system of the Tabernacle was also included in this Law. It is according to the requirements of this sacrificial system that God has saved us.

God first commanded Moses to build the Tabernacle with specific instructions. And He bestowed His grace on the people of Israel, so that they would be able to receive the remission of their sins through the sacrifice of atonement offered in the Tabernacle. Leviticus chapter four describes the sacrificial system through which the Israelites were remitted from their sins by



taking the following steps: they passed their sins to a sacrificial animal by laying their hands on its head, cut its throat and drew its blood, handed it over to the priests to put some of this blood on the horns of the altar of burnt offering and poured the rest on the ground, and then offered its flesh to God by burning it on the altar with fire. So in the Old Testament whenever the people of Israel committed sin, they brought a sacrificial animal like a bull or a goat, passed their sins onto the animal by making sure to lay their hands on its head as commanded by God, cut its throat and drew its blood, and sacrificed it to God. That is how they received the remission of their sins. God had given all of these requirements of the Law through Moses.

Moses also wrote in the Bible that the Savior would come. In fact, it was also through Moses that God wrote the book of Genesis. My fellow believers, would it be okay for us to have just the

New Testament without the Old Testament? No, this Old Testament contains the promises that God gave to us through His servants long ago, before the Lord came to this earth. God had promised our salvation in the Old Testament and He fulfilled it all in the New Testament.

The Israelites in the Old Testament were remitted from their daily sins and yearly sins through the sacrificial system of the Tabernacle. And through Moses they came to know the Law of God. It was all through Moses that the people of Israel came to realize what God wanted from them, what the Law was, and what sin was. But here in today's Scripture passage, Jesus didn't just talk with Moses on the mountain, but with Elijah as well. Why then did Elijah have to come to this earth prior to Jesus? And who exactly is Elijah here? When we turn to Matthew 11:11-14, we see Jesus saying, *“Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen*



one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if you are willing to receive it, he is Elijah who is to come.”

Who Is Elijah to Come? He Is John the Baptist

In the Bible, Jesus mentioned John the Baptist frequently. So we need to ask some questions here and search the Bible for their answers: “Why did Elijah have to come to this earth prior to the Messiah? Why must he come for everything to be restored? Was John the Baptist indispensable for our salvation?” Jesus said in Matthew 21:32, *“For John came to you in the*

way of righteousness, and you did not believe him; but tax collectors and harlots believed him; and when you saw it, you did not afterward relent and believe him.” The Lord said here that John came to us in the way of righteousness. What is the way of righteousness then? Jesus explains here that the reason why John the Baptist came was to lead the entire human race to the right path, to the road to the Kingdom of Heaven. He said, “John came to us in the way of righteousness, and he is Elijah who is to come.” In other words, John the Baptist and Elijah were the ones who had ministered the same kind of work before God.

We’ve already examined Moses, so let’s now take a closer look at Elijah. Must Elijah come to this earth without fail? Before we answer this question, however, let’s turn to another question first: “Did God really say in the Old Testament that He would send Elijah?”



The Old Testament ends with the following passage in Malachi 4:5-6:

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

And he will turn

The hearts of the fathers to the children,

And the hearts of the children to their fathers,

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

The Book of Malachi here describes just how utterly corrupt the priests of the time were. So through the Prophet Malachi, God rebuked these priests extremely harshly. Saying, “All these so-called servants of God are garbage,” God said that He would send us Elijah before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord before the arrival of the end of this world.

Why, then, must God send Elijah prior to the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord? What’s the reason? Is it absolutely

necessary for Elijah to come to this earth? When we turn to 1 Kings chapter 18, we see how Elijah confronted 850 prophets of Asherah and Baal, and showed the people of Israel that Jehovah was the real God. Elijah had thereby led all the people of Israel who were worshipping Idols back to Jehovah God. He was a powerful servant of God.

Then, must Elijah come to this world without fail? Yes, he must come without fail. I will now explain the reason why Elijah had to come without fail.

The Old Testament’s Sacrifice of the Day of Atonement

To understand the Old Testament’s sacrifice of the Day of Atonement, let us turn to Leviticus 16:29-34 here: *“This shall be a statute forever*



for you: In the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether a native of your own country or a stranger who dwells among you. For on that day the priest shall make atonement for you, to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all your sins before the LORD. It is a sabbath of solemn rest for you, and you shall afflict your souls. It is a statute forever. And the priest, who is anointed and consecrated to minister as priest in his father's place, shall make atonement, and put on the linen clothes, the holy garments; then he shall make atonement for the Holy Sanctuary, and he shall make atonement for the tabernacle of meeting and for the altar, and he shall make atonement for the priests and for all the people of the assembly. This shall be an everlasting statute for you, to make atonement for the children of Israel, for all their sins, once a year.' And he did as the LORD commanded Moses."

This passage describes the sacrifice of the Day of Atonement that Aaron gave on the tenth day of the seventh month. According to the sacrificial system of the Tabernacle, daily sacrifices were offered when an Israelite brought a sacrificial animal himself, passed his sins onto it by laying his hands on its head, cut its throat and drew its blood, and gave this blood to the priest along with its flesh. The priest then put some of this blood on the horns at the four corners of the alter of burnt offering and poured the rest on the ground. All the flesh of the animal was cut into pieces, along with the fat that was removed from the entrails, and everything that was clean was put on and burnt on the altar, while everything that was unclean was thrown outside. God called this a burnt offering or a sin offering.

Just as we cannot blot out all our sins by offering our own prayers of repentance, God knew that the people of Israel could not eradicate



all their sins through their daily sacrifices. So He established the Day of Atonement to be observed once a year. Its date was set for the tenth day of the seventh month. Having set this date for the Day of Atonement, God raised Aaron, Moses' elder brother, as the High Priest for the people of Israel, and through him passed their sins onto their sacrificial animal. The High Priest first offered a sin offering with a bull for himself and his household. By laying his hands on the head of this bull, Aaron the High Priest passed his sins and his family's sins. In other words, by first offering this sacrifice that passed the sins of everyone ministering in the Tabernacle, Aaron ensured that the priests would all receive the remission of their sins first.

Following this sacrifice, Aaron brought two goats, and took one of them into the Tabernacle. Laying his hands on the goat's head, he passed the sins of the people of Israel to the goat,

saying, "Lord, the people of Israel have committed such and such sins. They've committed adultery, they've committed murder, and they've broken each of Your Ten Commandments. I now pass all these sins to this goat." He then cut the goat's throat, drew its blood, and took this blood into the Most Holy. To step into the Most Holy, where the Ark of the Testimony was placed, Aaron had to pass through the Holy Place. So the High Priest took a censor and filled it with burning coals from the altar of incense, as well as filling his two hands with finely ground sweet incense, and then stepped into the veil, thus making sure that the Most Holy would be filled with the aroma of the incense. Inside the Most Holy was the Ark of the Testimony, measuring 3.75 ft (113 cm) in length, 2.25 ft (68 cm) in width, and 2.25 ft (68 cm) in height. The cover of this Ark is called the Mercy



Seat. It's on there that the High Priest sprinkled the blood of the goat seven times.

Golden bells were attached to the hem of the garments of the High Priest. So when the High Priest sprinkled the blood inside the Most Holy, the people outside could hear the sound of the golden bells. They heard the bells ringing seven times, as it was set in the sacrificial system of God. The people of Israel were then assured of their remission of sin, saying, "As required by God, all my yearly sins have now been passed onto the sacrificial animal. All the sins of the past year, which I could not atone with my daily offerings, have now been blotted out." That is how the people of Israel received the remission of their sins.

They obtained the remission of their daily sins by bringing a sacrificial animal by themselves, passing their sins onto it by themselves, and killing it by themselves. Their years sins, on the

other hand, were passed on by Aaron, the representative of all the priests of the people of Israel, on behalf of the entire people. When Aaron died, his first son succeeded him to minister as the High Priest. The office of the High Priest continued to be passed down onto the descendants of Aaron, but at any given time there was only one High Priest representing the people of Israel. The High Priest was ordained at the age of 30 and resigned when he turned 50. There lies the reason why Jesus was baptized at the age of 30.

Like this, the people of Israel believed that their yearly sins were all remitted away once and for all. They believed that the Messiah would come and that He would accept not only daily and yearly sins but also all the timeless sins by being baptized in a form of the laying on of hands. They believed that He would be



condemned on the Cross and that He would thereby save the entire human race.

However, all the priests of the Old Testament were corrupted. Rather than sacrificing unblemished animals as God had specified, they brought unfit animals that could not even be sold anywhere, and said to God, “Lord, please accept our offerings.” When the ordinary Israelites brought unblemished animals, the priests set them aside all for themselves and sacrificed blemished animals to God instead. They were corrupt beyond description. That’s why God told the Israelites to turn to Him in the Book of Malachi.

Malachi 4:5-6 says, *“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet*

Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.

And he will turn

The hearts of the fathers to the children,

*And the hearts of the children to their fathers,
Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.”*

God said that by sending Elijah, He would turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers. Where else but here can we find the need for Elijah to come to this earth? He had to come so that he could turn God’s heart to His people and to turn everyone’s heart to God his Creator.

When we turn to Luke, we see that John the Baptist was born six months before Jesus. John’s lineage was from the house of Aaron the High Priest. When his father Zacharias went to the Temple to offer sacrifices on behalf of the people of Israel, God had appeared to him and said, “Zacharias, I will give you a son. You shall name him John.” Zacharias was an old man. His wife Elizabeth was also an old woman. As Elizabeth was long past her menopause, it was completely



unthinkable for her to bear any child, yet God spoke like this in the Sanctuary.

Why then must Elijah come to this world? And why is it that Elijah who was to come is John the Baptist? Since Jesus Himself said, “Elijah who is to come is John the Baptist,” John the Baptist is Elijah to come. This does not mean Elijah would come in his old self, but it means that God would establish an earthly priest between mankind and Himself, just as Elijah had intermediated between God and the people of Israel. That priest is none other than John the Baptist.

Who was the prophet most prized by God? It was Elijah. That’s why God had promised that He would send Elijah. In other words, God had said that He would entrust someone like Elijah with the work of turning His heart to people and their hearts to God and make him fulfill the role of a mediator between God and mankind. But

isn’t Jesus our Interceder actually? Why did God then say that He would send Elijah? The reason for this is because every priest back then was all corrupted. That’s why God needed to send a prophet like Elijah.

The Old Testament was to end with the birth of Jesus. It had been repeatedly prophesied in the Old Testament how the Messiah would come and how the Son of God would descend on this earth, and so with the appearance of this promised Messiah, all these prophecies were to be fulfilled and the age of prophecy was to end.

John the Baptist Was Born Six Months Prior to the Birth of Jesus

God sent John the Baptist prior to the Messiah. He brought him to this world through



the wife of Zacharias, a priest from the division of Abijah.

Let's turn to Luke 1:5-6: *“There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah. His wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.”*

It is also written in Luke 1:8-17: *“So it was, that while he was serving as priest before God in the order of his division, according to the custom of the priesthood, his lot fell to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. And the whole multitude of the people was praying outside at the hour of incense. Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.*

But the angel said to him, ‘Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb. And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.’”

This is what God Himself said to Zacharias. Let's turn further down to Luke 1:57-63: *“Now Elizabeth’s full time came for her to be delivered, and she brought forth a son. When her neighbors and relatives heard how the Lord had shown*



great mercy to her, they rejoiced with her. So it was, on the eighth day, that they came to circumcise the child; and they would have called him by the name of his father, Zacharias. His mother answered and said, 'No; he shall be called John.' But they said to her, 'There is no one among your relatives who is called by this name.' So they made signs to his father—what he would have him called. And he asked for a writing tablet, and wrote, saying, 'His name is John.' So they all marveled."

Finally, let's read from verses 67-80: "Now his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying: 'Blessed is the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited and redeemed His people, and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David, as He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets, who have been since the world began, that we should be saved from our enemies and

from the hand of all who hate us, to perform the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember His holy covenant, the oath which He swore to our father Abraham: To grant us that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life. 'And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Highest; for you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways, to give knowledge of salvation to His people by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God, with which the Dayspring from on high has visited us; to give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.' So the child grew and became strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his manifestation to Israel."

Why did John the Baptist have to come six months before Jesus? That's because the Lord



had to accept all the sins of mankind from the High Priest of the earth. When the High Priest died, his son succeeded his priesthood to continue on with the office, but for several hundred years before the coming of Jesus, all the priests had turned corrupt. Lusting after material possessions, these priests had been completely corrupted. So the lineage of priesthood was cut off. However, God had preserved Zacharias the priest, a descendant of Aaron the High Priest, and through Zacharias God brought John to this world to baptize Jesus.

In the spirit of Elijah, John was to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers. And just as God had made the people of Israel pass their sins onto their sacrificial animal through the High Priest, so did God make John the Baptist baptize Jesus in exactly the same way. That is why God had brought John the son of Zacharias to this

world six months before Jesus. In other words, God sent John the Baptist, who had the spirit of Elijah, as the representative of all mankind who would pass all the sins of everyone in this world to Jesus the Lamb of God. John the Baptist was chosen and raised by God Himself. God had chosen him to carry out this work of passing all the sins of mankind to His Son, Jesus Christ.

God had said, “So I will send Elijah. I will strike you if you do not turn around and refuse to believe in the Word delivered by him,” and according to this promise, He sent John the Baptist to be born on this earth. John the Baptist is the very Elijah whom God had promised to send again. What exactly did John the Baptist do then when he came to this earth? He passed sin to Jesus in the Jordan River. That’s why Jesus said to the chief priests and the elders of the people, *“For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him; but*



tax collectors and harlots believed him; and when you saw it, you did not afterward relent and believe him” (Matthew 21:32). John came in the way of righteousness. He came to this earth to lead us humans to the right path, so that we may receive the remission of our sins. John was sent to this earth by God the Father Himself, according to His will. He came in the spirit of Elijah.

However, when John the Baptist came to this earth, many religionists did not believe him. They did not believe that John the Baptist was sent by God, that he came in the spirit of Elijah, and that he was the very servant of God who was to baptize Jesus Christ and thus pass the sins of the world to Him. The Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the scribes especially, did not believe him. Who believed him then? They were none other than harlots and tax collectors. Only outright sinners believed him. Tax collectors were

nothing more than licensed thieves sitting in the tax office. Although this is no longer the case, in the old days it used to be the case that any tax collector in Korea could buy a house in just two years. John had come to this earth to pass all the sins of mankind to Jesus and he did actually pass them all. At that time, many people of poor spirit believed in Jesus and the role of John the Baptist, and in particular, people like harlots and tax collectors who committed many sins believed in them. Even though John had come to this earth in the way of righteousness, boastful people did not believe, but harlots and tax collectors believed.

Let’s turn to today’s Scripture passage. Jesus brought Moses and Elijah to the mountain of transfiguration and talked with them. He then said to the disciples, “Until the Son of Man is crucified to death and resurrected, you should never tell anyone that I met and talked with Elijah and Moses.” Hearing this, the disciples



asked, “What does it mean when it’s said that Elijah must come first for everything to be restored?” Jesus then said, “Elijah has already come, but you treated him in whatever way you wished. Who is he? He is none other than John the Baptist.” Our Lord Himself said this. The role of John the Baptist was the role of Elijah and he is absolutely indispensable for you and me to be saved from our sins, for the atonement of mankind. For us to be saved, we need Jesus, and we also need Elijah to come. We need Moses as well to receive our salvation. Do you understand what I mean?

On the mountain of transfiguration, Jesus was transfigured to shine like white snow and the sun. This account is told to us as a precursor of things to come, that when we are lifted by Jesus on the last day and our bodies are transformed, everything, from our faces to our garments and

bodies, will all be transformed just as Jesus Christ was transformed. Do you believe this?

On His way down from the mountain, Jesus’ disciples asked Him, “why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?” Jesus answered and said to them, “*Indeed, Elijah is coming first and will restore all things. But I say to you that Elijah has come already, and they did not know him but did to him whatever they wished. Likewise the Son of Man is also about to suffer at their hands.’ Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist.*”

What did He mean by this passage? Jesus said to the disciples, “Elijah has definitely come. He came before I did. He is John the Baptist,” testifying that when John the Baptist baptized Him, He accepted all the sins of mankind from John. In other words, Jesus was saying to the disciples, “I have come to this earth to save you, and I have taken upon your sins. The one who



passed your sins and the sins of the world to Me is John the Baptist.” As such, John the Baptist was an exceedingly exalted prophet before God.

This exceedingly exalted prophet bore witness of Jesus the next day after he gave baptism to Jesus, saying, “*Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*” As John the Baptist passed your sins and mine to Jesus, and testified in John chapter one, “*Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*” we are now able to grasp clearly the salvation that Jesus has brought to us by taking upon our sins and dying on the Cross. In other words, thanks to the testimony of John the Baptist, we have now realized that the Lord has saved us from all our sins. If there were no testimony of John the Baptist, and if he had not passed our sins, then it would have been unnecessary for Jesus to come to this earth, and even if He came, He could not have fulfilled His will.

Since God had promised that He would pass all the sins of the people of Israel through the High Priest, He had to actually fulfill this promise in the New Testament as well. Jesus came to this earth to take upon the sins of the world, but who was to pass them to Him? It was John the Baptist. Jesus Himself described John the Baptist as the greatest of those born of women. Do men give birth? No. It’s women who give birth. What does it then mean by the greatest of those born of women? It means that John the Baptist is the representative of mankind, an exceedingly exalted prophet, and the last High Priest. To whom did the last High Priest pass sin? It was to the head of Jesus Christ that John the Baptist passed the sins of the world by baptizing Him. That is why the role of John the Baptist is so indispensably important to your salvation and mine.



The Necessity of the Testimony of John the Baptist

Let's turn to John 1:6-7. *“There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe.”*

The Light here means that Jesus took upon all the sins of the world and blotted them out completely, that all the sins of mankind were passed onto Jesus. John the Baptist passed our sins onto Jesus by baptizing Him so that through him, everyone would believe in Christ. As it is written, *“That all through him might believe.”* How do we then know that all the sins of your entire lifetime and mine were indeed passed onto Jesus? Don't we believe in this because of what's written in Matthew chapter three, that all righteousness was fulfilled when John the Baptist baptized Jesus—that is, when he passed all sins?

It is written in Matthew 3:13-17: *“Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. And John tried to prevent Him, saying, ‘I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?’ But Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.’ Then he allowed Him. When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’”*

The word “then” here is when both John the Baptist and Jesus were 30. Jesus began His public life at the age of 30. It is then that Jesus began His work of saving everyone. At that time, Jesus came to John the Baptist. He walked all the way from Galilee to the Jordan River to be



baptized by John. But John tried to stop Jesus at first, saying, *“I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?”* At first sight, John the Baptist realized who Jesus was. He knew that Jesus was the Savior of this world, and that’s why he declined to baptize Him.

Hebrews says that Jesus is the High Priest of Heaven. Jesus is the Son of God, and He came to this earth to fulfill His duties as the High Priest. That Jesus came to this earth to fulfill the office of the High Priest is all contained in the name of Jesus Christ. The name Jesus means the Savior. Christ means the anointed One.

Only three types of offices were anointed by God. First, when God raised kings of Israel in the Old Testament, He anointed them through His prophets without fail. For instance, when David was chosen as the new king, the Prophet Samuel filled a horn with oil and poured it on David, saying, “Jehovah God has raised you as the king

of the people of Israel.” He then quickly fled to Ramah. Why did Samuel flee? Because even though there already was an incumbent king, he had said to another man, “God has raised you as the king of Israel.” If the current king heard this, Samuel would have been beaten to death for sure, and that’s why he ran away for his life after anointing David.

Second, Aaron the High Priest and his descendents were anointed when they were consecrated into their priesthood. Nowadays, when a pastor is ordained, the presiding pastors lay their hands on his head to pray after dipping their hands into the oil plate. With this laying on of hands, the power of the preceding servants of God are transferred to the one on whom their hands are laid. To fulfill the office of the High Priest, one had to be anointed.

Thirdly, prophets were anointed. Anyone who obeys and spreads the will of God had to be



anointed without fail. What then, is the spiritual meaning of anointment? Today's anointed people are none other than those who have received the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit into their hearts. No one who has not received the remission of sins should minister as a pastor. A pastor who has not been remitted from his sins and whose heart remains sinful cannot be a real pastor. If there is anyone who is now ministering as a pastor even as he has not received the remission of his sins, then he is nothing more than a wage earner. He is a swindler and a thief. Such people minister only as a matter of profession, just to make a living.

The word Christ means the anointed One and only kings, priests, and prophets were anointed. When Jesus came to this earth, He fulfilled all these three offices as the King, the Priest, and the Prophet. He is the High Priest of Heaven. Just as the priests of the Old Testament had enabled the

people of Israel to receive the remission of their sins by passing their sins to a sacrificial animal and sacrificing it with its blood, so did Jesus make a sacrifice on our behalf in the New Testament. But this time He fulfilled our everlasting atonement with His own blood, not the blood of an animal. Jesus gave up His body as the propitiation for the sins of everyone in this world, and by being baptized in a form of the laying on of hands; He accepted all the sins of the world. In other words, by offering His body to God, Jesus accepted all the sins of our conscience. Hebrews says that by accepting all the sins of this world, Jesus completely cleansed His believers' conscience. It was to cleanse us from all our sins that Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist. The representative of the earth and the representative of Heaven had come together. Isn't this the case? Of course it is.



God the Father sent His Son to this earth in the image of man, and made Him fulfill His duties as the High Priest. To save us humans, God the Father sent His Son to this earth, made Him accept all the sins of the world onto His body, and put Him to death on the Cross. God sent His Son to this earth to blot out our sins and Jesus came to save us by sacrificing His body in obedience to the will of God. It's written, *“Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.’ Then he allowed Him. When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him.”* As Jesus explained that it was thus fitting for Him and John the Baptist to fulfill all righteousness, John permitted this and baptized Him.

The place where Jesus was baptized is the Jordan River. Formal baptism is received in a place where one's body can be completely

submerged in water. Baptism is received in the same way as the laying on of hands. A pastor would lay his hands on the head of the person being baptized, submerge him in the water, saying, “I baptize so-and-so in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,” and then raise him out of the water again. This is called baptism.

What then, does it mean by the baptism of Jesus? Baptism has meanings such as “to be washed,” “to be buried,” and “to be transferred.” Through the baptism of John the Baptist, Jesus accepted all sins. This was God's promise. Since it was God's promise, it was fulfilled exactly as promised when Jesus obeyed the Father. Just like in the Old Testament, in the New Testament also, Jesus the sacrificial Lamb was baptized by John the Baptist, the representative of mankind. It was through this baptism that Jesus accepted all the sins of the world. It was fitting for Him to thus



fulfill all righteousness. In other words, it was fitting for Jesus to blot out everyone's sins with His baptism. Jesus said, "Give me baptism, and I will receive it. Pass all the sins of the world to Me, and I will accept them all through you. It is thus fitting for Me to make My believers sinless." That's why Jesus was baptized.

One should not stand against this gospel without even knowing the Bible properly. Jesus said in the Bible, "*Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.*" The word "thus" here means that Jesus, having come to this world as the Savior, accepted all the sins of mankind in this way through John the Baptist. That is what the word "thus" means here. The phrase "for thus" is "*hoo'-tos gar (οὕτως γάρ)*" in Greek, which means, "the most fitting," "by this method," and "no other means besides this." For Jesus to shoulder the sins of the world, He had to be

baptized by John the Baptist, the representative of mankind. Jesus Himself had to accept the sins of mankind. That is why He said, "Thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness."

The "righteousness" here, which justifies all people by making them sinless, means "justice," or "rightfulness." This work that Jesus did to make us sinless when He came to this earth is the right work. It was to do the right thing that Jesus was baptized by John. None other than this was the very first thing that Jesus did when He began His public life at the age of 30—that is, accepting all the sins of mankind by being baptized. That is the meaning of the original text.

It is written, "*When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in*



whom I am well pleased.” It’s said here that when Jesus came out of the water after His baptism, the gate of the heavens was opened, the Holy Spirit descended like a dove, and the Father said, *“This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”* In other words, God the Father was saying, “My Son obeyed My will by being baptized by John the Baptist, and thus accepting mankind’s sins.” That is why the Father was rejoiced in His heart. It was because of His Son that God the Father found joy.

It is written, *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).* The world here refers to all mankind. Like this, God sent His Son to this earth and made us sinless by passing all the sins of the world to this Son through His baptism. Jesus then carried all our sins to the Cross, and in our place He was put to shame,

stripped of clothes, and whipped forty times minus one. He bore all sufferings and all curses, was crucified, and shed all the blood that was in His heart. That is how He has saved us. “God so loved the world” means that out of His love for us, God the Father sent His only begotten Son to this earth, made Him be baptized and crucified, resurrected Him from death, and has thereby saved us perfectly. God has perfectly saved you and me who believe in the baptism of Jesus Christ and His blood on the Cross, all those who believe in the meanings that are contained in His righteous acts. Do you also believe this?

In John 1:29, it is written, *“The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, ‘Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!’”* The next day refers to the day after John had baptized Jesus. When John the Baptist saw Jesus coming toward him the next day, he testified, *“Behold! The Lamb of God who*



takes away the sin of the world!” In other words, John the Baptist bore witness of Jesus, saying, “None other that He is the Son of God who is carrying the sins of the world as our propitiation. He is our Savior who is shouldering the sins of the world. As He was baptized by me, He is now carrying the sins of the world.”

Did Jesus really take upon all our sins by being baptized? Absolutely! By receiving His baptism, Jesus washed away all the sins that were in our hearts. Jesus said that He accepted all our sins through His baptism. If Jesus indeed accepted all our sins through His baptism, then did He not have to die? He had to die, of course. That is why baptism means “to be washed” and “to be buried.”

My fellow believers, is the role of John the Baptist absolutely necessary for us to receive our salvation? It’s absolutely indispensable. The Bible speaks about the work of John the Baptist

countless times. Those who do not believe in this fact believe in God all on their own, interpreting the Bible by themselves and leaving out whatever they want to leave out. We have to grasp here that anyone who believes in God by cutting off all the Word of the Old Testament will be deleted from the Kingdom of Jesus, and that anyone who believes by adding to the Word of God will be heaped with curses. In the Old Testament, the people of Israel passed their daily sins to their sacrificial animal by laying their hands on its head without fail. The sins accumulated over a year were passed onto the sacrificial animal with the High Priest laying his hands on it on behalf of the people on the tenth day of the seventh month. As the High Priest sacrificed to God on the Day of Atonement, the people were freed from all the sins that had accumulated over a year. Likewise, when Jesus came to this earth, He took upon all our sins once



and for all by being baptized by John, died on the Cross at once, and has thereby saved us once for all.

When the disciples asked Jesus why Elijah had to come first, Jesus told them that he had already come and that he was none other than John the Baptist. That's because John the Baptist had fulfilled all righteousness by baptizing Jesus.

How did John the Baptist's life end? At that time, King Herod was committing so many sins that John the Baptist had to point out his sins. For exposing Herod's wrongdoings, John the Baptist was imprisoned and eventually beheaded. He was martyred on this earth after passing every sin to Jesus, and bearing His witness, saying, "Behold! He is the Lamb of God who carries the sins of the world. None other than He is our Savior." Even though John was martyred on this earth, he was not a failure. He passed away after fulfilling all his duties. He had said, "*He [Jesus]*

must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30). John the Baptist faded away after fulfilling all of his role. He didn't need to be exalted anymore by the Israelites. John the Baptist bore witness of our salvation, saying that Jesus accepted all the sins of the world and took them away and having thus fulfilled his call, he was martyred. As such, we must realize what a great man John the Baptist was and believe in his ministry.

Why Do We Emphasize John the Baptist Like This?

Some people ask us, "Are you the followers of John the Baptist?" But Jesus said in the Bible, "Even though John came in the way of righteousness, you did not believe him, though tax collectors and harlots believed. These tax collectors and harlots will enter Heaven first,



while you will be forsaken.” Jesus continued to emphasize John the Baptist and his ministry. He said that John the Baptist came in the way of righteousness. Just as God had promised, John the Baptist passed all our sins to Jesus for us. That is why God had said that He had to send Elijah. Do you understand this?

The Bible therefore says in 1 Peter 3:21, *“There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”* The antitype that saves us is Jesus’ baptism. Isn’t Jesus’ baptism the antitype that saves us? Of course it is. Didn’t Jesus bear our sins when He was baptized? He indeed bore all our sins. All the sins of your entire life, all the sins of my entire lifetime, all the sins of your children’s lifetime, and all the sins of your parents’ lifetime—Jesus took upon all these sins through

His baptism. As it is written, *“There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism.”*

Jesus saved us, right? Indeed, by being baptized and crucified to death, Jesus bore all the condemnation of our sins. It is by believing in this baptism of Jesus and His blood on the Cross, by believing that Jesus has become our Savior, that we can receive the remission of our sins. Do you believe this?

However, now that we have received the remission of our sins, does this mean that we wouldn’t commit any sin with our bodies? No, we still commit sin even after attaining our salvation. So to prevent us from any misunderstanding, the Apostle Peter said in the Bible that the remission of sin means “not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God.” As Jesus was baptized in our place, we are now sinless. However, this means that we have been saved by



faith, not that the filth of our flesh has been removed. Peter said that it is the answer of a good conscience toward God. Even after receiving the remission of our sins, we still commit sin with our flesh from time to time. But this sin is also a sin of the world. This sin, too, was passed onto Jesus. So, by faith we have obtained a good conscience before God.

Is there any sin in your heart? No, there is no sin. Is it easy to say that you have no sin in your heart? Try to say this in front of other people. Their jaws will drop in shock when you say, “Do you have sin? I have no sin in my heart!” They’ll be so aghast to hear you say this. Yet our own conscience says that we are now sinless before God. Because all our sins were passed onto Jesus when John the Baptist baptized Him, we have no sin in our conscience. Because we believe, we have no sin.

It’s written, “*The answer of a good conscience toward God.*” Why are we now able to come out to stand before the presence of God? That’s because all the sins that we commit in this world everyday, and all the sins that we will ever commit until the day we die, were all passed onto Jesus when He came to this earth and was baptized. Nailed on both His hands and feet, Jesus said while bleeding to death, “It is finished!” And rising from the dead again in three days, He ascended to the Kingdom of Heaven. By believing in this, we have now been made sinless and received the gift of the Kingdom of Heaven with a good conscience. Jesus is the Savior who came to this earth to save mankind and forever blotted out the sins of the world once and for all. The Lord has saved us. Then has He not made you a man of good conscience? He really has made you so.



Because Jesus was born on this earth to save us, was baptized by John the Baptist at the age of 30, endured countless suffering for three years, and was crucified, we are sinless. It is written, *“But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities”* (Isaiah 53:5). By being baptized, Jesus accepted the sins of the world, including the blemished sins that we commit everyday, and by dying in our place, He has saved us. So given all these things, how could we say to God that we have sin? Anyone who knows this and believes in it cannot say to God that he has sin. No believer can have an evil conscience, for he has a good conscience before God. When God has saved me so clearly, how could my sins still remain? I have no sin. The Lord has saved me. I am a righteous man. The Lord has made me a righteous man. He has made me God’s child.

The Bible says, *“As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name”* (John 1:12), and it also says, *“With the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation”* (Romans 10:10). My fellow believers, do you believe in this? Faith is to believe with the heart. It’s the answer of a good conscience toward God. Those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit confess the following: “Father, as Jesus bore my sins by being baptized, and as He shed His blood to death, You have saved me like this. God, I have now come to stand before Your presence by placing my faith in Jesus. I believe in You.” Our faith is not based on our own emotions. The Bible said, *“There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism.”* The Apostle Peter believed so. But what about you? Do you also believe so? I, too, believe in this.



The Lord has indeed saved us in this way. I am so grateful to Him. Even though we are sometimes insufficient, because the Lord actually took upon all our sins, we are now God's children. We believe in this gospel always with our hearts, and whenever we commit sin out of our insufficiencies, all that we have to do is just admit our wrongdoing.

Now, I would like to tell you a few things about prayers of confession. Some of you probably still have a desire to offer prayers of repentance, right? Someone who is used to offering prayers of repentance is bound to have this urge out of habit. When you commit sin after receiving the remission of your sins, you should offer prayers of confession, saying to God, "Lord, I've committed such and such sins." Rather than asking God to forgive you, admit your sins honestly before God, saying, "Lord, I've sinned." And affirm the gospel once more,

realizing, "These sins were also all passed onto Jesus when He was baptized." When we recognize that these sins were also all passed onto Jesus when He was baptized, we can feel even more gratitude for our salvation.

That's why 1 John 1:9 says, "*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*" When we confess our sins, the Holy Spirit speaks to us in our hearts, saying, "Do not worry, for those sins were also all passed onto Jesus Christ when He was baptized." That is why we are now living with our faces lit like the sun. It's because we have the Holy Spirit dwelling in our hearts that we are thankful to God and able to lead a joyful life always. We have been saved despite our insufficiencies and that is precisely why we are always thankful. After all, if God had saved us for our own merits, who among us would thank Him? It's because He has saved us despite



our flaws that we are grateful. So in this world, only those who are flawed are saved. But more flawed people do not believe in this gospel and that is why they are heading to hell. Since these people don't realize just how flawed they are, they resist in stubbornness, only to be cast into hell.

If you believe in the Lord, you will go to Heaven. When this world turns even darker, our Lord will come. Because we believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit before the Lord, we are God's own children. We have become God's people by faith. The Lord has clothed us in such amazing love that it's impossible for me to describe it all in this hour.

So as you go to bed tonight, I ask you to ruminate on this love. I am sure that you will find yourself laughing out of joy helplessly, saying to yourself, "Whoa! How amazing it is that I am a righteous person and that I now have no sin!"

Your spouse or children may then think that you've gone mad, but even so, you have received such a great joy that you simply cannot hide it.

So feel free to testify in the Church how the Lord has blotted out all your sins and tell everyone just how happy your heart is. And if you have any questions about the Word, then simply ask around to any saint in the church. All your questions will be answered. There are many big brothers and sisters in the church. Those who have received the remission of their sins only recently are the youngest.

I give all my thanks to God for remitting away all our sins. Halleluiah! ☒



John the Baptist, Who Came in the Way of Righteousness

< Matthew 17:1-13 >

“Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, ‘Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.’ While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, ‘This is My

beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!’ And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid. But Jesus came and touched them and said, ‘Arise, and do not be afraid.’ When they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only. Now as they came down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, ‘Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man is risen from the dead.’ And His disciples asked Him, saying, ‘Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?’ Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Indeed, Elijah is coming first and will restore all things. But I say to you that Elijah has come already, and they did not know him but did to him whatever they wished. Likewise the Son of Man is also about to suffer at their hands.’ Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist.”



Today's Scripture passage comes from Matthew 17:1-13. Here it is said that Jesus took three of His disciples, Peter, James, and John, and led them to a high mountain. Something stunning happened there. Moses and Elijah had descended from Heaven. And Jesus' garments turned blindingly white, and his image was completely transformed as well. Jesus talked with Moses and Elijah. When Peter saw this, he said dreamingly, "Let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah. We'd like to build three tabernacles and live beside You." Then a cloud covered the sky and a voice spoke from the cloud, "*This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!*"

Peter, James, and his brother John had climbed to a mountain with Jesus, and when they reached the summit Jesus was transfigured all of a sudden and Elijah and Moses came down to talk with Him. Then the sky was covered by a

cloud and a voice said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!" You can imagine what a mysterious scene it must have been. Why did Jesus then show the disciples such a scene? Jesus had let them see Him talk with Elijah and Moses, but what is the significance of this event?

Verse 2 says here, "*He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light.*" Elsewhere in Daniel, it is written, "*And those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever*" (Daniel 12:3). The Bible writes here that Jesus' clothes became as white as the light. God promised us that He would change us in the last day, just as Jesus had changed. So when we are transformed on that day, we will likely be changed as Jesus was transfigured. We will shine like the sun on that day. When the Lord returns, we will be resurrected and raptured and I am sure



that our images will be transformed like this at that time. That is why Jesus had taken His disciples to the mountain and shown these things to them.

After showing these things to His disciples on the mountain, Jesus spoke to them on the way down from the mountain. As written in verse 9, *“Now as they came down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, ‘Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man is risen from the dead.’”* The disciples then asked Jesus, *“Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?”* The Bible then continues on to say, *“Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Indeed, Elijah is coming first and will restore all things. But I say to you that Elijah has come already, and they did not know him but did to him whatever they wished. Likewise the Son of Man is also about to suffer at their hands.’ Then the*

disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist.”

The disciples were wondering in their minds, “Lord, everything from the Scriptures is to be completed with Your baptism, crucifixion, and resurrection, but then why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?” The Scriptures were written from long ago, and the Masoretic scribes were claiming, “For our Lord to complete the prophesy of the Old Testament, Elijah must come beforehand.” They had argued that only when Elijah came would the salvation of mankind be fulfilled and everything that God had promised be restored. The “restoration of all things” refers to the fact that by sending the Savior, God would deliver the descendants of Adam, who were driven out of the Garden of Eden for sin, and thus make them His children once again.



In other words, the disciples were saying to Jesus, “The scribes say that Elijah must come first for this salvation to be fulfilled, for everything that You spoke to be completely restored, for the Garden of Eden to be restored, and for us to be saved from our sins and restored back to God’s people. Who then is Elijah?” Jesus answered them by saying, *“I say to you that Elijah has come already, and they did not know him but did to him whatever they wished.”* In other words, God had already sent Elijah, but people had not believed in him on their own. Jesus then added, *“Likewise the Son of Man is also about to suffer at their hands,”* indicating that just as John the Baptist had suffered a lot on this earth, so would Jesus also suffer. When His disciples heard this, they finally realized, “Oh, so John the Baptist is Elijah!” Verse 13 says, “Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist.” John the Baptist is the Elijah

whom God had promised to send in the Book of Malachi in the Old Testament.

Let’s then turn to Malachi. In the very last chapter of the Old Testament, just before Matthew, it’s written in Malachi 4: 1-3: *“For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, and all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble. And the day which is coming shall burn them up,’ says the Lord of hosts, ‘That will leave them neither root nor branch. But to you who fear My name the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings; and you shall go out and grow fat like stall-fed calves. You shall trample the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day that I do this,’ says the Lord of hosts.”* He then continued on to say in Malachi 4:4-6: *“Remember the Law of Moses, My servant, which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments. Behold, I will*



send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.”

God had promised that He would send His servant Prophet Elijah before He Himself was to come to this world. He said that Elijah would turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers. This is exactly what the High Priest is supposed to do. It's the High Priest's duty to change God's heart by offering sacrifices to Him. God's wrath is provoked when His people commit sin before Him, and it is the High Priest's job to change this angry heart of God to a merciful heart. In other words, it's the High Priest who fulfills this mediator's role to change God's heart to have mercy on this people. It is also his duty to turn the hearts of the people who had left God back to

Him. These are the very duties of the High Priest who offers sacrifices to God on behalf of His people. God had said that He would send the Prophet Elijah, and Elijah was to fulfill these duties by coming to this earth. When was he to come then? God promised that He would send him when the judgment was impending, as it is written, *“Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.”* Elijah was to come and fulfill his role as a mediator to lead the people's hearts back to God and God's heart to them. But the Bible also says that if the people did not listen to the words of the coming Elijah, failed to turn their hearts back to God, and did not believe in Him, then God would come and strike this earth. He would wipe them out and cast them into a burning furnace.

Jesus came face to face with Moses and Elijah in the Scripture passage that we read today. He met them on a high mountain and talked with



them. This account is of absolute relevance to our salvation. Moses is the representative of the Law. After receiving the Law from God, Moses had also received the sacrificial system of the Tabernacle, which enabled his people to obtain the remission of sins from God. God had spoken to Moses personally. So the five Mosaic Books, the Pentateuch, are absolutely authoritative. In these five Books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, God had spoken about His blessings to the people of Israel and the entire human race through Moses, and He had prophesied that Jesus Christ would come to this earth and save mankind. It is all contained in the Pentateuch that everyone in the Old Testament was to receive the remission of sin through the sacrificial system of the Tabernacle. Consistent with the requirements of this sacrificial system of the Tabernacle, Jesus Christ would come to this earth and blot out all the sins

of mankind once and for all. God had spoken everything through Moses.

What do the remaining books of the Old Testament, from Joshua to Malachi, tell us then? They say to us, “Keep the Law of God. If you worship idols and do not obey the Law, then God will judge you.” From the Book of Joshua and on, the Old Testament is all about the cycle of sin and repentance that the people of Israel went through, recording how they were stricken for failing to keep the Law, how they repented, and how they fell into sin again. As such, it’s the Pentateuch that constitutes the absolute foundation of salvation. You can then probably understand now why Jesus went up to a mountain and summoned Moses and Elijah down to talk with them.

Elijah was a servant of God who had led the idolatrous people of Israel back to the Lord, testifying to them, “God is the real God. Jehovah



God is the true God.” However, the Elijah prophesied in the Book of Malachi, who was to come before the Lord to prepare His way, refers to none other than John the Baptist, whom Jesus bore witness as the greatest of all those born of women (Matthew 11:11). Jesus said in Matthew 11:14, *“If you are willing to receive it, he is Elijah who is to come,”* and He also said in Matthew 11:11-12, *“Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he. And from the days of John the Baptist until now the Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.”*

Why does the Kingdom of Heaven suffer violence from the days of John the Baptist? That’s because all the sins of mankind were passed onto Jesus through the baptism that John the Baptist gave to Jesus. That is why those who

believe that all their sins were passed onto Jesus through John the Baptist take Heaven by force. In other words, they enter Heaven by faith. Verse 14 says, *“If you are willing to receive it, he is Elijah who is to come.”* Who did Jesus say was Elijah? It was John the Baptist.

In other words, this Elijah is someone absolutely indispensable and necessary for our salvation, and he is none other than John the Baptist. Only when this Elijah came could everyone’s sins be passed onto Jesus, thus making everyone sinless. In other words, John the Baptist, who was Elijah, led everyone back to the presence of God by baptizing Jesus and thereby passing all sins to Him. As John the Baptist passed the people’s sins to Jesus and thus offered sacrifice on their behalf, he had fulfilled all of his role as Elijah. Referring to John the Baptist, Luke 1:17 says, *“He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, ‘to turn the*



hearts of the fathers to the children,' and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." That's what Zacharia, John the Baptist's father, had prophesied before John was born.

The completion of our salvation is the fulfillment of all the Law and the statutes of the sacrificial system that God had spoken through Moses. By sending Jesus Christ His Son to this earth, God the Father has saved us, who were all destined to hell for our failure to keep the Law. When Jesus came to this earth, He accepted all the sins of mankind by being baptized by John the Baptist, and having thus shouldered all the sins of the world, Jesus went to the Cross and was crucified to death, thus saving us all. That is how we have received our salvation. And that is why Jesus, Moses, and Elijah are indispensable to your salvation and mine. They are absolutely essential for the completion of salvation, that is,

for the restoration of the proper relationship with God. That is why Jesus had called Elijah and Moses and talked with them.

The disciples had asked Jesus, saying, "The scribes say that for everything to be restored, Elijah must come first. What do You say then?" So Jesus said to them, "Elijah has already come. But they did not believe him, and instead treated him in whatever way they wanted. He is none other than John the Baptist who had baptized Me." People had failed to recognize John the Baptist and did not believe in what he had done for them.

Matthew 21:23-27 continues on to say the following about John the Baptist: "*Now when He came into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people confronted Him as He was teaching, and said, 'By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority?' But Jesus answered and said to them,*



‘I also will ask you one thing, which if you tell Me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things: The baptism of John—where was it from? From heaven or from men?’ And they reasoned among themselves, saying, ‘If we say, ‘From heaven,’ He will say to us, ‘Why then did you not believe him?’ But if we say, ‘From men,’ we fear the multitude, for all count John as a prophet.’ So they answered Jesus and said, ‘We do not know.’ And He said to them, ‘Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.’”

At that time, Jesus had come into the Temple and was teaching the people there. The chief priests, the scribes, and the elders of the time then came out to confront Jesus, and rejected His teaching. They rebuked Him harshly, saying, “By what authority are you teaching people inside God’s Temple? Who has given you such authority?” In Israel, except for teachers of the Law called Rabbis, no one else could dare teach

inside the Temple. That’s why they were challenging Jesus, asking, “From whom have You received this authority? Was it from the chief priests? From the elders? If not, then are You teaching on your own authority? Who has given you such authority?”

However, instead of answering them directly, Jesus said, “I have a question for you as well; if you answer my question, then I will also answer your question.” Then Jesus asked the chief priests and the elders, “From whom did the baptism of John come? Is it from Heaven or from men? John gave his baptism to people, and He also baptized Me. Was this baptism then from the authority that you yourselves had granted? Did you give him this authority? Or was it God who gave him this authority? Who permitted this? Did it come from Heaven, or did you yourselves authorize it?”



The scribes knew that if they answered, “It was from Heaven,” Jesus would then say to them, “Why did you not believe in the work of John the Baptist then?” On the other hand, if they said, “It’s from men,” then this would be akin to denying that John the Baptist was a servant of God, in which case the crowd would stone them. So in their fear, they just said, “We do not know.” They answered like this because all the people of Israel at that time knew and believed that John was a servant of God. So Jesus said to the scribes, “Then neither is it necessary for Me to tell you by what authority I am speaking to the people.”

Jesus then used another example, saying, “*But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, ‘Son, go, work today in my vineyard.’ He answered and said, ‘I will not,’ but afterward he regretted it and went. Then he came to the second and said likewise.*

And he answered and said, ‘I go, sir,’ but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?’ They said to Him, ‘The first’” (Matthew 21:28-31).

Jesus then rebuked them, saying, “*Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him; but tax collectors and harlots believed him; and when you saw it, you did not afterward relent and believe him” (Matthew 21:31-32).* Like this, Jesus bore witness of John, saying to the scribes and the chief priests that tax collectors and harlots will enter the Kingdom of Heaven before them, for these people believed in John, while the chief priests and the elders did not believe in him, even though John had come in the way of righteousness.

What did Jesus say here? He said, “John came to you in the way of righteousness.” This means



that John the Baptist came for the righteous work that would justify mankind. He was sent to this earth for the work that would make it possible for mankind to receive the remission of their sins, and he fulfilled this work by baptizing people and Jesus. Yet despite this, the Jewish leaders at that time did not believe that God the Father had sent John the Baptist to fulfill this work of blotting out everyone's sins, nor did they believe in his baptism. That's why Jesus was rebuking them. Moreover, Jesus also told them, "Even tax collectors and harlots will enter the Kingdom of Heaven before you." Tax collectors and harlots had believed John. They had believed that John the Baptist was a servant of God, and that by baptizing Jesus, he had passed all the sins of the people and washed them away.

What is the significance of John's baptism? The word baptism means to be washed. Like the Old Testament's laying on of hands, baptism

entails one to lay his hands on another person and submerge him in water. When hands are thus laid, sin is passed on. This institution has been established by God and so it is effective for everyone. If you let a demon-possessed person lay his hands on your head, his demon would pass onto you. When someone tries to speak in tongues, another person who speaks in tongues out of demon-possession would lay his hands on the other person's head and pray. Then the demon would pass onto that person and the one who just received the laying on of hands would also start to speak in tongues from demon possession. If one listens to sermons preached by a demon-possessed person, it's highly probably that he would start speaking in tongues as well. Such people would throw themselves into a seizure all of a sudden, speaking in tongues feverishly, rolling around the floor, and raising all kinds of racket. That's all because demons



would have entered them. By then, the evil spirits that had possessed someone else would have invaded them as well. Like this, the laying on of hands means to transfer.

My fellow believer, the word baptism means, first of all, the washing of our sins. Calling everyone to be baptized, John had said, “Wash away your sins. You must be washed from your sins.” To the people of Israel, John the Baptist gave the baptism of repentance that made them receive the remission of their sins (Mark 1:4), but He also baptized Jesus, and this particular baptism was the baptism that passed all the sins of mankind to Jesus. The baptism that Jesus received from John the Baptist was the baptism that washed away everyone’s sins. That’s why baptism means, “to be washed,” “to be buried,” and “to be passed on.”

My fellow believers, what had to be done for our sins to be washed away? For our sins to be

washed away, it was absolutely indispensable for John the Baptist to lay his hands on Jesus and pass all the sins of the entire human race to Him. What then had to happen once our sins were passed onto Jesus? Since Jesus accepted all our sins, He had to die and be buried in the ground. That is why Jesus, after shouldering all the sins of mankind by being baptized, went to the Cross as the Lamb of God and died in our place. And that is why Jesus was buried.

Jesus had asked, “What is the baptism of John?” but the religious leaders of Israel did not pay attention to John’s baptism. So Jesus said to them, “John came to this earth in the way of righteousness, and while tax collectors and harlots believed him, you did not repent and believe him even as you saw him. You will go straight to hell. Just as it’s written in Malachi, on the last day you will be cast into the middle of a



burning furnace, placed in the midst of extreme wrath.”

God was to send the Prophet Elijah and he was to turn the hearts of the Father to their children—that is, the heart of God to His children. How? It would be by sending John the Baptist, the representative of mankind and the greatest of all those born of women. By baptizing Jesus, the Son of God and our Savior, John the Baptist passed all our sins to Christ. Through this, John redirected God’s wrath that was reserved for us to Jesus Christ His Son instead, and made it possible for all of us who could not approach God because of our sins, to boldly come before His presence by believing in this Truth. By believing in this gospel of the water and the Spirit, that John the Baptist passed all the sins of the world to Jesus by baptizing Him, and that Jesus shouldered all these sins and was condemned for them on the Cross, mankind is

now able to come to stand before God. God had made John the Baptist fulfill his role as the man responsible for Jesus’ baptism, so that God would have mercy on all those who believe in Jesus Christ and in the ministry of John the Baptist and take them in as His own children. In other words, John the Baptist played a mediating role. It is written, *“He will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children.”* As the last priest of the Old Testament, John the Baptist completely fulfilled this role as mediator.

God had established the institution of the sacrificial system and made it known to the people of Israel through Moses. So all the Israelites offered their sacrifices to God based on the principle of representation, and here was John the Baptist, who fulfilled his duties as their last High Priest. He is the representative of mankind, the greatest of all those born of women. Jesus said that Heaven suffered violence



from the days of John the Baptist. This means that John Baptist is the last High Priest of the Old Testament who fulfilled the crucial role of passing all the sins of the world onto the Lamb of God to open the gate of Heaven.

God had promised to send Elijah, and this Elijah is none other than John the Baptist. God had said that Elijah would turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers. John the Baptist offered the eternal sacrifice on our behalf.

In the Old Testament, the people of Israel had brought their sacrificial animals and the High Priest had sacrificed them on their behalf, but now this sacrifice was changed. The Son of God Himself became our propitiation. And John the Baptist, the last High Priest of the Old Testament, passed all the sins of mankind to the Son of God. Through this baptism that was given by John the Baptist, Jesus accepted all the sins of

mankind. As John the Baptist fulfilled his role to break down the wall of sin that had blocked mankind from God the Father, He turned the Father's heart to the children, and the children's hearts to the Father. Therefore, everyone can receive the remission of his sins if he believes in the baptism of Jesus and His blood on the Cross. God has made completely sinless all those who believe in the salvation that the Lord has brought, all those who believe in this gospel of the water and the Spirit, proclaiming that Jesus accepted all their sins through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, and that He has blotted them all out. As it's written, "John came to you in the way of righteousness," John the Baptist performed his role of passing the sins of mankind to Jesus by baptizing Him.

However, no matter how we shout out that every sin was passed onto Jesus through John the Baptist, people today simply do not believe. This



is so ridiculous! Just how clearly is John the Baptist testified in the Bible? It's none other than John the Baptist whom Jesus approved the most. It's the very John whom Jesus Himself gave His personal seal of approval. It's through John the Baptist that Jesus shouldered all the sins of mankind. Jesus did not just say, "I will shoulder your sins by Myself." Just as the sins of the Israelites in the Old Testament were passed onto their sacrificial animal through the High Priest without failure, so did Jesus come to this earth as the Lamb of God and as our own offering of sacrifice, He accepted all the sins of the world through the baptism given by John the Baptist. This is so crystal clear. Yet even so, people still do not believe in it.

When Jesus was on this earth, the religious leaders at that time, the scribes of the Law, and elders of the Israelites not only refused to believe in Jesus, but they also did not believe in what

John had done for them. They stood against the ministry of John the Baptist. That's why Jesus said to them, "You will be cast into hell, for you are so full of your own righteousness and you do not believe in the testimony of John. But harlots and tax collectors believed." In other words, harlots and tax collectors were saved first by God because they believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Even today, however, most Christians still do not believe in this gospel.

When Jesus was on this earth, the Pharisees and the scribes came to see Him from Jerusalem and asked Him, "Why don't your disciples keep the tradition of our elders? Why do they eat without even washing their hands beforehand?" They condemned the disciples just because they ate without washing their hands. They mocked Jesus, saying, "Just by looking at Your disciples, we can see that You are a flawed man also. You, too, are a man who does not keep the Law. You



are completely below our standard.” So Jesus rebuked them, saying, “What goes into the mouth is not what defiles a man. It’s the wickedness coming out of his heart that defiles him. Out of the human heart proceed twelve sins including evil thoughts, and it is these that come out of the mouth to defile a man. Just because one eats without washing his hands, this does not mean that he is defiled.” Then the scribes and the Pharisees, who kept the tradition of the elders, mocked Jesus, saying, “You and Your disciples are completely wretched. You are so filthy that we can’t have anything to do with You. How can anyone eat without even washing his hands? The tradition from our forefathers clearly dictates that everyone must infallibly wash his hands and feet whenever he returns home from outside, and it commands us to keep this tradition, but You refuse to abide by it.” They denounced Jesus based on only superficial things.

So Jesus rebuked them, saying, “Do you claim to keep the Law? The Law commands you to honor your parents and take care of them, but have you really done this? Did you not actually break the Law, thinking that you don’t have to offer anything to your parents simply by saying, ‘Whatever profit you might have received from me is *‘Corban’* (that is, a gift to God)?’ Is this really keeping the Law? Haven’t you changed God’s commandments into men’s commandments, and do you not believe in these instead now? You fear God completely in vain, for even as you claim to believe in God, you do so based on men’s commandments.” Jesus then said, “So when a blind man leads another blind man, both will fall into a pit.”

This tradition of the elders refers to the man-made doctrines. Even today many Christians say, “Make sure to attend a big church. Ensure that the church you are about to attend is registered



under the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. And be sure to attend a church whose doctrines are clearly established. In short, you should attend a church that belongs to a large denomination and is recognized by secular people as well. You should be taught at such a church and believe in the Word according to how it teaches.” It is all in vain to believe in God and fear Him based on such commandments of men.

No matter who may be teaching what, can it even compare to a single phrase that God spoke? Human teachings are completely useless. Yet today’s Christian leaders go through a long litany listing of who said what, saying to the congregation, “Calvin said this, Luther said that; Livingston said this, Abraham Kuyper said that; Hegel and Kant said this, while Confucius, Mencius, and Socrates said that. This is what John Stott from Britain said, and that is what Abraham Lincoln from the US said, and how he

believed and led his life of faith.” It’s all completely in vain to teach like this, learn like this, and walk like this.

What’s most important is what the Bible actually says. What the Word of God says in both Testaments is what’s really important. Jesus said that John the Baptist was Elijah to come, and that he was the greatest of all those born of women. When God Himself says that John the Baptist passed all our sins to Jesus by baptizing Him, and that this is what is entailed by the sacrificial system, then we ought to believe so and teach accordingly. This is what is meant by listening to and believing in the commandments of God and His Word, and it is by believing in this Word of God that we are saved. It’s absolutely imperative for us to listen to God closely according to this Word. That is the way to fear God.



There is nothing more foolish than expounding only on doctrines without even knowing the Word of God properly. Did John Calvin from France know the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the Word of God? France is where this theological giant was born, yet the gospel of the water and the Spirit is entering France now. French people do not know Korea that well, but we will take this opportunity to make it known to them clearly. They will recognize that Korea is no longer “the Hermit Nation” but a country of the predecessors of true faith.

Even though John came in the way of righteousness, many Christians do not believe this. They do not believe that John the Baptist was the Elijah whom God had promised to send in the last age. People speak of John the Baptist as a failure, saying, “John was a failure. Why? Because he got his head cut off by challenging King Herod.” But John the Baptist was not a

failure. If John the Baptist were a failure, then so would Jesus be a failure, as God the Father would also be a failure. In order to save us humans from sin, God the Father sent John the Baptist to this earth six months before Jesus. The Father then sent Jesus to this earth six months after the birth of John the Baptist. And when the two turned 30, John baptized Jesus, and Jesus received this baptism. That is how God the Father put the sins of the world on Jesus. Given this, had John the Baptist failed, then so would Jesus’ ministry of salvation have failed, and God the Father who had sent them would also have failed.

Through Moses in the Old Testament, God spoke of the Law to mankind that had fallen into sin, the sacrificial system that blotted out sin, and the 613 statutes and commandments that mankind had to keep. Everything was contained in the Law, from the sacrificial system to the law



of salvation and the law of judgment. God had promised to send Elijah. And just as He had promised, He sent Elijah. Six months after sending Elijah, God sent Jesus to this earth. And through Elijah, He passed all the sins of mankind to Jesus. Jesus accepted all the sins of mankind through Elijah. Elijah passed all the sins of mankind to Jesus. Jesus said, “It is thus fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness. It is proper to thus make everyone sinless and to save all the people of this world from all their sins.” Since Jesus accepted the sins of the world through John the Baptist by being baptized, and since John the Baptist passed these sins of the world to Jesus, it is through John the Baptist, who was Elijah to come, and Jesus, who became the Lamb of sacrifice, that God has blotted out all the sins of mankind. Yet despite this, people still do not believe in this fact. Even in the age of the New Testament, there were many who did not

recognize John the Baptist, and therefore were unable to be saved.

Have you heard about the e-mails we got from a certain missionary in Africa? When this missionary first read one of our books, he reacted adversely. He said to us, “This book says that John the Baptist passed my sins to Jesus, but the claim is too grandiose for me to accept. I cannot agree with the content of this book.” He might have been a very impatient man, because he had sent this first letter indicating his disapproval even without finishing the whole book. And then a few days later, he wrote to us again, saying, “I have holy news to share.” He had actually not finished reading the book when he wrote to us the first time. After reading our book just a little and browsing through the first part, he had told us, “I can’t agree with this,” but now that he read more, he came to truly understand what this book was all about. So after reading some more, he



sent us another letter saying, “I would like to share a very holy news with you. I, too, agree with your position on the baptism of Jesus, that God passed our sins to Him through John the Baptist. And my sins were also passed on. I now have no sin.”

Many people abroad are now agreeing with us like this. They are confessing that even though they had believed in Jesus for a long time, it was the first time that they heard such a gospel. I had outright written in my book, “Except for the writings of the disciples of Jesus, this is the first book in the entire world that contains the gospel of the water and the Spirit.” These people do not object on this issue. They are agreeing with their silence. And even at this moment, many people are confessing after reading our books, “I have never read such a book like this in Christianity.” They admit that John the Baptist passed the sins of the world to Jesus. They accept into their

hearts that Jesus accepted the sins of the world through John the Baptist. They accept all this even after reading just one book. At first, as this gospel Word is too unfamiliar to them, they may think that it is exaggerated, but what happens later on when the gospel is explained based on the Bible? They come to accept it.

So right now countless foreigners are being born again. Even at this moment, new believers are being born. In their living rooms and bathrooms, countless people are reading our books with the eye of faith and they now believe in the gospel, saying to themselves, “Then I have no sin. It’s exactly as the Bible says.” Then they write us, “I would like to share a great news with you. I agree that Jesus shouldered all my sins by being baptized.”

The entire mankind agrees that Jesus carried our sins to the Cross and was crucified. Even the Devil agrees with this. Yet some people still



attack me, saying, “How come Pastor Jong only knows about this? Why does he talk about it alone all the time? How come He can only find such things in the Bible? Does he really have to find only these things?” I don’t have to find them; all I do is just read the Bible. When the whole Bible speaks of this salvation, isn’t it inevitable for me to see the salvation, even if I were not trying to find it? When I begin to read the Bible, I read a lot. I read until I am so full. What I am saying is that I know the Bible as much as the so-called Bible doctors.

Everyone all over the whole world who believes in God will come to believe in the baptism of righteousness that John gave to Jesus, the way of righteousness, for this path is all too clear. This is what the Bible speaks of and it was prophesied in the Old Testament. It is written, “*I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the*

LORD. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers.” People are now turning to God in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. As John the Baptist passed all the sins of mankind to Jesus by baptizing Him, as he transferred all the sins of this world to Him, all that sinners have to do now is just turn to God by believing in this. Didn’t we also turn to God? Didn’t we say that we believed? Of course we did. Had John the Baptist not done this work, then even the death of Jesus would have been useless. Salvation would have been unreachable, no matter how strongly we might believe, how much we might cry, how we might submit ourselves to martyrdom, how we might offer all our money, or how we might serve others. In the end, we would have only regretted like Judah, saying, “Why did I believe? It would have been better had I not believed! I wish I weren’t even born!”



However, John the Baptist passed all our sins to Jesus by baptizing Him, and that is why we can believe boldly before God.

My fellow believers, John came in the way of righteousness making us into the instruments of righteousness. Jesus accepted all their sins by being baptized so that people may receive the remission of their sins. By receiving this baptism from John, Jesus blotted out all the sins of the world. Jesus took upon the sins of the world, was crucified to death, and saved us. If the Word says that this is the case, then we should all believe so.

Jesus summoned Moses and Elijah. And He talked with them. Although it's not written in the Bible exactly what they talked about, it is clear that the three spoke with each other. Moses here represents the Law. What about Elijah then? He represents the High Priest. He is the greatest

priest of all those born of women—that is, he is the representative.

The Bible often mentions the earth. The earth refers to people's hearts. It refers to their spirits. What does the last verse say in Malachi? It says, *“Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.”* This means that God would pour His wrath on all those who do not believe in the Truth of salvation. You may wonder why I am saying this again when you all believe already. But I am saying this again because there still are many who do not believe. Everything is not over with just you receiving the remission of your sins, but there still are way too many souls that we must take as our responsibility. The entire human race must believe in this. There have been many people who began believing in this recently.

I will continue to publish our gospel newspaper no matter how high the price of paper may go up. I am sure that many who come across



our newspaper by chance will somehow read it piece by piece and flock to our church, saying, “Someone here please lead me. I want to come here and listen to the Word. I had no idea that there was such Word in the Bible.” A while ago, our saints at Daejeon Church visited a woman running a beauty salon and gave her our newspaper. After this hairdresser finished reading our newspaper, she left it on top of the coffee table at the shop. One of her clients read our newspaper while waiting for her turn, and then said to the hairdresser, “Do you know where this church is? Can you lead me to this place where such amazing Word is preached? I’ve been a Christian for a long time, but my sins still have not disappeared. Would you please lead me to this church?” So as she was able to reach us by phone, the pastor of Deajeon Church preached the gospel to her, and upon hearing it, she received the remission of her sins.

My fellow believers, the Word of God will never disappear. It will remain exactly as it is forever. The most precious news in this world is this Word proclaiming that John passed our sins to Jesus by baptizing Him, that Jesus shouldered all the sins of the world and carried them to the Cross, that He died on it and rose from the dead again, and that He has thereby saved us all. This is the most beautiful news and the most joyful news; it has an amazing power like dynamite; and it is a music that’s more beautiful than any other music. Do you believe so, my fellow believers? Or are you by any chance bored that I am repeating the same words time after time? My sermons used to be even longer than this. When they were really long they lasted up to three hours. I am actually being very considerate these days. If I were to preach everything on my mind, I would have to speak for three or four



hours. So compared to the past, nowadays my sermons are quite moderate.

My fellow believers, you can preach this Truth of the water and the Spirit only if you know it yourself. Have you preached the gospel before? When you try to preach the gospel, do you not find yourself at a loss for words? Only when you listen to the Word of God in all its detail, and confirm it and know it in all its elaborateness, can you then preach the gospel concretely whenever anyone challenges you with the Word, make him surrender, and save his soul. Would you rather be saved alone and just keep the knowledge of the Truth all for yourself? If I had done so, I would have stopped serving the gospel long ago when I first received the remission of my sins. If I had quit serving the gospel after receiving it, then by now I would probably have become the director at the large prayer center that my foster mother had led. It's then probable

that some of you would have come to my prayer center to pray. "Welcome. What brings you here?" "I've come to pray." "Go to that room to pray then; you can use that room." You would then cry your eyeballs out in that room and put yourself through a great deal of suffering trying to fast. People who visit a prayer center often want its director to lay his hands on them. Those who run prayer centers usually demand a lot of offering just for laying their hands once. They make tons of money. But if I had kept my mouth shut rather than preaching this gospel, then wouldn't you all be heading toward hell now? If I had not done this work, then God would have made someone else do it, for He has the power to turn even this stone into a descendant of Abraham.

However, I cannot resist the will of God and that is why I am preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit. This is the reason why I



keep preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit to you time after time. I admonish you to also preach this gospel to others in its concrete details, rather than just living for yourself. Try writing down what you have heard about in today's Scripture passage in its entirety, confirm it as it is, and preach it to someone else as it is. See for yourself if the other person would then receive the remission of his sins or not. He will surely receive it. If he is remitted from all his sins through you, then the Kingdom of God will descend into his heart, too.

Perhaps some of you are now too tired at this hour of worship, as you had played soccer very hard this afternoon. I heard that our sisters are so good at soccer. I can be a good forward player when I play soccer, but nowadays I don't even have enough strength to play a game of soccer with you. I have to spend most of my time nourishing my body back to health, and so in

these days, I can only come out to preach once in a while. My health is too fragile to move around too much. Considering how my health has been so poor lately, I am thankful just to be able to stand before you and preach the Word. Indeed, God has made what's impossible possible.

My fellow believers, shouldn't every human being in this world believe in what John the Baptist testified? Why do people not believe this, even though the Bible makes it clear that John had come in the way of righteousness? Everyone should believe in John's testimony and ministry. The gospel of the water and the Spirit that John the Baptist fulfilled together with Jesus is the way of salvation that everyone throughout the whole world must believe. John the Baptist came in the way of righteousness and passed all the sins of the world to Jesus by baptizing Him. And by thus accepting these sins of the world and dying on the Cross, Jesus has saved all of us



from our sins. Everyone must believe in this salvation and in this path to the Kingdom of Heaven.

You and I alike, all of us must reach salvation by faith. Everyone who believes in Jesus must believe in all this without exception. Salvation cannot be reached just by believing in the Cross alone. It's an absolute must to believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. That is what I would like to share with you all. How about you then? Do you believe in this gospel?

You may have heard this Word hundreds and thousands of times, but if you still do not cherish this gospel, then you should be ashamed of yourself before God. When Jesus Himself approves this gospel of the water and the Spirit, how could we not cherish it? My fellow believers, I ask you all to cherish this gospel. You must keep it faithfully. And you must believe in it with your heart.✉



CHAPTER

18



CONTENTS



Those Whose Faith Is Like That of a Little Child

< Matthew 18:1-4 >

“At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, ‘Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?’ Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them, and said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.’”

Those who have too many thoughts of their own before God are evil people. In contrast,

those who rely on God by faith and who follow Him simply by trusting in Him, are people of faith. To otherwise follow the Lord with thoughts, rather than the heart, is in itself evil. God abhors anyone who worships the Lord with thoughts instead of the heart. When we look at ourselves before God, what are we really capable of doing? Are we capable of doing anything right and are we even able to control ourselves? No, we can’t even control ourselves. There is a song in Korea that goes, “♪I have received a draft card, ♪even as I don’t know how to take care of myself.♪” Likewise, we have nothing that is upright before God, neither our thoughts nor our will. Before God, our will is wrong, our thoughts are wrong, and we have nothing that’s right.

In today’s Scripture passage, the Lord is speaking to us about little children. When the disciples asked, “Who then is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?” Jesus called a little child



to Him, set him in the midst of them, and said, *“Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the Kingdom of Heaven.”* This means that in the Kingdom of Heaven, those who are like little children are the greatest. And it means that it is these child-like people who will enter Heaven. In other words, Jesus is saying here that those who humble themselves like little children can enter Heaven and that they are the greatest before God.

When we look at ourselves before God, we have only our child-like faith and hearts to be approved by God and nothing more. As far as our thoughts, our acts, and anything of our own will are concerned, we have nothing that deserves His approval. The only thing that we can present to God is our child-like spirits. What do I mean by this? I mean that when the Lord says to us, “I have saved you,” we then simply

believe in Him like a little child, saying to Him, “Yes, Lord. You have indeed saved me. I believe in You.” Before God, we have nothing else to present but only our faith that is as innocent, fragile, and weak as a little child. The Lord Himself said that a child-like faith is greatest of all.

My fellow believers, as you and I carry on our lives, when we look back and examine ourselves, we realize that we have nothing to offer to God. All that we have to offer are only blemishes. We have flaws and our thoughts are not upright either, but even so, if there is one thing that we can offer to God, it is our faith that is like a little child. That we have faith like a little child means that we believe that the Lord has blotted out all our sins in our hearts. It means that we wholeheartedly believe in what the Lord has done for us, and that we also believe in what He will do in the days to come. Apart from this



child-like faith that we have placed in what the Lord has done for us, we have nothing to present to the Lord. Except for this faith, we have nothing else to offer to God. That's because we are all imperfect.

The Lord has saved me. He bore all my sins through His baptism, carried them to the Cross and died on it, rose again from the dead, and now sits at the right hand of the throne of God. We believe that the Lord has thus blotted out our sins. We have nothing but this faith that's like a little child. If such child-like faith were taken away from you and me, what would we be left with? Wouldn't we be left with just our own insufficient selves? To us the people of faith, the Lord has given a faith that's as small as a mustard seed, and this faith is the very faith that's like a little child, innocently believing in what the Lord has already fulfilled and achieved. We have nothing else but this faith. Indeed, this

faith is all that matters to the people of God. God has given us this child-like faith. Through the Lord, we have received from God such faith that's like a little child. Now, there can be nothing else but this faith for us. We are incapable of achieving anything to reach our salvation, and so all that we can do is just believe that our Lord has saved us from all our sins.

In today's Scripture passage, the disciples were asking the Lord, "Before You, who is the greatest in the Kingdom of God?" Then the Lord called a little child, had him stand before the disciples, and said to them, "In the Kingdom of Heaven, whoever humbles himself like a little child is the greatest." Who really is the greatest before God? Those who humble themselves, know themselves, and like a little child, simply accept and believe in what the Lord has done for them—these are the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven. In other words, those who are truly great



in the Kingdom of Heaven are those who simply believe in the Word of God with the heart—that is, those who believe in what the Lord said exactly as it is are the greatest before God.

Someone who is not like a little child before God, but far from it boasts his own iron fists like General Naaman, is not a great man. A man who is so strong that he can whip around an iron mace weighing 100 kg is not a great man, but in the Kingdom of Heaven, it is someone who is like a little child that is the greatest. My fellow believers, is there anything that we can do before God? Unless the Lord helps us, what can we really achieve? Would we be able to serve the Lord with our material possessions, unless the Lord gives them to us in the first place? Unless the Lord gives us the strength to carry out our tasks, how could we serve Him with our bodies; and unless the Lord gives us wisdom, knowledge, and the faculty of the mind, how

could we think, learn, or obtain anything? How could we have any faculty on our own, unless the Lord has given it first? Whatever abilities we may have, we have them only because our Lord has granted them to us. We all are merely like small children before the Lord. I am convinced that all those who have received the remission of their sins are like small children. That's why I rely on the Lord.

When is it that our hearts are most comfortable and most faithful? It's when we realize our human insufficiencies and our hearts return to that of a little child, saying to the Lord with a spirit of a child, "Lord, please help me. I can't do anything on my own; I ask You to do all these things for me." It is when our spirits are humble like this that we can pray to the Lord, and strong faith springs forth in us to believe that God will indeed listen to these prayers of ours. And it is then that the Lord works in our lives.



All these things are possible only when our hearts become like that of a little child.

My fellow believers, what could we possibly do without the Lord? Are we really great on our own before the Lord, instead of being as fragile as little children? That's not true, is it? All of us are indeed like small children. Everything we do, we can do it only because the Lord allows this, and it is because the Lord has saved us that we were able to believe in Him like a little child and be born again. Isn't this the case? Of course it is. What do we really have apart from this? We have nothing. When we analyze mankind, we see that ultimately, the only thing that is salvageable is its child-like heart—that is, nothing in mankind is worthwhile but for its simple acceptance of and faith in the Word of God. Apart from this, we have nothing that is of any use at all.

However, many people do not believe even in this. Even though the Lord said, “He who is like

a little child is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven,” this world is filled with so many people who are like Goliath that those who are like a small child are few and far between. Even though it is these child-like people who are the greatest, we see that on this planet, there are way too many people who do not have this child-like spirit. What about you then? Do you have a child-like spirit in your heart? Do you simply believe that the Lord has saved you from all your sins, and do you wholly believe in everything that He has done for you to deliver you from your sins? If you really believe so, then you are like a little child. Are you upset to hear me saying that you are like a little child? Would you rather prefer to hear that you are like an adult? Or a young man? I hope not. It's precisely because when you are like a little child you can believe in Jesus simply and accept Him.



However, there are many people in this world who do not have a child-like spirit. There is no need for us be insulted by the fact that we are like little children. In fact, many people are unable to believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit precisely because their spirits are not like that of a small child. After considering all on their own, such people conclude that this gospel of the water and the Spirit is not logical and reject it, saying, “If we are sinless, then we should have become holy. Since the Lord has saved us, we must have become holy. But did God really give us the spiritual blessings of Heaven and make us His children only by this method? Must salvation be received only in this way?”

There are many people in this world whose spirits are far from that of a little child. Nevertheless, when I look at myself closely, and when I look at each and every one of our saints, I

am compelled to believe that all of us are like small children. The very fact that we believe in what the Lord has done for us means that we are already little children before Him. Those who pretend to be smart would never believe in this gospel, as they are not as innocent as a little child. Such people are happy only when they can do whatever they want to do with the Word of God, adding to it, subtracting from it, or multiply it all on their own; these people do not believe in God’s Word exactly as it is. That’s why the Lord admonishes us to have the faith of a little child.

My fellow believers, I ask you to believe that you and I are like little children. You and I are no more than little children in God’s eyes. If we were indeed little children, then we would believe that the Lord has blotted out all our sins, and we would wholeheartedly believe in everything that the Lord has done for us. If this is the case for us, then we can ask the Lord for



everything else. We can ask the Lord for His help. Only someone whose spirit is like that of a little child is able to pray to God, ask Him for his help, and indeed live his life with this help from the Lord. I admonish you to realize that you are a little child. Unless you are a little child, you cannot obtain the Lord's help. What did the Lord say? He said, *“For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them”* (Mark 11:23-24). What is the Lord trying to tell us in this passage? He is saying to us that when we ask God with a child-like faith, simply by relying on Him and trusting in Him like a little child, the Lord will work in our lives.

We should all realize here that the Lord often spoke of such a child-like faith in the Bible, and that He made it clear that this kind of faith is the greatest of all. Yet how is your faith and mine? Do you really have this kind of faith that's like a little child, and are you really living by faith? The Lord has already given us a child-like faith.

Yet despite this, we often ignore this faith, saying to ourselves, “What kind of faith is this?” We let it slide by us and neglect it, and we keep looking for some great faith instead. But we can't find any, even when we look for it. No matter how hard we think, there is nothing to present before God. Do you have something to show off to the Lord? Do you have a great faith to present to God? How could we present a great faith, when none of us has it? We have nothing to offer to God. So instead, we believe in the Lord with a child-like faith and it is by this faith that we have received the remission of our sins. We also pray



to the Lord and ask for His help with this faith of a little child, and we see the work of the Lord unfolding in our lives by believing with the spirit of a little child that the Lord will indeed help us. In short, the work of faith is made possible only when our spirits are like that of a small child.

My fellow believers, faith is not something that grows automatically from the beginning. Some of you may think, “It’s been ten years since I first received the remission of my sins, so my faith must be better than yours, since you just received the remission of your sins only a year ago.” But just because you’ve been leading your life of faith for many years after being born again, this does not mean that you would have automatically become a man of great faith. Regardless of how long it’s been since you were first saved, you should realize that for all of us, our faith begins from the spiritual state of a little child. True faith is to simply believe “the Lord

has saved me,” and follow Him accordingly. Faith begins when you say, “I can do nothing on my own. Help me, Lord. I believe in You.” It is from this child-like state that faith begins.

Don’t aim too high for the starting point of your faith. Instead, begin by believing that the Lord has saved you. It is from this faith of salvation that more faith will spring forward, emboldening you to ask God for other things. Faith does not stem from anywhere else. The faith that enables us to ask for God’s help and receive His answer spring forth not from a seemingly tremendous faith, but from a child-like faith. Do you believe this, my fellow believers? It is from here that faith begins. But even so, what do we actually do? We keep trying to begin our lives of faith from some place great. It’s because we aim too high for the starting point of faith that we find it so hard, if not quite impossible, to believe in the Word of God.



While following the Lord, whenever we ask Him for something we must have no doubt. If we pray to Him with a doubtful heart, then even something that is going well would not be achieved. If, on the other hand, we pray with the spirit of a little child, then we can ask God by faith and whatever we ask will be answered. This faith is tremendously bold. When we begin with the spirit of a tiny little child by trusting in God with a child-like faith, whatever we ask and pray for with such a mindset, God will answer it all. When we have the belief that God will surely answer us and ask Him by this faith, saying, “Lord, this is so important that You cannot let it slide by. I believe that You will answer me for sure.” My fellow believers, we must lead our lives of faith with a child-like spirit.

From where can we find enough faith to pray to God? It is when we become like the spirit of a little child that our hearts can pray and we can

also march forth by faith. Great faith does not just appear from the beginning, but it springs forth when our spiritual state becomes like that of a small child. We should never allow our hearts to be conceited nor be ignorant of our true selves. Instead, we must be able to recognize the Lord who has saved us, innocently accept this salvation into our hearts by faith, and begin our walk from this very faith that’s placed in His perfect salvation. If we do not begin from there, and instead start by thinking to ourselves, “I am a man of great faith,” then we will find ourselves stumbling all too often. It is my sincerest hope and prayer that you would all humble your heart. Do not think on your own that you have great faith. Instead, I admonish you to begin your life of faith from a child-like state. I ask you to humble your heart. When you return to the state of a little child’s heart, your heart will be at peace, and you will then become bold and



courageous to enable you to live a life of righteousness.

By any chance, do you often say, “I have no faith. I’m faithless?” You have no faith only because your heart is too exalted. It’s because you think that you have a great faith that you actually are at the end of your faith. I am repeating myself here, but faith begins by believing in the Word of God simply like a little child, by the faith that has saved us. If you find yourself saying, “I have no faith,” then this means that your heart is too arrogant. When we already believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that has saved us, and when we already have received the remission of our sins, how is it possible for us not to have faith? The Lord has saved us from all our sins. We believe in this with our hearts. This then means that our faith has already begun. It is from then on that we pray to God and ask for His help. When we ask the

Lord for our needs, would He not answer such requests from His believers when He has saved us? Therefore, if we have the faith that has saved us through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, then we are more than able to obtain the Lord’s help. As we have received the remission of our sins through our faith that’s like a little child, we are bound to also believe that when we ask the Lord for our needs that He will surely answer us. So will boldness spring forth in us. All these things will come if we start from the faith that has saved us.

If you are trying to begin from a great faith, then this is nothing more than a reflection of your arrogance. I ask you to admit the fact that you yourself are merely a little child. You shouldn’t compare yourself to someone else, saying, “Some brothers and sisters have a greater faith than mine.” Every real faith begins from



believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and receiving the remission of sin.

My fellow believers, I believe in God. But from where did this faith in God fundamentally begin? My faith in God began from the simple belief that the Lord has saved me from my sins, from this faith in His salvation. It is from there that my faith began. My faith did not begin from anywhere else but this faith of salvation, from believing that the Lord has saved me and that I have reached my salvation. And it is because the Lord has saved me that I am able to believe in God. So I pray to God, “Lord, I believe in You. I believe that since You have saved me, You will answer all my requests and do everything I ask from You. So Lord, answer my prayer and give me everything I ask. Do all these things for me.” What grounds do I have to pray like this? It’s because I am like a little child that I am able to pray in this way.

We keep asking God to give us more and more, but did we entrust anything to Him to keep it for us? No, we didn’t entrust anything to the Lord, and yet we pray to Him and ask Him time after time precisely because we believe with all our hearts that the Lord has saved us and loves us. And that is why these prayers are answered. It is on account of our faith that the Lord says that we are the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven.

My fellow believers, are we great people before God? Are we not? We are indeed great people. That is right. Since all of us have a child-like faith, we are the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven. Yet when people hear what we believe in and preach, many of them ignore us, saying, “Gee, you don’t even have the basics right; you don’t know how childish your faith is.” But that’s only because these people do not know the mystery of Heaven. We speak of our salvation all



of the time because of what God has done for us is the most important of all.

Yet others do not have a child-like spirit, and so they try to have a great faith and perform great wonders. But even so, are these people able to achieve anything? No, they can't achieve anything at all. I ask you to never forget that if anyone has been saved, then he is infallibly a little child. I admonish you all to begin your faith from such a heart that's like a little child. And you must also remember what Jesus said here: *"Unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the Kingdom of Heaven."* By now, you should all have realized that a child-like faith is all about believing in and following what the Lord has done for you with an innocent heart.

There is no one who can ever enter the Kingdom of Heaven unless he believes in the Lord simply like a little child and in what the

Lord has done for him, saying, "Lord, You did all these things to save me. Yes, I believe in You." My fellow believers, do you believe with an innocent child-like heart that the Lord has blotted out all your sins and mine to save us? None other than this, my fellow believers, is a great faith. It is the very faith that enables us to receive all the spiritual blessings of Heaven. It is the very faith that gives us the right to inherit the Kingdom of God. By no means is this faith small. Such faith—that is, to believe like a little child and say to God, "Lord, You took away all my sins. I believe in You"—is what makes it possible for us to have all the blessings of Heaven. This faith is no ordinary faith. It is exceedingly great. There is no faith that is greater than this. Is there any faith that's greater than this? There is no faith in this world that is greater than the faith which believes that Jesus has saved us from our sins by taking upon all our sins with



His baptism and bearing our condemnation with His death on the Cross. This is not a trivial belief that can just be ignored.

By any chance, is there anyone among our saints who thinks of faith and his relationship with God while setting aside this faith, without wholeheartedly believing that the Lord has blotted out all his sins? My fellow believers, do not set this faith aside. Your heart's belief that the Lord has saved you is the greatest faith of all. I ask you, all the saved people, to keep this faith, and to take it as the foundation to begin your lives of faith. Now that you have been saved, do not just throw away this faith and turn your back to it. Believe that all blessings begin from this faith in the gospel of salvation. Do not neglect this faith, for it is by this faith that you can receive and enjoy all blessings from above.

My fellow believers, I believe in God. My faith in God began from the belief that the Lord

has blotted out all my sins. My faith in all the work of the Lord, His power, and His every profound promise for my present life and future life all stems from the belief that the Lord has saved me. Because I believe in this, He will work on the rest of my life. But if the Lord has not saved me, then I wouldn't be able to believe in all His work. How could I believe in Him? On what basis could I believe? It would be impossible. To believe without any basis is in itself an act of a madman. What is clear, however, is that the Lord has blotted out all my sins. Because I believe in this unwaveringly like a little child, I also believe in all the rest of God's work. That is why I call on God by faith and live out my faith. Are you also like me?

Faith begins by asking with persistence. The Bible shows us an example of such faith. Someone had a visitor, but he didn't have anything to treat him. So he went to a friend's



house and knocked on the door. It was late in the night. His friend was not too pleased with him knocking on the door late in the night, but when he heard his request, saying, “I have a visitor at my home, and so can you please give me something to treat him?” he gave his friend what he wanted, as he could not ignore his friend’s ardent request, even though he felt too lazy to get out of the bed. The Lord said, *“I say to you, though he will not rise and give to him because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will rise and give him as many as he needs”* (Luke 11:8).

Jesus said, *“If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!”* (Matthew 7:11) My fellow believers, it is from here that every true faith begins. Do you believe unquestionably that the Lord has saved you and

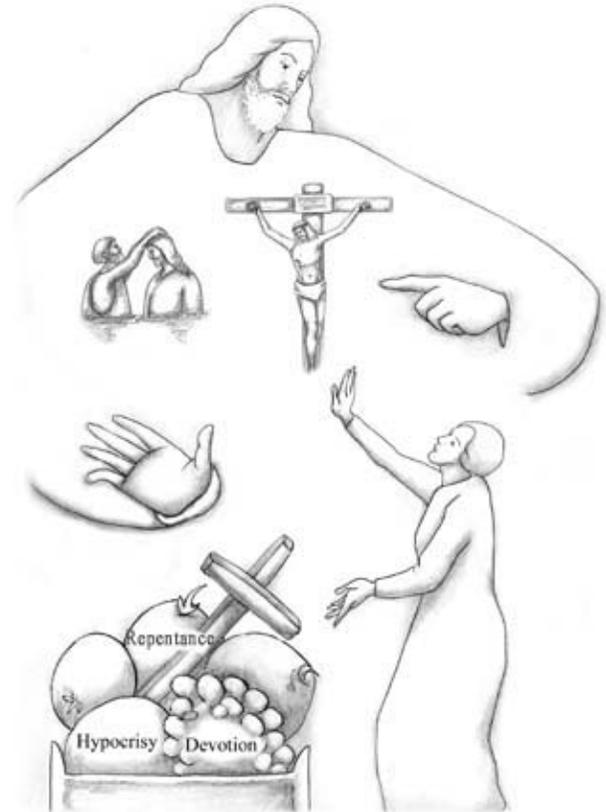
that you have become a child of God? Does your heart really and simply believe that the Lord has saved you? If you believe in this absolutely, then your faith is a tremendous faith, for this faith is what makes you God’s child, whose requests are answered by God. Anyone who believes that Jesus Christ has saved him has already begun his life of faith. He is now someone who lives by faith. Do you believe in this, my fellow believers?

I admonish you all to never forget that God has saved us, to never forget the faith that enables each and every one of us to be saved. Treasure your life and live by this faith. Do not throw it away in neglect in your attempt to find another faith. Instead, believe that your life of faith begins from a simple faith like that of a little child, thank the Lord for giving you this child-like faith, and praise the Lord who has given us this faith. ☒



CHAPTER

19



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Those Who Are Rich in Their Own Good Deeds Of the Flesh Cannot Enter Heaven

< Matthew 19:16-30 >

“Now behold, one came and said to Him, ‘Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?’ So He said to him, ‘Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.’ He said to Him, ‘Which ones?’ Jesus said, “You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery,’ ‘You shall not steal,’ ‘You shall not bear false witness,’ ‘Honor your father and your mother,’ and, ‘You shall love your

neighbor as yourself.’” The young man said to Him, ‘All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?’ Jesus said to him, ‘If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.’ But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. Then Jesus said to His disciples, ‘Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.’ When His disciples heard it, they were greatly astonished, saying, ‘Who then can be saved?’ But Jesus looked at them and said to them, ‘With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.’ Then Peter answered and said to Him, ‘See, we have left all and followed



You. Therefore what shall we have?’ So Jesus said to them, ‘Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name’s sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last first.’”

The season of fall is upon us and we just began our ministry for the second half of this year. I am thankful that we were able to successfully complete our ministry for the first half of this year, even though it was a struggle for us, and that the Lord has blessed us to serve Him in this second half also. It’s my hope and

desire that the gospel would continue to be spread in the second half of this year’s ministry as well.

Nowadays, we have about 100 to 150 people visiting our website from all over the world. (Editor’s note: This sermon was given not long after our Mission first began its Internet ministry, and therefore the statistics mentioned in the sermon are considerably lower than the more recent figures. For example, our website now registers an average of almost 5,000 visitors a day.) Many of these people request our paper books and download our electronic books. Since most of them, after believing in the gospel thanks to our books, pass their finished books and preach the gospel to their families and relatives as well, we can estimate that the gospel is being preached to about 300 souls a day.

Lately the first three English volumes have been in high demand. A while ago, we calculated

that every three saints at our Mission were preaching the gospel to one person a day. Given how visitors to our site have continued to increase, nowadays it's equivalent to every three saints preaching the gospel to two people a day. The gospel is thus being proclaimed in this fashion. I believe that God will continue to work in our ministry, so that soon every saint would be able to preach the gospel to ten people a day. I am sure that before this year is over, we would have preached the gospel to about a thousand people. I am convinced that God will make this happen.

The gospel was spread to many people during the first half of the year, and our ministry for the second half is also going well right now. I was told that nowadays about a thousand books are shipped out overseas from the distribution center at Wonju City on a weekly basis. A thousand books shipped out a week means that around 150

books are shipped out everyday, but could we afford to meet the demand if 10,000 books were requested on a daily basis in this second half of the year? Even so, I do not worry. I am sure that God will provide for all our needs. All of us have labored hard in the first half of the year to serve the Lord. You and I alike have both toiled hard for this ministry. Our ministry workers throughout Korea have also worked hard. I am sure that our overseas coworkers have also labored very hard for the spreading of the gospel. I hope and pray that God would bestow even more blessings into the second half of this year, before we hold our winter retreat.

After today's worship service, we will be making pledge offerings for world missions, with a timeframe set for the end of this coming December. I ask you each to write down and submit whatever amount your heart's conviction tells you to offer to serve God. Some of you may



think, “I have no money, so what can I do?” But if your heart desires, then you can find a way to contribute and if you want to count yourself in the work of the Church, God will make sure to fill all your needs in whatever way. But if you don’t have such a mindset, and say to yourself, “I am in no condition to make any contributions. I would like to, but I just can’t make any commitments,” then your faith itself will perish away. Moreover, even if the gospel were to spread in this second half, it would have nothing to do with you. This would then prevent you from receiving God’s blessings, so even though circumstances may be hard for you, you only have to offer your heart and faith to the Lord. If you can’t serve Him directly with your material possessions, then you can indirectly help the church in its work. We should all thus participate together in spreading the gospel. Those who cannot offer any contributions right now can help

the gospel ministry with their prayers, and they can actually take part in the church’s work, even if in a small way.

Are you glad that fall is now upon us? I like how it’s so cool now that fall is here. It’s cool without even turning on fans or air conditioners. With its gentle breeze and the sound of crickets singing with lingering cicadas, the weather is perfect for taking a nap or reading the Bible. This summer was very tough for us. It was a very difficult and exhausting season for us. When you are too tired, you need to admit this and take some rest to recharge yourself having a good time together for a couple of days, as we are doing right now. But if you pretend not to be tired even as you are, then you will only continue to accumulate more fatigue. You would then die of exhaustion even before the Lord comes. If you at least express your weaknesses before God, saying, “Lord, I am so tired,” your heart and your



faith will both be renewed.

Recently this church building that we were renting was sold to someone else. But the new owner won't move in here, so there is nothing to worry. Even if we are asked to leave, we can just move to another place. While it's good for one to live in one place for a long time, it's also good to move to face new circumstances once in a while. We are determined to always work with renewed hearts under all circumstances. We've made the most out of this building until now, but as it was sold to a professional real estate investor, we now need to negotiate a new lease with him. I ask you all to pray for this matter, so that a new lease may be signed with reasonable terms.

Although we've made several achievements in the first half of this year, I am hoping to spread the gospel even more in the second half. I myself would like to travel with students at our Mission School and spread the gospel with them, and I

would also like to visit every branch church in Korea and preach the gospel. If possible, from now on and for a while, I would like to concentrate my effort on spreading our books than making them. We've published many books until this year. We have worked hard to lay the foundation of the gospel until now. We've published a series of volumes on the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and we are now doing some last-minute work on a collection of sermons on the Apostles' Creed soon to be published. I feel strongly that if we can continue to stride along as before, then we would be more than able to spread the gospel everywhere. So I am convinced that in this second half, we will be able to preach the gospel even more forcefully. Are you also sure of this?

We are now spreading the gospel to many places all over the world through the Internet. Our sisters have been sending countless emails to

introduce our website, and some of them may now think, “We’ve worked so hard and sent out so many emails that there is not anymore places to send our invitation message,” but they need not worry. Yesterday I got a call from Rev. Shin telling me that according to the information sent by one of our coworkers in Portugal, there are countless Christian sites there. Were you thinking by any chance, “What should I do if there is not anymore places to send out emails? Won’t I now have any more work to do?” Don’t worry; I’ll prepare some amazing work for you all.

Recently some Japanese people read our books and received the remission of sins. When the news of the gospel spreads around through these people, even more people will come to receive the remission of sin. Although there are many souls throughout the whole world who have received the remission of sins, we don’t

know the full extent of this because not everyone contacts us. Even as we are gathered together here right now, the work of the gospel continues to unfold and people continue to receive the remission of sins. A pastor in Africa has told us that he now believes in this gospel, and that he is teaching it to his congregation. We’ve also heard from a Canadian pastor who is now using our books as textbooks for his congregation’s Bible studies. Yet these are only the tip of the iceberg; the gospel work is unfolding all over the world in far greater number and strength, even though we do not hear about it all. God’s amazing work is unfolding everywhere. I am convinced that the gospel is now being spread by tens of millions more times than our labor.

Until the day the Lord returns, the gospel will continue to be spread vigorously. The gospel will be spread ceaselessly until it is preached all over the world in the next few years and those who



want to believe will believe, while those who do not want to believe will not believe. I believe that God will bring this about. You also believe so, right? As more time goes by, the proclamation of the gospel will also accelerate. It was not too long when we were rejoiced to see the number of daily visitors to our New Life Mission increase to over 100, but now we have over 200 people a day requesting our books. At first, only a handful of books were sent out everyday, but we were soon pleased to ship out 30 books and then 50 books a day, and we all clapped in joy when the number went over 100 books a day. After a while though, we seemed to be somewhat less moved, as we got used to shipping out well over a hundred books a day. But I am sure that we will once again clap in joy when the daily shipment reaches 500 books. And we will clap again when the number reaches 1,000, and clap again once more when the gospel reaches 5,000 people a

day. Perhaps it's because our hearts have become too complacent, desensitized, or bolder, but the usual figures don't trigger that much reaction.

There is nothing better than the fact that we are able to carry out the work of the Lord unbound by the affairs of the world, and that we are preaching the gospel with all our dedication. While we love to preach this gospel, so does God. The title of our revival meetings for the second half of this year is "Expositions on the Book of Revelation." As the title indicates, the main theme addresses the question of how this world would change in the future. I am praying to God to send many souls to one of these revival meetings scheduled for the next week, and I am also sure that God will indeed send many souls. I ask our students at the Mission School and our workers to share fellowship with these new souls. It's very important to share fellowship individually with each soul. I hope and pray that



many souls would come to the revival meeting, so much so that we would run out of space. As the Bible says that faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen, we should dream big. And we should pray and trust that God would make our dream come true. Wouldn't God answer us only then? I pray to God to bestow many blessings on you and to bless the church abundantly as well.

Here today, we just read Matthew 19:16-30. In verses 16-17, it was said, *“Now behold, one came and said to Him, ‘Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?’ So He said to him, ‘Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God.’”* This man here thought that one could receive eternal life by doing some virtuous deeds. In other words, he thought that if he did good works, he could receive eternal life to never die but live forever and enter the Kingdom of

Heaven. However, Jesus said here that no one is good but One. Actually, doing the good work here is for us to believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit through which God has saved us and accept the remission of our sins. It is a virtue to accept the remission of sin that God has given us, and it is also a virtue to preach this salvation that He has given us to those who still do not know it.

What Should I Do to Receive Eternal Life?

The man shown in today's Scripture passage was not speaking from a perspective of faith, but he was talking about his own good deeds of the flesh, about mankind's own virtues. That's why Jesus said to him, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One.” This passage means



that Heaven is not entered by doing good deeds. It also means that doing good deeds cannot blot out one's sins. Yet even so, this man failed to realize it, and so when Jesus told him, "If you want to enter into life, keep the commandments." He asked, "Which ones?" Jesus then said to him, "*You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness. Honor your father and your mother. And you shall love your neighbor as yourself.*" The young man then responded by saying, "All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?" So Jesus said to him, "*If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.*" It's written, however, that "when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions."

When Jesus told this young man to keep the

commandments, he asked Him confidently which commandments he should keep. So Jesus listed them for him: "You shall not murder; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; honor your father and your mother; and you shall love your neighbor as yourself." The man then said to Jesus, "All these things I have kept since my youth. What do I still lack?" By this, he was asking what other things he had to do, since he had kept all these commandments. So what did Jesus say then? He said, "*Sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.*" The Bible says that this young man then went away sad, because he had a great deal of wealth.

This passage actually makes one single point. It speaks of human righteousness, making it clear that no one can receive the remission of sins if he is filled with his own virtues and his own human



righteousness. In other words, eternal life cannot be received if one has too much righteousness of mankind. This is what differentiates the mind of God from the mind of man.

Human beings keep trying to attain everlasting life by carrying out good works of their own and accumulating their own virtues. However, God told us to cast aside our own righteousness and accept and believe in His righteousness instead—that is, the righteous work that God has done for us—and thus receive everlasting life. When we approach God, it's our instinctive tendency to try to make up our own virtues and take them to God, since we have no virtue whatsoever as human beings. Everyone has this tendency, as it is virtually instinctive. However, when we turn to today's Scripture passage, we see Jesus explaining to us what would happen if one continues to cling to his own righteousness before God.

It Is Harder for a Rich Man to Enter the Kingdom of Heaven Than for a Camel to Go through the Eye of a Needle

From verse 23 on, Jesus taught His disciples using the rich young man as an example to explain that it's harder for the rich to enter Heaven than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle. Can you imagine any camel ever going through the eye of a needle? Think about just how small the eye of a needle is. It is not just hard for a camel to go through such a small hole, but it is completely impossible. Yet even more difficult than that, is for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. In other words, Jesus was saying that it was even more impossible for the rich to enter the Kingdom of God.

What kind of rich people did Jesus speak of



here? The rich man here refers to someone who is rich in his heart. Jesus was not speaking about materially wealthy people. Take a look at this young man. It's written, "One came and said to Him, 'Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?'" This man's heart was filled with his own human virtues. He had done many good deeds, earned many merits, kept all of the Law, and obeyed each of the Ten Commandments as well, and he was wondering what more he could do on his own, convinced that he was near perfect and he could do everything that needed to be done. Given this, it was natural for him to be rich in his heart. In other words, he was a rich man because his heart was rich with his own virtues. That one has many virtues means that his heart is very rich. Jesus, however, said that it was harder for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle.

Let's turn to verses 23 and 24 here: "*Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God.'*" Jesus drew a comparison to illustrate that it was easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. You all know what a camel is, right? What about a needle? These days, hardly anyone does any needlework anymore, but you all know what a needle is. The eye of a needle is so small that a grandmother with poor eyesight has to ask her grandchild to put the thread through the needle's eye for her. When not even a finger can go through the eye of a needle, how can a camel, an animal that's several times larger than a man, ever go through it? Even the largest door at your home can hardly



accommodate a camel to pass through it.

You can never enter the Kingdom of Heaven with your own human virtues. It is harder for someone with many human virtues to enter Heaven than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle. Even if there was a way for a camel to somehow go through the eye of the needle, it's absolutely impossible for anyone filled with his own human virtues to enter Heaven. Can anyone filled with human wickedness enter Heaven then? No, such people cannot enter either. What is it then that we must do? Jesus said here, "*With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.*" This means that since God Himself became a man and came to us on this earth, and since He has saved us through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, all that we have to do is just believe in this. Yet those who have too many human virtues of their own do not believe in Jesus.

There are many religions in this world. Christianity, however, actually is not just a religion, but it is all about spiritual faith. But let's take a look at some aspects of the religions that boast many followers and are widespread around the globe. Every religion has its respective doctrines. Confucian creeds, for instance, teach that one should live an upright life on this earth and practice virtues, while Buddhism teaches that if one tries hard to do good deeds and accumulates enough virtues, he would be reincarnated into a better station in his next life. Drunk on religion, people believe in and follow doctrines, but I will address this issue in another book. If you read that book, you will be able to grasp clearly what it is that mankind is doing, and what it means to accumulate one's own human virtues. This is actually what the Lord pointed out in today's Scripture passage.

When a rich young man asked, "What good



thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?” Jesus said to him, “*No one is good but One, that is, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.*” And He gave him the major commandments in turn. The young man then asked, “I’ve kept all these commandments, and so what I do still lack?” Jesus then said to him, “Did you? Well then, sell all your possessions and give them to the poor. You will then be able to enter into life.” Selling our possessions means that we must throw away all our human virtues.

Does mankind actually have any virtue at all? No, as a matter of fact, mankind is completely devoid of any virtue. Whereas God told us, “Help your neighbors and love them as you love your own body,” can any of us really do this? Of course God is more than able to do this. After all, Jesus Christ, God Himself and our Creator, forsook His glory and the magnificent throne of

Heaven, and came to this earth incarnated in the flesh in order to save us. And He accepted all the sins of mankind onto His own body through His baptism, went to the Cross, bore the punishment that was reserved for mankind in its place, was crucified to shed His blood, died in mankind’s place, rose from the dead again, and has thereby saved us. This is something that only God can do. Does mankind then have any virtue? No, it has no virtue at all. Even though God said, “Love your neighbor as your body,” people still hate one another, stabbing each other’s back and hurting one another. Confucianism also teaches its followers to love one another, as does Buddhism and Islam, but no matter how consistently mankind is taught like this, human beings are simply incapable of keeping the commandment to love one another, so they keep breaking it time after time.



Although People Think That They Are Virtuous in Their Own Way, No One Is Truly Virtuous

Let me draw an example here. Let's say that in a house full of people starving desperately without any food, a loaf of bread somehow appeared. Imagine all these people are friends and that they are sitting around the loaf of bread and staring at it. All that they have is this tiny loaf of bread that's not enough to feed even one person. Would any of them then say, "This bread is not enough to be shared among us anyways, so I will die first and let you have it; go ahead, don't worry about me?" Whether human beings are truly virtuous or not is quickly revealed when they encounter emergencies and face dire situations. Even though people sometimes think that they are capable of doing good deeds, is

mankind really good? No, mankind is not really virtuous. That is why Jesus Himself said that no one is truly good but One, God Himself. Only God is truly good, and mankind is not virtuous at all.

Imagine yourself in such a starving situation that you have nothing to eat other than a loaf of bread. Would you share it equally with the others? Even if you were to share the bread, wouldn't you fight over who would eat more? Or would you say, "You can have this bread and live a bit longer; I will go first?" Which of these three scenarios would fit you? Never mind what others might do; what would *you* do if you and the person sitting next to you were facing such a situation? If it were someone else, you could always be generous enough to say, "he will probably share the bread equally," or, "he will give it all to his friend and give up his share."

But if it were you, would you really share the



bread with your friend equally? Or would you try to take it away from him so that you would have some more bread? If not, would you then say, “Here it is. Why don’t you eat it all? I will just sacrifice myself.” If none of this were plausible, would you then take your friend’s share by force and eat the whole loaf all by yourself? When you face such a problem for real, things won’t go as you think now.

When I was a kid, I used to do dishes all the time for my mother. I used to follow my mother everywhere clinging to her skirt, doing chores for her, drawing water, and building the fire for her when she was cooking rice. In those days, we had very little to eat. So when my mother cooked rice, she used to mix in wheat and other grains to swell the amount. One day, I happened to find myself putting the cooked rice into each bowl for my family. Every bowl was distinguishable, so I knew exactly which bowl belonged to whom,

whether it was my father’s, mother’s, or mine. I was so young back then, but even so, can you guess how I divided up the rice into each bowl? I put the rice lightly into other family members’ bowls so that it would be all fluffy, but for myself, I pressed it tight so that the bowl would hold as much rice as possible. Even now I can remember this clearly as if it were yesterday. Even though I was young, I thought to myself, “I’m doing this all because it’s my bowl! It’s because the bowl is mine that I am trying to pack so much rice into it.” Selfishness is triggered like this even in one’s own family and that is just the way that mankind is by nature.

My fellow believers, it is only a matter of fact for every son and daughter to take good care of their parents, but as I recall here, the fundamental nature of mankind does not allow this. I realize clearly what I was doing back then and I’ve never forgotten it. And even though I have tried

very hard to live virtuously, when I actually turn around and look at myself objectively, I see that I've failed to achieve this. Is mankind good? No, it's not. When you judge someone else just by examining his outward appearance, you may think that this person is really virtuous, but forget about everyone else and think only about yourself.

Do you think that you are good enough? That is absolutely not true. Out of the human heart proceeds twelve sins including evil thoughts, murder, adultery, greed, sexual immorality, and theft, and this heart is filled with such sins. That's why it's not a wild beast that is most terrifying and fearsome to encounter on an isolated trail deep in the mountains, but it is another man. What is most fearsome is not anything else, but man himself. If you come across a wild animal, you can at least flee. But you can't flee from your fellow men. Even if you

try, someone will always find a way to sneak up on you from behind. The most fearsome creature of all is none other than mankind.

Given how mankind is by nature an evil brood, isn't it inevitable that people would do only evil? Even though human beings desire to live virtuously, they cannot help but practice evil, for their basic nature is evil. It's because mankind is evil that it tries to do good deeds. That is what gave rise to religion. And that is why various religions such as Confucianism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Catholicism have emerged. It's precisely because human beings are too evil that through all these religions, they try to somehow compensate for their wickedness.



Jesus Said That It's Impossible for Anyone to Enter Heaven by His Good Deeds

Jesus said, *“It is hard for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God.”* Our Lord said that it's harder for a rich man to enter Heaven than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle. If this is true, then this ultimately means that those who are too virtuous on their own can never enter Heaven. Those who are rich in their hearts are least able to enter Heaven, even less so than those who are rich in their material possessions of the flesh. Those who are rich in their faith, on the other hand, are safe. If you are such a rich person with a good heart, yearning to labor for the salvation

of souls in obedience to the Word of God after receiving the remission of your sins, then you are fine. However, it's not acceptable for those who have not received the remission of their sins to think on their own merits that they have many virtues, nor is it acceptable for them to try to do many good deeds. It's hard for such people to receive their salvation, even though Jesus has given it to them. How hard is it? It's harder than it is for a camel to go through the eye of a needle. Do you understand this, my fellow believers?

That's why the Lord is saying to us, *“With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”* In other words, whereas it's completely impossible for men to reach salvation on their own, with God it is more than possible. How did God then fulfill the salvation of mankind? It is written, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but



have everlasting life” (John 3:16). That is how God has saved mankind. God has blotted out all the sins of mankind by sending His Son to this earth, by baptizing this only begotten Son and thus passing all the sins of mankind to Him, by making Him carry the sins of the world to the Cross, and by crucifying Him to death. It is because God has done the right work for us, the good work of saving us that we have received our salvation by believing in this work. When Jesus said, “*with men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible,*” He was saying that it was God Himself who saved us. My fellow believers, all of us should be grateful to God for the remission of our sins, ruminate on this everyday and carve it into our hearts again and again.

Are human beings good by nature? No, as we discover time after time from our own everyday experiences, we are not virtuous at all. Even

when it comes to our lives that are lived after receiving the remission of our sins, apart from what is done to serve the gospel and God, everything else we do is all evil. Isn’t this so true? That is precisely why Jesus said that we must cast aside our own human virtues. Even after receiving the remission of sins, we must not show off our own human goodness.

What exactly is mankind’s own virtue then? It is to treat others with carnal virtue. We have to cast aside our effort to help others only in carnal terms and stop having only humanistic compassion. Instead, we must be spiritually virtuous. We must have a spiritual faith. To be spiritually virtuous is to believe that Jesus Christ shouldered the sins of the world through His baptism that blotted out our sins, and that He has saved us by being crucified, shedding His blood to death, and rising from the dead again. And it is also to preach this gospel. Receiving the



remission of our sins by believing in this gospel, dedicating ourselves to the spreading of this gospel, praying for it and serving it with the belief that Jesus has blotted out everyone else's sins as well—this is what is really virtuous. To breathe for the sake of serving this gospel, to make money in its service, and to live for such purposes—that is how we live virtuously. Everything else is evil. That's why those who have too many human virtues of their own start to believe in God at first, but in many cases, they eventually end up renouncing their faith and departing from God.

My fellow believers, you must throw out your own human virtues. Mankind actually has no virtue to speak of. Human beings are devoid of any virtue by their very original nature. We must recognize that what is truly virtuous is to serve the gospel of the water and the Spirit once one is saved by believing in it. It's written in 1

Corinthians 10:31, "*Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*" Taking this passage as the purpose for our lives, we must believe that everything we do for this gospel is right.

Even though I am still living in this world, just as you are also living in this world, I believe that it's a true blessing for us to live entirely for the Lord and I often thank Him for allowing us to lead such a life. Just how many enticements are ready to lure our hearts away, if only we weren't fully dedicated to this work? Moreover, we are incapable of carrying out multiple tasks at the same time, but we've now been enabled to devote ourselves entirely to the work of the Lord, so just how thankful should we be? Unless we serve the Lord with all our dedication, we will face many difficulties. I am so thankful and so glad that God has blessed me to serve the Lord with all my life. I am so happy that my heart's



devotion is not divided. It's also good for you if it's possible, to live entirely for the Lord. If you dedicate your whole life to the Lord without your mind wandering off somewhere else, then you will also avoid wasting your time uselessly. Of course, you may be unsure of this, since you haven't lived like this before, but once you dedicate your entire life to God, you will discover that it is full of joy. After all, it is when you live for this purpose that God will bless you.

Let's now turn to verses 27-30 here: *"Then Peter answered and said to Him, 'See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?' So Jesus said to them, 'Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for*

My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last first.'"

Those who lose much for the sake of the Lord actually have much to gain because of the Lord. When it comes to material possessions also, if you lose much for the sake of the Lord, you will also gain much because of the Lord. And eternal life is your assured reward. We have been saved by faith, not by our own human virtues, but by believing in the righteousness of God, in the salvation that God has brought to us. And if we have thereafter suffered many losses for the sake of the Lord, then we will also gain much because of the Lord. This is what is meant when Jesus said, *"So the last will be first, and the first last"* (Matthew 20:16).

Who actually are the first then? Who are the spiritually advanced? Those who have forsaken many things for the Lord are the spiritually



advanced. Someone who has forsaken many things for the Lord is the first, and someone who has neither forsaken nor lost much even after meeting the Lord is the last. Those who have lost much for the sake of the Lord are the spiritually advanced. When we look at those trailing behind in faith, we see that they have lost absolutely nothing for the sake of the Lord. Their faith is like this everyday.

But how about those who have suffered many losses for the Lord, they run forward energetically for the gospel and they actually prosper on this earth as well. Have you seen anyone serving the Lord ever go hungry? No one who truthfully lives for the Lord and His gospel will ever go hungry. This is not just my own words, but Jesus also said, *“Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left their 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). They will surely receive this reward. Do you agree with me? Moreover, it’s impossible for those who live for the Lord to lose their faith. That is why it’s so good to live for the Lord.

Before, I used to have many acquaintances, friends from my seminary years, family members and close relatives, but I lost them all once I received the remission of sins. My heart broke each time when I lost one of them. In fact, it wasn’t just that I lost them, but even worse, they persecuted me. But what happened next? When I turned to the Bible, I found the Lord’s promise that goes, *“Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left their 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). I believe in this Word. As I lost my family of the flesh, God has brought a huge spiritual family to me. In fact, it is you who have become my brothers, my sisters, and my family. I have so many family members spread all over Korea and throughout the whole wide world.

So when worldly people boast of their families, I answer them by saying, “You are so lame to boast of your family when there is only a handful. Do you have any idea just how big my family is? I’ve got thousands and millions of family members. Do you realize just how many family members I have?” If I take all my family members and they each give just one knock on these worldly people’s heads, their households

would all be ruined. I don’t even have to fight them; just each of my family members stomping on them once will suffice.

My fellow believers, the first refers to those who follow the Lord; following the Lord is to forsake oneself and live for His sake; and salvation means receiving new life from the Lord. That is what the Bible is saying to us. It is not because we are somehow good that we have been saved, but it is God who has saved us; therefore, it is by accepting this salvation by faith, by accepting the goodness of God, that we can reach our salvation. Who is good? Is it we, or is it God? It is God who is good. And it is God who is righteous. Just before Jesus was baptized, He said, “*Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.*” The phrase “all righteousness” here means that Jesus was to accept all sins through His baptism. The Bible also describes Jesus as “the Lamb of God



who takes away the sin of the world,” and this means that Jesus shouldered all the sins of the world through His baptism. Therefore, it is not we who are good, but it is God who is good. Do you believe in this, that it is God who has saved us?

Even though we are insufficient, we will never lose our faith if we unite ourselves with the Church. Although you are insufficient, you will still enter Heaven if you believe that Jesus took upon all your sins by being baptized, carried the sins of the world to the Cross, was crucified to death, rose from the dead again, ascended to Heaven, and has thus become your God of salvation. And you will receive everlasting life. Eternal life means that you will enter Heaven to never die but enjoy splendor and glory forever. That is why God is good.

We must serve the gospel with our hearts united together within the spiritual order of the

church. To ignore this spiritual order is the same as ignoring God. We used to ask jokingly to our followers of faith, “How should you think of your predecessors at our Mission School, even those who attended it just one semester ahead of you?” They then had to answer, “We should think of them as God’s classmates.” It was all to underscore the point that new believers should cherish their predecessors’ faith that much more and learn from their example. We don’t say such things that often anymore, but in the old days we used to ask such questions frequently for training purposes and to establish God’s order. Our Mission School is fundamentally different from the seminaries of the world.

We have the unavoidable duty to deliver everyone who has fallen into religion. Yet it’s nearly impossible for us to preach the gospel directly to everyone all over the world, and that is why we are publishing our books in various



languages and sharing them with people across the globe.

By the time 600 years passed by since the coming of Jesus, Christianity had already collapsed totally. As Christianity had already lost its influence by then and this gospel was dead, Islam emerged for many people to believe in it and to argue that Allah and God were the same. How can Allah be the same as God? Was Allah there when the heavens and the earth were created? Others also believed in the sun as their god. However, the sun is one of God's creations, so how can it be the Creator? Christianity in the Medieval Age launched its violent Crusades to recover Jerusalem from Muslims by force, but it failed miserably in the end. A flawed faith can be corrected with a stroke of a pen, not by violence. With one book, I can criticize the flaws of the religions of the world and present the absolute rightness of God.

All the religions of the world have gone astray. For example, Buddhists say, "You are a god, as I am a god; everyone is divine." So I say to Buddhists, "Do you use the bathroom?" Then they say that they do use the bathroom. I then point out to them, "What divine being would use the bathroom? One must believe in the real God. Only then can he become a child of God and reach divine state." That is right. What our Lord said here is true. My fellow believers, it is by believing in the Lord that we are saved. It is by faith that we receive everlasting life, and it is by faith that we have attained the righteousness of God. Even though we had no righteousness of our own, God has done the right work for us. That is God's righteousness. To save you and me, in other words, God Himself came to this earth incarnated in the flesh of man, bore all our sins by being baptized, carried the sins of the world to the Cross and died on it, rose from the



dead again, and has thereby indeed saved us all. He is our everlasting Savior, for He lives forever.

To save us, Jesus the true God gave us the deliverance of the water and the Spirit through His 33 years of life on this earth. None other than this is the very righteousness of God. It is by believing in this righteousness that we have received our salvation, and now that we have been saved it is by living for this righteousness that we can keep this faith, inherit eternal life, and receive many blessings both on this earth and the next world to live forever. And although mankind has a pronounced tendency to try to do good deeds based on some human standards instead of serving the gospel, this is absolutely not virtuous at all. Serving the gospel is what is truly virtuous. Do you grasp this? Do you believe this? Serving this true gospel is the absolute virtue.

My fellow believers, I admonish each and

every one of you to trust in God in all things and pray to Him. It is God who blesses us, it is God who gives us eternal life, and it is God who remits away all our sins. God has given us the remission of sins once and for all. Let us therefore all believe in this gospel and live our lives according to the Word of God, in obedience to the Lord. Let us all thus receive God's abundant blessings in our lives. ☒



CHAPTER

20



CONTENTS



Live for the Gospel of The Water and the Spirit

< Matthew 20:20-28 >

“Then the mother of Zebedee’s sons came to Him with her sons, kneeling down and asking something from Him. And He said to her, ‘What do you wish?’ She said to Him, ‘Grant that these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on the left, in Your kingdom.’ But Jesus answered and said, ‘You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?’ They said to Him, ‘We are able.’ So He said to them, ‘You will indeed drink My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; but to sit on

My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared by My Father.’ And when the ten heard it, they were greatly displeased with the two brothers. But Jesus called them to Himself and said, ‘You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.’”

Today, I would like to focus on the passage that says, *“Whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And*



whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave.” Whenever we are entrusted with a certain task, we must be faithful to the task, or otherwise we should give it up so that someone else can take charge of it. This applies to every task.

Whoever wants to be first among us must serve the Lord. Zebedee had two sons, James and Andrew. Both of them were Jesus’ disciples, and one day their mother came to Jesus and asked Him to let her two sons sit at the Lord’s side, left and right, when His Kingdom comes to this earth—in other words, she was asking Jesus to grant prominent places to her sons. Our Lord then asked, “Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?” and they answered, “Yes, we can.” The Lord then said to them, “You will indeed drink My cup, and you will be persecuted and martyred for Me. But it is not up to Me to decide who sits on My side, but whoever

prepared by My Father shall sit on My side.” Our Lord then explained Himself by using an example, illustrating His point through a parable. He said, *“You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant.”*

Today, with this passage in mind, I would like to clarify how our saints throughout our churches in Korea should lead their lives of faith before the Lord. Commerce is a central feature of human affairs. Not only are venders engaged in commerce, but ordinary people are also engaged in various types of commercial transactions in everyday life. We the born-again have to live out our faith as if we were engaged in a trade.

Even when it comes to the life of faith, too many people prefer to be elevated than lowered,



and they also want to be served rather than to serve. But our Lord said that it's completely opposite in His Kingdom. As He said, *“Whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave.”* Of course, this passage should not be interpreted under some sort of carnal thoughts. Believers who are carnally minded tend to interpret this passage to mean that they should serve the faithless in carnal terms, but that is not what this passage means at all. This passage means that those who are truly elevated in the Kingdom of God are those who serve His gospel energetically and faithfully.

Many People Want to Be Heard

The human mind is such that everyone wants

to be elevated, and the saints in this Church and God's servants are no exception. Even when there are only two people gathered together, one of them inevitably wants to be higher than the other. So considering how people argue over who is higher than whom even when there are only two people, wouldn't this tendency be even more accentuated when there are 40-50, 100, and 1,000 people gathered together? Everyone has the desire to be elevated from the rest. Yet even though this desire to be elevated is shared by everyone, few actually seek to serve the gospel faithfully regardless of whether they are treated well or not. While it is true that some people yearn to follow the gospel sincerely and sacrifice themselves to serve it, this is not necessarily the case for all, as many have relatively little desire to serve the Lord even though they all want to be elevated. Those who want to be elevated and be served by others, but do not serve others



themselves, are very mistaken.

The Lord taught us about such mistakes in His Word of admonishment for His disciples. Our Lord is the head of God's Church. Every creature and every man must praise our Lord as the most exalted of all. Since our Lord is the most exalted One in this entire universe, it is only a matter of fact for Him to be elevated. God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are our God, but who should be glorified the most by us? It is Jesus Christ our Lord. Not only did He make us, but also He even gave up His life to save us. And He forsook the glory of Heaven. For the sake of His flock and for His people to be saved, He suffered shame, made every sacrifice, and gave everything He had.

Our Lord said, "*The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.*" And the Lord actually did this. But what kind of heart do our saints and

God's disciples have? Do their hearts really desire to serve rather than be served or do they want to be served? Those people whose faith is mature want to serve sinners. Those who have true faith serve others with self-sacrifice. But this is not the case for those whose faith is young—indeed, the more immature one's faith is, the more he wants to be served. Such people seek to be elevated and treated well no matter what. If you are invited to a church celebration, and you want to sit at the place of honor and be treated and served well, then it's a sign indicating that your faith is immature. It shows that you are still carnally minded and that as far as your faith is concerned, you are behind everyone.

Those who are immature want to be served unconditionally. When they are not served against their wish, they grumble and whine, constantly complaining about their treatment and caring about only themselves. One of their



characteristics is their tendency to believe that everyone is there to serve them, from their parents to those around them, and even the whole world.

However, once they grow up and mature, they eventually prefer to serve than to be served. What do they like to serve? They are glad and pleased to serve the gospel for its sake, for the Kingdom of God, and for this Kingdom to come and the gospel to be spread. So they are rejoiced to serve in various ways, whether with their bodies or time, physically or spiritually. The more one's faith has matured, the more he wants to serve than be served.

This is what is manifested by the Holy Spirit dwelling in the hearts of those with mature faith. If you really want to have mature faith and become advanced in faith, then you should realize that you must serve rather than be served. All the servants of God who preceded us did so.

Just as Jesus was rejoiced to serve, so were all His twelve disciples pleased to serve. Not only these twelve disciples of Jesus, but all your predecessors of faith gave up everything to live for the flock and offered everything for the sake of souls. That is how they eventually became your leaders, and while they are sometimes served by you, they still remain servants of the gospel. They are not serving you, but they are serving the Lord. They still continue to exist as the Lord's servants.

You really must be someone whose faith is mature and who wants to serve rather than be served. You can then become a man of faith. It's when you become such a person that you are able to learn about faith, know God's heart, and realize the Word of Truth. A servant is truly rejoiced and happy with the gospel. Someone who does not serve, on the other hand, is always complaining and grumbling. Such people are

annoyed by the work of the church, judge its progress all on their own, and want to be served even more. While this is mostly due to their immature faith, if they continue to be like this even after a considerable time has gone by, then they must examine their hearts, realize their erroneous hearts, and turn around.

The heart of Jesus Christ is fundamentally a humble heart, a heart of service. So our Lord has also given this heart to you and me also. The problem, however, is that we still have the lingering desire to elevate ourselves. Even in our church, some members of the women's fellowship claim to be ahead of others as they were saved earlier than the others, and so they say either directly or indirectly, that others should listen to them and serve them more. Actually, even the disciples used to quarrel among themselves over who was the head. Peter would say, "I am old. If there is anyone among

you who has followed the Lord as completely, boldly, and closely as I have, let him step forward." James would then say, "I am young, but how are you so different from me? Wherever you went, didn't I always go as well?" John would also say, "I am the youngest here, but Jesus still loves me the most and I've always followed Him wherever He went." The other disciples, such as Andrew, Philip, and Nathaniel, would then think to themselves, "It's so ridiculous! Are they better than us? These three disciples always go around in a tight group and claim to assist Jesus, but how can they be our leaders when they ignore us so much? We, too, can do what they are doing."

Perhaps the disciples quarreled like this here because Zedeebe's sons brought their mother into the picture. Since they couldn't bring themselves to speak to Jesus, they did so through their mother. Like these disciples, when our



sisters are gathered together, there are times when they quarrel over their seats, rather than thinking about how they could serve the gospel by faith for the sake of the Lord. Some people sometimes say, “I was saved prior to that person. So why is that person treated as being ahead of me?” Even worse, some people serve with a calculating mind, thinking, “That person is so thoughtless! It’s all good to serve the Lord, but one should be smart about it. Why does that person serve Him like this? Won’t he run out of his everything soon, if he keeps serving like this? What is he going to do when he runs out of his everything?” I haven’t actually seen such people with my own eyes. But I can see it happening even with my eyes closed.

I am not speaking about some material concept here. Don’t misunderstand me as if I were exalting those who contribute a lot of money to the church. I am just saying that there

are some believers who follow the Lord with a calculating mind. Some people, while they do follow the Lord, are constantly calculating about the pros and cons, asking themselves, “Should I now step forward or not?” There are surprisingly many people who follow the Lord based on their calculations. It’s the faith of a vendor to follow the Lord with such calculations. A vendor’s faith is one that follows the Lord from afar, and as such, it is a faith that will die away in the end.

Isn’t It True That the Things of the Lord Are Ours and Vice Versa?

Someone who follows the Lord with the belief that what is the Lord’s is his, and what is his is the Lord’s, is someone who is truly ahead. Such people can possess many things, manage and enjoy everything the Lord has, and serve the



Lord energetically. Indeed, whoever is a man of faith must have this kind of heart. I know that when our adult brothers gather together, no one says, “I was saved before you; you were saved after me.” Of course, none of the members of our Adult Gathering actually say such things. It’s not only impossible, but no one has ever said so. I haven’t heard them say so, and I am not sure that any of them are that proud of their faith career.

My fellow believers, who is actually the highest among our brothers and sisters of all ages, from the Adult Gathering to the Youth Gathering and the Sunday School, and among all our workers, men and women alike? Regardless of what positions and departments they are working at, those who offer themselves for the gospel of the Lord, follow Him wholeheartedly, and serve Him with all their lives—these people are the exalted ones. Who is older than whom or who was saved before whom is not what’s

important. What is the most precious faith? It is one that is grateful for the Lord’s salvation and the gospel that has washed away our sins with the water and the Spirit, one that is united with this gospel because we are rejoiced to serve the Lord. This desire and this faith to dedicate your heart to the spreading of the gospel, to go wherever the Lord goes, to dwell wherever the Lord dwells, and to thus walk with the Lord—this is a precious faith.

Whether you were saved long ago and only recently, whether you are old or young, whether you are rich or not, and whether you are meritorious or not based on the standard of this world—none of these things matters in God’s Church. In the true Kingdom of God, those who live for the Lord are the exalted ones, and those who live for the gospel and serve it are the greatest and highest. That is why we must not let our eyes be carnally oriented. For our ministry



workers as well, they must not argue over who is higher than whom in their gatherings. I believe that the really great ones in God's Church are those who truly offer their bodies to the Lord without any ulterior motives even though they have no possessions to offer, who dedicate themselves to the Lord regardless of wherever they may find themselves, and who want to live for the gospel and serve the Lord for its sake. They are the workers who desire to serve the Lord and His gospel with evermore joy. I am absolutely sure that just because someone was saved before others or was raised to be a worker before anyone else, this does not mean that he is a great person in faith.

I am impartial to myself also. If I really live for the Lord and the gospel, then I call myself an exalted man, but if I try to live for myself rather than the gospel, then I admit that I am a lowly man. That is the law of the Kingdom of God.

Those who have truly been born again know each other without even saying anything. They recognize exactly whether one is spiritual or not without uttering any words, as they see each other eye to eye. No words are necessary. They know all about each other because minds are on the same page. Who then is the last among us? What kind of people has the most immature faith in each of our divisions? Those who only want to be served and those who pretend to serve the Lord with a calculating mind even as they don't actually serve Him—these are the least of the least.

How do I then know these things? You may think to yourself, "Pastor Jong must know something about my mind." Yes, I do know how your heart is. It's because my eyes can somehow see through your heart that I know it. But I know nothing that's manifested superficially. I truthfully have no idea whether you've made



offerings or not, and if you have, how much you've offered. While a few things under my management come to my attention inadvertently, I don't know about the rest. I don't know whether you are serving or not with your material possessions, nor do I know who offered how much. We have two brothers overseeing church accounting and finances, and when these two brothers report to me, they only report the overall breakdown of offerings and expenses, not the individual figures showing which saint offered how much. There is no way for me to find this out nor do I even want to know it. But even though I do not know these things, I can still tell if someone is really rejoiced to serve the gospel by faith.

None of our brothers ever says to me, "Brother so-and-so contributed this much offerings." I only hear them reporting, "We've received this much from pledge offerings, this

much for literature ministry, and this much from thanksgiving offerings. The total contribution is so-and-so amount and the tithe that will be sent to the Mission is this much." Nothing else is reported to me. No one ever reports which saint and which worker offered how much. Such things have been done ever since our church was founded.

While we don't keep such detailed accounts on this earth, they are kept in the Kingdom of God. In other words, although no one judges you based on your offerings, whatever you give is written in your heart and in the ledger of God. What is important is that you offer your contributions by faith not based on any calculation. In other words, God knows all about whether you are serving Him by faith or not. Serving the Lord by a shrewd, vendor-like faith that wavers depending on your own circumstances is different from serving the Lord



by real faith. I ask you not to turn this church into a marketplace. Such things are never tolerated in God's Church. The Bible mentions a widow who offered two mites to the Lord, but it says that this tiny offering was greater than any other offering. Like this, God looks at the weight of your heart. He never looks at the weight of your material offerings.

The Lord looks at your heart, not just your acts. Those who want to serve the Lord out of their sincere hearts with whatever they have can testify as the following: "It was impossible for me to serve the Lord under my circumstances, but as I set my mind on serving the Lord with my whole heart, He gave me what I needed to serve Him. I serve the Lord because of what I have now, and whatever I have now was all given to me by the Lord." Those who are really living by faith have testimonies in them.

However, there are others who serve the Lord

with a very calculating mind. They are so calculating and shrewd, but serving the Lord unwillingly rather than by faith is completely useless. How hard is it to make money in this world? I myself know this very well. But even so, if you donate your money to serve the Lord only reluctantly, then this is beneficial to no one. Offerings made in this way are not only unbeneficial to the church, but if the church relies purely on such offerings, then it will run out of finances shortly. The harder it was for you to make your money, the more it should be spent on the most precious endeavor—that is, it should be offered to the Lord. That is how your money is best spent. What is offered to the Lord is not begrudged. It is never a waste.

Take a look at the woman who brought an alabaster jar of very precious fragrant oil to Jesus and poured it on His head. When people around her saw this, they said to her, "Why are you



wasting such a precious thing? You poured the whole jar on Jesus' head, and now the oil is dripping from His head to His face and his garments. You've ruined His clothes and hair. Not only did you wash His head with the oil, but you also put it all over his feet, and so now even the ground is soaked with the oil. What a waste!" However, the Lord said that what the woman did was not a waste. The alabaster jar of fragrant oil was this woman's dowry, and yet she had poured it on Jesus. To purchase this alabaster jar in those days, a man would have to work for the whole year and save every penny of his earnings. So you can imagine just how hard this woman must have worked to save that money. Yet she poured it on the Lord unsparingly and the Lord said that wherever the gospel is preached, her faith would be told as a memorial to her.

If we hesitate and quiver when we offer our material possessions to the Lord, then we are

making a really big mistake. Also, since everyone's circumstances are different, not everyone serves the Lord with his material possessions in the same way. While some people offer their material possessions to serve the Lord, others who are unable to do this serve the Lord with his body and labor. The desire to serve the Lord by faith in anyway possible and actually serving Him with whatever one has and whatever he has received from the Lord by asking Him by faith—that is the real faith. Some people offer themselves to the Lord as they have nothing else to offer.

However, if your heart desires to be served in the church rather than to serve, then this heart shows that your faith is the last. This kind of faith is the least of all faith. Some people who have just been saved also want to serve the Lord, and they do indeed serve Him earnestly. On the other hand, there are others who, even though it's



been a long time since they first received the remission of sin, have little faith. In the Kingdom of God, it's very evil and wicked to desire only to be served in the church, to avoid work in anyway possible, and to try to reap as much harvest with as little effort as possible. That is a sin. Are you now wondering, "Is Pastor Jong saying these things with some sort of plan in mind, to ask us to make pledge offerings?" No, I don't have any ulterior motive here. Every plan for the first half of this year was already implemented. So I won't be planning anything for the second half until after the end of the Summer Discipleship Training Camp. I have no plans right now. I am just speaking my mind here. The desire to be served is a sin.

Going through trials in life is what builds your character. Without experiencing any hardship, you can't become a decent human being. Because human beings are fundamentally selfish,

they all need to build their character through hardship. Someone who grew up with life's difficulties knows hardship, learns the wisdom to endure through this hardship, appreciates other people's trials, helps them and teaches them how to overcome their difficulties wisely, and does not give up so easily. On the other hand, someone who has lived like a princess under constant protection and without knowing any hardship not only has no consideration for others, but even problematically her heart wants to be served all the time. How could we allow our hearts to be like this? If we have received the remission of sin, then we must recognize our Lord. So even though we have nothing, we want to offer at least our hearts to the Lord. Whenever we actually have something with which to serve the Lord, we offer it to Him. If there is nothing to offer no matter how hard we look, then we offer ourselves and our time. That is what serving the



Lord is all about. You must have the desire to do whatever you can for the Lord and to serve the Lord in any way possible.

How can you let your heart have no desire to serve, but only to be served? Just how wicked is this? Such believers' faith is the worst of all. They rank last in their faith.

The Lord Wants to Clothe Us in God's Glory

It is not to be served by us that the Lord has saved us. Rather it is to serve us, to make us God's people, and to clothe us in glory that the Lord has saved. The Lord really has done so.

When we serve the Lord, we, too, must cast aside the tendency to measure everything with some worldly standards. It's very worldly and very wrong to work hard only if someone says

something to you or someone is watching you, but slacking off when no one is watching. Regardless of whether anyone is watching or not, if you really have faith in God, and if you really desire to serve the Lord, then you are bound to offer everything. I keep speaking about material possessions, but I do this because one's attachment to his material possessions is the barometer of his heart. As it is written in the Bible, "*For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also*" (Matthew 6:21), one's heart is fully revealed through his material attachments. In ordinary times, it's not easy for his heart to be exposed. But it's quite different when it comes to things that are related to materials. When one is facing some situation where his material interest is at stake, his true intentions are revealed without fail. It doesn't matter what he may say. His true colors are revealed through his material attachments.



From now on, don't just say vaguely, "Since the church is engaged in this work, I'll pray for it, but it really isn't any of my business." Don't be indifferent to what the church is planning to do. The people of faith should think about what they can do for this plan. And they should also pray in detail for the work of God by faith. In other words, when the Church is engaged in a certain work, you should think, "What's my part? What can I do?" You shouldn't ignore what the church is doing and just think, "I don't care what the church may or may not do. It's all someone else's work, not mine. I am not responsible for it. I should just carry on with my usual business, going to work, dealing with my own affairs, attending church, and raising my family. Whatever the church may do, it's up to the few ministers; it's none of my business."

Instead, whenever the church does anything, you should think, "Oh, I want to participate in

that work and contribute my share. That's only a matter of fact. What should I do then? What can I do? Should I offer financial contributions, my time, or my abilities? Or should I offer my prayers? What should I do? Should I participate in this work with my manual labor?" It's not right for you to think, "Whatever the church does is its work, and whatever I do is my work."

The mayor of Chuncheon City announced that he plans to turn the city into an animation center. For whom are such projects pursued? It's all for the citizens to make money. It's to create economic gains through this venture that the mayor is trying to form an animation town in Chuncheon City and advertising it all over the world. It will be very helpful to our ministry because we are thinking of publishing some comic books that contain the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

By the way, if the church were to decide to



spread the gospel through comic books, then everyone who can draw cartoons must come together. Some people might say, “But I am not good at drawing. I don’t have any gift in drawing cartoons. I have no gift whatsoever, zero! I would be helping just by not going anywhere near anyone drawing cartoons. I will just ruin it for him simply by standing beside him. I’ll end up spilling the ink and ruining everything, and so don’t even think about calling me to draw comic strips!”

But is it right to think like this? Others might think, “What should I do? I can’t draw comic strips, and so should I buy coloring pens for the drawers? Should I buy papers? Should I run errands? Or should I clean the studio after the day’s work is done? Should I participate in this work with my financial support? Or pray for it? What should I do?” Which of these two thoughts is right then? Before God, the right disposition is

to ask the church to assign you with anything you can do to contribute to what the Church is endeavoring to achieve.

Just how much work do we have to do to serve the gospel? From our overseas ministry to literature translation and Internet ministry, don’t we have so much work to do? Then we all clearly have something that each of us must do. Those who can work should offer their bodies to labor, those who can provide financial support should serve the gospel ministry with their contributions, and those who pray should continue to pray for our ministry. It’s only when there are such people that God’s work is achieved. Then all of us, as well as every arm of the church, must each think about how we should serve the gospel and what we should do for this end, for serving the gospel is not done by oneself alone, but it requires us to pool all our strengths together. How could a few people achieve such



things? If we have any desire to serve the church's work, then we will come to participate in it, and if we do this, our lives will never be in poverty.

My fellow believers, regardless of how rich or poor we may be, if we each offer even the smallest amount to partake in the work of serving the gospel, then this gospel work will indeed be accomplished. For those with little material possession and facing difficult financial circumstances, they can offer their time, their bodies, and their prayers. And those whose hearts are set to offer their material possessions must think, "This is how much I am spending for my family's living expenses, and so I should tighten the belt a bit and use the savings to serve the gospel. "Given the constraints of my income, I should try to restrain my spending to necessities and save as much as possible, and offer the saving to this worthy cause." Like this, some

people tighten their belts to offer more to God. That's how we should live. No matter what, we must serve God and participate in this work of serving the gospel.

For our faith to grow, we must dedicate our hearts to serving the gospel. Whether we can work well or not is secondary; the first thing that we must do is to offer our hearts to the Lord by doing the best of our abilities. If we live according to our own circumstances, rather than dedicating our hearts to serving the gospel, then it will indeed be impossible for us to serve the gospel. Do you think that you will live just fine without offering your heart to serving the gospel? Far from this, it will be a struggle for you to just keep your body alive.

We must dedicate our hearts to the gospel. Then the more our faith grows, the more we will come to serve the Lord. The growth of our faith means that we have that much more to serve.

What then happens when we have more to serve? Our bottom is exposed. When your faith grows, you will want to serve even more, but what happens then? When you see how much you have to serve, and yet how little you have, you will eventually come to pray to God “Lord, make me serve You more. Help me so that I may serve you more.” Thus, when you come to pray to God and exercise your faith, your faith will grow, God will give you more, and so you will have a man of great possession even though you may seem to have little. God is bound to give more to those who serve Him more. And it’s because you receive more from God that you are also bound to serve Him even more. Your faith will then grow more, you will want to serve the Lord more, and out of this desire you will indeed serve Him more. And when you serve the Lord, God will give you even more, and you will then become the first. In other words, those who serve

more for the Lord and the gospel, abide with the Lord, the Head of our Church, and they will indeed become the nearest to the Lord.

The Apostle Paul said, “*Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God*” (1 Corinthians 10:31). Everything is contained in this passage. Whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, we must do all for the glory of God. While this passage is not specific, doesn’t it still speak of everything with all its implications? As the Bible tells us that whatever we do, whether we eat or drink, we must do everything for the glory of God; faith is the only thing that matters in our lives as the righteous.

My fellow believers, we must indeed become people of mature faith. Our faith must grow. Rather than desiring to be served, we must volunteer our services to the Lord. We must become the kind of people who serve more and more. The logic of the world is clear: if you



spend ten out of ten, you will have nothing left. But we have experienced different things in the Kingdom of the Lord. If we offer five to the Lord and live with the remaining five, the Lord will fill us with another ten. We will then want to offer seven out of ten to the Lord and live on the remaining three, but we will realize that we can actually live more prosperously now than when we had lived with five. That's because the Lord fills us even more on top of our pure faith.

It is in this context that the miracle of five loaves and two fish was performed. Likewise, with the story of the widow in Zarephath in the days of Elisha, the Bible also tells us that it is on faith that God's blessings are bestowed. This widow had served God's servant with a handful of flour and a little oil in a jar, but until the famine was over, the bin of flour was not used up and the jar of oil did not run dry. The widow had so little flour left that when she kneaded it and

baked it into biscuits, there was barely enough for her and her son to each eat one. But even so, she used this last bit of flour to serve the servant of God first and the Bible writes that because of this, she was able to feed her son and herself, and the bin of flour did not run out until the end of the famine (1 Kings 17:11-16). She had clearly served God's servant first. But I am not saying that you should all serve me. Rather, I raise this story to remind you that because the widow had believed in God and served His servant even though she herself was in a dire situation hardly able to feed herself, God blessed her house and provided for her needs. That's why her bin of flour never ran out.

My fellow believers, if only you have the desire to serve the gospel, then you can indeed serve the gospel more than enough. If only our hearts are set, we are more than able to accomplish this work of spreading the gospel



through comic books. You never know, we may even capture the whole comic book industry, and cover the entire world with the gospel through our comic books. If only you and I have the heart's desire to serve, then we can serve the gospel more than enough with God's blessings. The problem is the lack of desire. It's not as if the Lord has closed the road, but He has opened it wide for us. It's only because we have no desire that we are unable to embark on this road. If only our hearts have the desire to work, then even if we have no gift, God will make the people of the world help us and bring our work to completion.

Indeed, what's important is our hearts. What is important is to have the desire to serve the Lord. This desire to serve rather than be served is what's really important. Those who want to serve the Lord regardless of how much they have tried their best to reduce what they spend on

themselves as much as possible and offer the rest to God. In contrast, those who want to be served only think about how they can spend even more on themselves. Someone whose heart desires to serve the Lord indeed serves Him under all circumstances, and God fills him even more so than he would be able to serve Him more.

Someone who wants to be served never has enough, even though he struggles constantly to improve his lot and does everything in his means to invest all the money in himself. This is the difference of the realm of faith, and if you have really received the remission of your sins and become a man of faith, then you must desire to grow your faith. So first of all, you must then pray for your faith to grow. It's when your faith grows that your heart desires to serve the Lord more, and that is how you actually become someone who serves the gospel. All of us must become those who want to serve more and more.



Do not think to yourself, “I’ve done enough. I’ve served this much, and so it’s my turn to be served now, not to serve. All those behind me are the ones who should serve the gospel, not me.” Those who were saved before others must follow the Lord even more and those who have put on more grace in the church, who have abided in it longer, must serve even more. Precisely because their faith has grown that much, they must serve that much more.

Such is the Kingdom of God. You and I are both servants of the Lord. We are both God’s people. Since all of us are living for the Lord, we are of those who have offered the materials of this world, this body of ours and everything else to the Lord. If we were to spend everything on ourselves and calculate our every step with our own interest in mind, when will we ever serve the Lord? When will we carry out the work of the gospel? When will we spread the gospel

through comic books, when will we evangelize the world, when we will bear witness to our fellow Koreans, and when we will preach the gospel to our own families? If you do everything you want to do for yourself, you will never be able to serve the Lord. In other words, someone who serves the Lord cannot do everything he wants to do for himself.

This does not mean that you shouldn’t even buy any clothes. Some people serve the Lord faithfully even when they wear nice clothes and spend a lot of money, while others don’t serve the Lord at all even when they act as if they don’t do anything to gratify themselves. The issue at hand is of the heart, not of some visible phenomena.

God has given you various gifts. He has fostered your circumstances ideally so that you may be able to serve Him in whatever way, whether with your material possessions or your



body. However, someone who does not serve the Lord with anything at all, neither with his body, nor with his material possessions, nor with his prayers and thoughts, absolutely refuses to serve no matter what. When we contrast such people to those who serve the Lord faithfully even unto their death, we can see clearly that these people are not upright at all. It's not right for those who have small faith to stop exercising whatever little faith they have. As a well dries out eventually when water is not drawn out of it for a long time, so will your little faith run dry if you do not exercise it in God's Church.

My fellow believers, I ask you to break yourself down in the church. And I ask you to shatter your own thoughts. You can never lead your life of faith with your own thoughts. That's simply impossible. What the Word of God says is what's important. The Word of God said, "He who wants to be the first must be a servant."

Whose servant? He must be a servant of the Lord. No matter how meritorious you may be, if your heart does not cherish the Lord, then you cannot become His servant. No matter how anyone may be smart and bright in worldly affairs, if he has no desire to cherish the Lord then he is not a servant of God.

Is Anyone Who Has Graduated from a Seminary a Servant of the Lord Automatically ?

Does anyone become a servant of God just by accumulating enough formal education? Does he become the Lord's servant just by graduating from a seminary, a graduate school, and taking and passing some test? No, that's not the case. Someone who cherishes the Lord, who cares for



His gospel, who accepts His Word, who follows Him, and who denies Himself, picks up his cross, and follows the Lord—that is a true servant of the Lord. Do you think just anyone can become one of the Lord’s servants? A servant of the Lord is actually far higher than anyone wielding secular power in this world. He is far more exalted because he is a servant of God. No one in this world is even comparable to the servants of God.

My fellow believers, we must throw away the desire to be served. We should desire to be the people of faith who like to lend their blessings rather than borrow money from someone else owing to their unbelief, as the Apostle Paul said, *“I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive’”* (Acts 20:35). Rather than committing frauds to

borrow money from our neighbors in anyway possible just to ensure our own survival, we should be lenders, saying to others, “Do you have no money? I will lend you this money to start a business. Just pay me back the principal; you don’t have to pay any interest.”

My fellow believers, we must have this abundant and rich heart that’s set on the Lord. For us the born-again, our hearts themselves must be rich. The Apostle Peter proclaimed, *“Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk”* (Acts 3:6). Those who have strong faith in the Lord can stand firm and proceed boldly like a young lion. Our whole hearts must be filled by the Lord. In our entire Church, anyone who doesn’t serve the Lord is ranked the last in his faith.

Although we don’t have that many specific offices established in our church, strictly



speaking, there still are invisible offices and order. Few churches have clearly defined offices as our church does. Compared to us, worldly churches have many more offices. One of them is deaconship, and the word itself means someone who takes care of the house, and so a deacon is a servant and a slave. Of course, we the born-again are not just ordinary servants, but we are the Master's caretakers who are close to Him, who know His everything, and who establish His Kingdom together with Him. In other words, we are not just lowly servants who stand at the gate to greet visitors or carry loads, but we are such servants who are close to the Master, who know His will, and who are participating in building His Kingdom. Because we are servants building the Kingdom of the Lord, when this Kingdom is established, we will assume its highest offices as our rewards.

Because inside our hearts is the Kingdom of

God, we must have a great faith. Because our whole hearts must really be set on the Lord, we must cast aside any love for the world. If our hearts have love for this world, it means that the Lord is not there, but if we cast aside our love for the world, the Lord will automatically fill our hearts. We ought to become servants of the Lord. How could we instead want to be served? We should become those who give something to beggars, not the other way around, turning into beggars ourselves. Nowadays, when I go to downtown, I see some disabled people without legs crawling around and begging in the streets all in the name of Jesus. I am ashamed whenever I see such people. It's hard for me to have pity on them, as they invoke the name of Jesus only to live as beggars, put the name of the Lord in shame, and undermine the dignity of all the other Christians. Of course, any help that you give to such people would also be done to the Lord, but



how can a Christian allow himself to turn into a beggar?

My fellow believers, you must have a great faith and you must expand the width of your faith. It is those who broaden their minds, have more faith, and serve more who are blessed. How can you, even after being born again, still keep the tiny vessel that you had before you were born again? When you say to Jesus, “Lord, please fill my vessel,” then your vessel will be filled with just a couple of drops. Is this really enough? No matter how large our vessels may be, would our Lord be unable to fill them? The Lord is more than able to fill all our vessels. The problem is on our end, for we just bring tiny vessels of faith that are smaller than a side dish, asking the Lord to fill them and living on these tiny vessels everyday. It’s so frustrating for me to see this.

You should have a broad mind and a big vessel of faith to desire to serve the Lord. If you

bravely decide to serve the Lord, then God will fill you with His many blessings. God will make it possible for your faith to grow, for you to make a lot of money, and your gains to be exceedingly great. Yet despite this, you fret about your tiny vessel, hesitating whether to pour its half or not, worried what might happen if you offered it. Since your vessel itself is too small, you think that it’s not enough to spend it all for yourself no matter how full it may be. But how can you then serve the Lord enough out of such a tiny bowl of faith?

Broaden your mind and grow your faith. If you say to the Lord, “God, I can’t live with such a tiny thing. Give me more. Give me big things,” then the Lord will fill you more. When you thus grow your faith more and more asking the Lord for big things, you will be able to serve the Lord more and you yourself will live an abundant life. All of us must therefore grow our faith. For us to



grow our faith, our hearts must desire to serve more. Faith does not grow just by trying; rather, it's when we grow our desire to serve that faith grows alongside.

Worldly people are happy to make just \$2,000 a month. There are such people who are satisfied to make just \$2,000 a month, driving around a mid-sized sedan confident of themselves. These people's entire lives are worth only \$2,000. In contrast, my fellow believers, we can make our lives worth millions and billions of dollars by praying, "Lord, I want to serve You even more." When those who yearn to serve more live by faith, they don't turn into such penny-pinching misers, and so I admonish you to make more use of your faith and desire to serve the Lord even more. For someone whose faith is ranked the last, his life itself is also ranked the last. This life must be lived in tears everyday, all beat up and wretched. Do you think there is any difference to

being ranked the last in faith and the last in life? Do you think that it's possible for your life to be ranked the first but your faith to be ranked the last? No, anyone whose faith is ranked the last is also ranked the last when it comes to his life. At least that's how it is in the Kingdom of God.

Therefore, we should all ask ourselves, "How can I serve the Lord? What can I do to please the Lord? How can I faithfully carry out His entrusted task? What should I do to accomplish the Lord's work?" It's for this purpose that we must live. Whatever we do, whether we eat or drink, you and I must each do everything for the purpose of serving the Lord and His gospel.

Someone who is content to just eat, drink, and sleep everyday, and who has no worries about what to eat and drink, has a faith that's as small as a penny, and therefore that's all that he serves the Lord. So it's impossible for him to become rich. Once born in this world, you should live a



rich life, and while you may not live in a huge mansion, you should at least have a nice place to call your own home and enjoy the good life. If instead you were to just work yourself to death everyday, barely make enough money to feed yourself, or sometimes even have to go hungry, isn't this kind of life too wretched? You only live once, and so I admonish you to live with great ambitions and boldness, rather than living so miserly like this everyday from the lack of faith. If only you have faith, you will experience how God provides for all your needs.

Are you a righteous person or not? You are indeed a righteous person. Given the fact that you are a righteous person and a child of God, would it be His will for you to live a penny-pinching and wretched life in this world? No, of course not! Therefore if you want your heart to have faith and serve the Lord, and if you dedicated your heart to the gospel and the work

of the Lord, then seeing what you are doing before His eyes, God will provide for all your needs. If your heart is disposed to say, "Lord, I want to do Your work faithfully," then even if your circumstances are not suitable, God will change them so that you may be able to serve Him. In other words, God will provide a certain impetus for you to carry out many works of faith. Why should we then live so miserly? Since you were born in this world once, shouldn't you travel around the world, try its different cuisines, and see and experience the various customs, sceneries, and cultures that the world offers? And shouldn't you live for righteousness? Let us indeed all live like this. Don't just listen to my sermon and end it there; if you have really received the remission of your sins, then the right thing to do is to apply this principle of how to grow your faith to your life.

We all need to ponder the following questions:



“What’s wrong with my faith? Do I really desire to live for the Lord? Sure, I’ve been saved, but I am still living in my flesh, just thinking about what to eat, what to drink, and what to wear?” If you are worried about what to eat, what to drink, and what to wear, then you cannot serve the Lord. Far from it, you will wake up with these worries every morning and live your entire life under their weight. You will be constantly worried, wondering, “What should I eat today? What should I drink? What should I wear? I have no clothes. My refrigerator is empty. What am I going to do?”

Our Lord said, *“So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not*

much more clothe you, O you of little faith?” (Matthew 6:28-30) And He went on to say, *“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” (Matthew 6:33).*

Our Lord promised us that He will give us everything. Do you want to live your life always worried about what to eat everyday? Now we should desire to become people of faith who serve the gospel even more and we must actually become so. Broaden your mind and live for the Lord and the gospel. God will then make you live in abundant prosperity. Do you believe in this? That’s why I am admonishing you to live by faith. I am fundamentally different from the fraudulent pastors in worldly churches who say, “If you sell your house and offer it to the Lord, you will have two houses,” all just to increase their own church finances. Do you think that that’s why I am ministering? No, please don’t



look at me as if I were such a cheapskate. I have never said to you a single word that is not of faith or any word that would lead you to your destruction.

The way for you and I to prosper is to serve the Lord. To seek His Kingdom and His righteousness is the way for us to receive blessings. His Kingdom is established by preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit. And to lead everyone on this earth to receive the remission of sin and become a child of God is to seek His Kingdom and His righteousness. God is telling you and me to live for Him, for what is right.

Let us therefore all live for His Kingdom and His righteousness. Halleluiah! ☒





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